

New Book Tells the Story of How a Nazi Helped Jews During the Holocaust and Earned Israel's Highest Civilian Honor

Risking his own life, Otto Busse helped the Jewish resistance procure food, warm clothing, medicines and equipment to stage an uprising in the Bialystok ghetto.

CINCINNATI, OH, UNITED STATES, September 9, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The third book in the

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Otto would escort my mother back to the ghetto after work so the Nazi guards would not search her since Otto always gave her extra food to smuggle into the ghetto. These were great acts of heroism.”

Barry Shapiro, son of Bluma Erenkranc Shapiro who was helped by Otto Busse

new [Upstander Stories: Brave People Who Saved Jews During the Holocaust](#) series has been released by 18-year-old illustrator Lilly Wise and her Bubbie (grandmother), writer Joyce Kamen.

In *The Story of Otto—A Nazi Who Helped Jews*, young readers (aged 8-12) will learn about Otto Busse (1901-1980), a German man who was forced to become a Nazi in 1939—or be consigned to a concentration camp. Though he wore the uniform, Otto despised what the Nazis were doing to the Jews. He vowed to use the power his uniform gave him to help the Jews, and he did—in Bialystok, Poland, where he’d been sent by the Third Reich to operate a painting company there.

“When I then learned about the fate of the Jews up close...I was seized by a shudder at the Nazi methods used against the Jews,” Otto wrote after the war. “I was overcome by an unspeakable, deep pity for these persecuted people. The die was cast for me. The mission my heart and mind gave me was: Fight the destroyer and help the persecuted!”

Otto’s desire to help as many Jews as he could as the manager of the painting company led him to become part of the Jewish resistance effort in Bialystok. At great risk to his own life, Otto helped the group procure food, warm clothing, medicines and equipment to stage an uprising in the ghetto. The touching stories of three of the Jewish women he assisted and protected in Bialystok are also told in the book.

“My mother told me that when she worked for Otto Busse at the painting company, he would

invite her to sit at the lunch table with the non-Jewish workers—which was unheard of at the time,” said Barry Shapiro, son of Bluma Erenkranc Shapiro. “She also said he would escort her safely back into the ghetto after work so the Nazi guards at the gate would not search her. These may seem like little things, but back then, these were really great acts of heroism.”

In 1968, Israel’s Yad Vashem (Holocaust Memorial Museum) honored Otto’s heroism by naming him one of the “Righteous Among the Nations”—Israel’s highest civilian honor given to non-Jews who helped Jews during the Holocaust.

The first book in the series, *The Story of Anna and Dr. Helmy*, revealed how an Arab-Muslim Egyptian doctor saved a young Jewish girl from deportation to a concentration camp during World War II. Dr. Mohammed Helmy risked his life every day for over two years to hide Anna Boros.

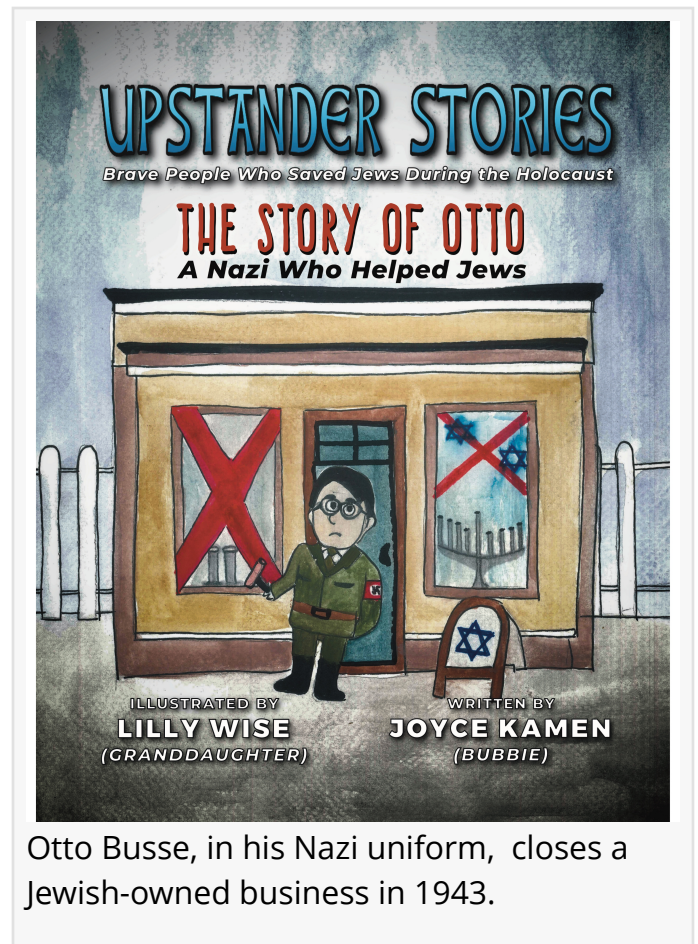
In *The Story of Golda, Stachek and the Helpers*, the second book in the series, young readers met a brave young Catholic man named Stachek—an employee and friend of a Jewish businessman in Stryi, Poland—who risked his life to save his boss’s family and nearly 30 other Jews from the Nazis during World War II.

These stories not only impart stories of courage and sacrifice during the Holocaust; they remind readers of the importance of being Upstanders today—acting to help others in need—and how doing the right thing can change the world for the better.

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Upstander Stories was born after Lilly participated in a high-school class project to illustrate a book about two Holocaust survivors in her community. She was so inspired by the experience that she asked her Bubbie (grandmother) if she would write a book for young readers about how Bubbie’s husband Fred’s biological mother (Anna) was saved by an Egyptian doctor in Nazi-occupied Berlin—while Lilly would create the illustrations.

“Publishing a book with my Bubbie, especially on the Holocaust, was deeply meaningful,” said Lilly, now a freshman in college. “I felt a profound sense of duty to respectfully convey these stories as works of art—knowing that my work could contribute to preserving history and fostering understanding. My generation must now emerge as the keepers of these stories.”



Otto Busse, in his Nazi uniform, closes a Jewish-owned business in 1943.

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