  
INSIDE HANA'S  
SUITCASE

Student Reference



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# About the Film

The poignant story of two young children who grew up in pre-WWII Czechoslovakia and the terrible events that they endured just because they happened to be born Jewish. Based on the internationally acclaimed book, "Hana's Suitcase" which has been translated into 40 languages, the film is an effective blend of documentary and dramatic techniques.

In addition to tracing the lives of George and Hana Brady in the late 1930s and '40s, the movie tells the present-day story of "The Small Wings", a group of Japanese children, and how their passionate and tenacious teacher, Fumiko Ishioka, helped them solve the mystery of Hana Brady, whose name was painted on an old battered suitcase that they received from the notorious Polish death camp, Auschwitz.

The film's plot unfolds as told through the contemporary young storytellers who act as the omniscient narrators. They seamlessly transport us through 70 years of history and back and forth across three continents, and relate to us a story of unspeakable sadness and also of shining hope. For this is a Holocaust story unlike others. It provides a contemporary global perspective and lessons to be learned for a better future.



*Selected Images from the film 'Inside Hana's*

# A Message from George Brady

## *Hana's Brother - Holocaust Survivor*

Sharing the tragedies that I faced in my life was often a daunting task and something I avoided for many years. Then, nine years ago, Fumiko Ishioka came into my life and transformed the tragedy of my beloved sister Hana's fate into a lesson for children around the world. Ever since then, and with Fumiko's encouragement, I've willingly opened up about my experiences.

In recent years, Hana's story has spread via radio, a book, television, on stage and through school projects around the globe. Just when I thought the story had been told in every medium, Larry Weinstein proposed making a film that would be both documentary and drama. Bringing to life a story that began over 70 years ago is not an easy task, but he and his team managed to respectfully and powerfully bring it on



The film's way of telling the story through the perspective of children from around the world, captures the heart of our message. That, combined with interviews with those who knew Hana and those who have been at my side as the story has come to light, is especially illuminating.

I told Larry that I would want to attend many of the film shoots even though he warned me that some of the scenes might be quite painful for me. I was really touched by so many of these scenes and I was struck by how remarkably reminiscent they were of our experiences – how they reflected my own memories. Yes, many were very sad, but there was something beautiful about the experience.

Since the completion of the film, I have had the opportunity to watch it with audiences and I see how much they are affected. The extent of their reaction continues to renew my faith in how one person's life can change millions. My little sister was murdered at 13, but her story continues to resonate more than six decades after the fact. And, most importantly, it gives me great hope that in light of the state of current world events, "Inside Hana's Suitcase" will become more and more relevant by reminding future generations of the importance of family, freedom, compassion and respect for others. I hope Hana's tragedy encourages people to explore history and learn more about the terrible consequences of hatred and intolerance.

"Inside Hana's Suitcase" answers many of the questions that Fumiko, Lara and I are often asked as we travel. It is the next generation that has the opportunity and the responsibility to create a better world. It is up to the young people. I lost many family members and friends as a result of the Holocaust - so did millions of others, but I've come to believe that our story speaks for the millions whose stories could never be told.



*"You cannot describe the feelings you have if you are in Auschwitz and you see the huge flame and you know that it's your best friend...the people who had (been) twenty four hours before, still alive...I feel it's my obligation to make people aware of what can happen if people hate each other." or*

*"When I go to Auschwitz and Hitler and the Nazis are here and I am here they didn't manage to put me away. Somehow I managed to escape the fate and I am here to tell the story makes me feel I am the victor."*  
*George Brady speaking at Auschwitz.*

George Brady with Jindriska Hanusova (Hana) on the set of Inside Hana's Suitcase

# A Message from Larry Weinstein

*Director - Inside Hana's Suitcase*



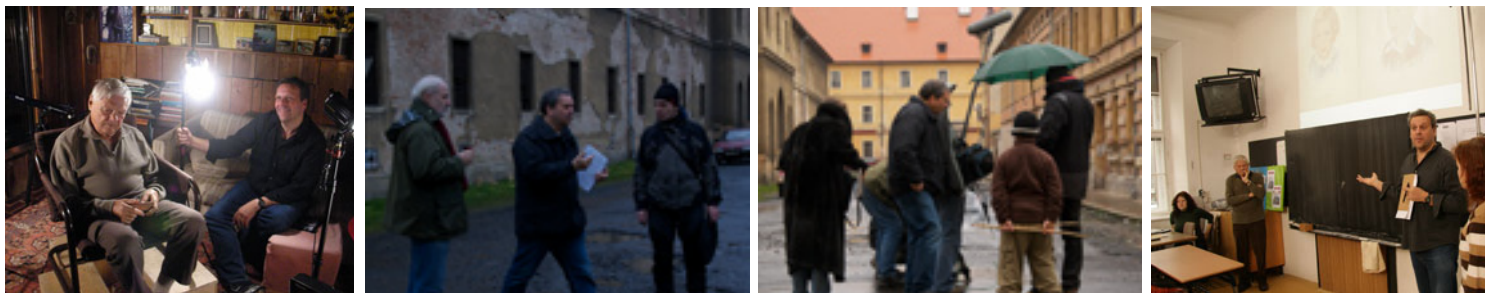
I have to admit that I never wanted to make a Holocaust film. The subject was simply too dark and overwhelming to me. I had already made twenty-five films but they were all about music. Then I read the book “Hana’s Suitcase” and I was stunned - it affected me beyond words, but in a very positive way. It was not only a powerful story about the Holocaust – it was filled with hope and with allegory. And it was beautifully structured with fluid movement from past to present, present to past and from continent to continent to continent. Above all, to me it was clearly meant to be a film. Not a journalistic documentary – though it could be that. Not a full-fledged dramatized narrative, though it could be that too. But I was convinced was that what this film really wanted to be was a hybrid documentary/drama. The drama would tell the back story, the documentary would tell the present day story and

a number of mixed techniques could be used for everything else in between. And I realized that with all my heart, I truly wanted to direct this film – this Holocaust film.

I feel extremely fortunate to have been given the opportunity to make INSIDE HANA’S SUITCASE. I got to know so many kind and generous individuals in Canada, Europe and Japan – above all George Brady (Hana’s brother) and Fumiko Ishioka in Tokyo, who were a constant inspiration.

I have designed “Inside Hana’s Suitcase” to reach out to a wide audience because its message is so vital. I wanted to make a film that would engage the viewer on different levels. This idea is what has guided us through our research, writing and stylistic approach – it has led us to devise a number of visually stunning techniques using animation, and dramatic stylizations that enhance the story’s emotional core.

Perhaps the film’s most powerful technique has nothing to do with special effects, animation or dramatization. It is our use of George himself to narrate his story with the help of Fumiko, George’s daughter Lara, and a disarmingly insightful group of youthful storytellers from Canada, Japan and Czech Republic, all of whom comment on the story of Hana and George as well as speak about intolerance and compassion, cruelty and kindness, magic and loss. Most of all they underline a story which is harrowing in its sadness, yet sparkling with hope and promise. I am certain that in viewing INSIDE HANA’S SUITCASE an audience will discover a story that is very special and universal, but also uplifting in its promise of hope for Humanity.



*Larry Weinstein on the set of Inside Hana's Suitcase*

# A Message from Fumiko Ishioka

*Director - Tokyo Holocaust Education Resource Center*

Hana's Suitcase arrived at the Tokyo Holocaust Center in spring 2000. Back then I never ever imagined that this one ordinary, empty suitcase would carry a story that would be told first in a book and then a film 10 years later. My first years of journey with Hana's Suitcase were filled with a lot of surprises, coincidences, and mixture of emotions. It was heartbreaking when I thought of the fate of little, innocent Hana, and you can easily imagine my excitement when I first met Hana's surviving brother, George, my true hero now. Thanks to his courage to talk about his most difficult memories, Hana's Suitcase was able to start a new journey of sharing the lessons of history with children all over the world. In the process I have had a chance to meet so many wonderful people - those who have told and shared the story of Hana in different ways, but also the many all over the world who seem as affected by the this story as much as I have been.



I remember when I first met Larry Weinstein, who was full of ideas on how he wanted to make this story into a film. Then he and Thomas Wallner, the writer, came to Japan and we spent a good amount of time together. We visited Hiroshima. We talked about Japan's own aggression in Asia during WWII. I showed them how I was trying to share the lessons of the Holocaust with children living in a small island country like Japan.

Once the filming started, I was constantly reminded how lucky I was to be able to work with such a talented and dedicated group of people. I truly appreciate and admire the work of Larry and everyone involved in the making of this film as they treated this story with so much care, love, and respect. Thanks to their work, Hana's Suitcase is no longer empty. It is filled, not just with sad memories, but with life and hope for the future.

As the United Nations declares, the Holocaust is "a warning to all people of the dangers of hatred, bigotry, racism and prejudice". I hope that viewers of this film, young and adult, will join us in spreading the message of tolerance and understanding so we can make this world a more compassionate place.



***"We the Small Wings would like to tell Hana's story to everyone in Japan. We, the Small Wings, will never forget what happened to 1,500,000 Jewish children. We will take action for peace so a tragedy like the Holocaust will never be repeated"***

*A message from the Small Wings, a group of volunteer students in Tokyo.*

# The Suitcase

Fumiko Ishioka was appointed the coordinator of the Tokyo Holocaust Education Centre in 1998. Her difficult job was to teach Japanese children about the Holocaust in Europe. Japan is very far from Europe and not many Japanese children had been told much about the terrible things which had happened there during the Second World War: they did not know that millions of innocent people had died in concentration camps; nor did they know much about the horrors which people had experienced in Asia and Japan during that war. But Fumiko understood that it is important for children to learn the truth about history. She also thought that she might make these things more immediate for her students if she could gather together some real objects which had belonged to people who died. She contacted Holocaust museums in Israel and Europe and eventually she received, from the Auschwitz Museum, a sock, a shoe, an empty can which once contained the deadly gas, Zyklon-B, and a suitcase. On the suitcase was printed the name of the owner: Hana Brady, her birthdate, and a German word, "Waisenkind", which means 'orphan'.

There were no clues as to who Hana Brady was or what might have happened to her, but the young Japanese students kept asking "Who was Hana? What did she do? Where did she live? Who was she?" Fumiko knew she had to find out, both for her students and for herself.



*"When I saw that on the suitcase was the name 'Hana Brady', on one hand I realized that this was an object that came from a long time ago, from somewhere far away, but on the other hand I thought that this suitcase belonged to a girl just like me."*

*Japanese Student, 2008*



# Who was Hana Brady?



Hana 1935

Hana Brady was born in 1931 in the small town of Nove Mesto, Czechoslovakia. She lived with her parents and her brother George, older by three years, in a handsome white house on main street. Her father ran the General Store on the ground floor and the family occupied the upper floor. Before the Nazi occupation, Hana and her brother George lived a normal family life, skiing in the winter time, swimming in the summer time, going to school, making friends, and helping out in the store. But when the Nazi came life changed. More and more restrictions were placed on Jewish families, their parents were both taken by the Nazis to concentration camps where they were eventually killed.

After that, George and Hana lived with their relatives for a short while, but in 1942, both children were deported to Theresienstadt, a concentration camp set up by the Nazis in an old fortress town, Hana age 10, George 13. Later the two children transferred to Auschwitz, a death camp, now located, in Poland. George swore to Hana that he would look after her no matter what, but he never saw her again. Both Hana and her parents perished.



Actress Jindřiska Hanusová as Hana in the film.

*“I wanted to find out more, like about the suitcase and whose it was and who was Hana Brady? And then how did the suitcase get from Auschwitz to Japan?”*

*Canadian Student*

# The secrets inside a suitcase are revealed to the world: A timeline

**2000** - Toronto, Canada George receives Fumiko's letter.

**2001** - Canadian Jewish News article introduces the story.  
Karen Levine produces CBC award-winning radio documentary.

**2002** - Karen Levine writes Hana's Suitcase. Published by Second Story Press & translated into 40 languages.

**2003** - Brady family launches website [www.hanassuitcase.ca](http://www.hanassuitcase.ca).  
New interactive website with Xenophile Media in development.

**2005** - Fumiko Ishioka awarded an honorary doctorate from York University.  
Hana's Suitcase approved for Japanese English curriculum.

**2006** - Emil Sher adapts Hana's Suitcase for staging and play debuts at the Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People in Toronto following sold-out run, travels across Canada.

**2007** - Hana's Suitcase opens in USA in St. Louis and Chicago.  
Plans for Los Angeles and Israel for 2010.

**2008** - Larry Weinstein of Rhombus Media direct Inside Hana's Suitcase. Inside Hana's Suitcase debuts at 2009 HotDocs Festival opening.

**2009** - George Brady receives Order of Ontario.

**2009** - Oct 31 [insidehanassuitcase.com](http://insidehanassuitcase.com) is launched online.

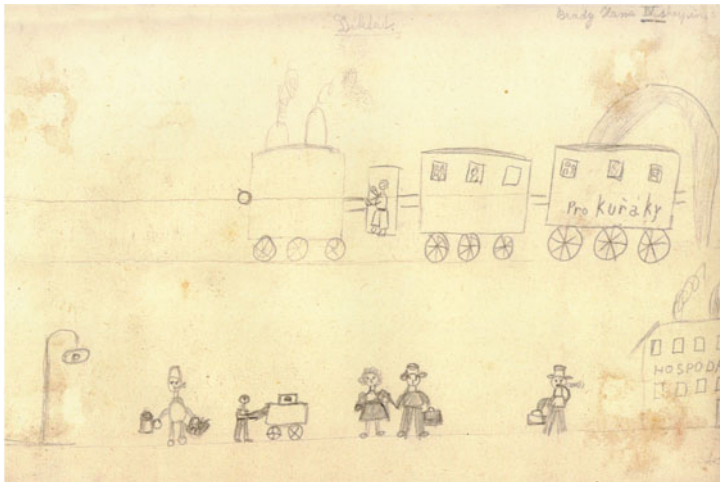
**2009** - Nov 6 Inside Hana's Suitcase is released in Canada theatrically and made available to all schools.



*Various scenes from the film*

# Hana's Artwork

Hana Brady was a student of Friedl Dicker-Brandeis. Friedl Dicker-Brandeis was an artist imprisoned at Theresienstadt who taught clandestine art classes to children. Hana Brady was one of their students. The drawings below were created by Hana in Terezin and were discovered along with more than 4000 others in a suitcase that had been hidden - perhaps by Dicker-Brandeis herself. Many of these are now on display, including Hana Brady's, at the Jewish Museum in Prague.



A few examples of some of Hana's drawings that she did while in Theresienstadt Ghetto.

*We took Hana's drawings and made them move as if we had extended her imagination"*

Vincent Marcone  
Creative Director, Visual Effects  
Inside Hana's Suitcase

'Inside Hana's Suitcase' uses various animation techniques that are based on and play with existing elements like stock photos, and Hana's drawings. The animation serves to extend into the worlds of memory and imagination. When Fumiko walks through the fields of Terezin, several of Hana's animated trees are seen to spring to life which symbolizes Fumiko's sense that she is getting closer and closer to Hana's spirit.

# Words for the Future:

## *A Message from Lara Brady*

I've been curious about my aunt Hana from a very young age. As I grew up and learned more about her story, like the Small Wings, I had many questions. Why Hana? What had she done to deserve such a fate? Why did no one stop it? I've realised that not speaking up or taking action against injustice is a reaction in itself. For every Hana in history, there's a child who is presently without a voice, who needs and deserves to have their story shared. It's clear from the letters we receive from around the world that Hana has affected children profoundly, encouraging them to speak up and be active within their community. It's easy to give in to feeling powerless as just one person, but we need to realise that even the smallest of actions hold incredible power.

In Canada, we are lucky to see on a daily basis how diversity can be embraced. Children around the world continue to be affected by intolerance, war and human rights violation. Previous generations have not done enough to stop this and I hope that this generation takes on the challenge. Hana's story took 65 years to come to light, and this is thanks to Fumiko's perseverance and George's bravery. How many more stories are there to be told, and who will speak for them, if not for the next generation?



*George visits his home town to share with local school kids his sister's story*



*The package that George received from Fumiko containing drawings, pictures and letters from the "Small Wings"*

## Activities:

- 1 In small groups tell each other a story.
- 2 Imagine you had to leave your life behind, picture one object you would want to take with you. What would you take and why?
- 3 Write a letter to a person in a different country, someone you've never met be-
- 4 What was the most influential part of the film and why?
- 5 If your life were to be remembered through an object, what would it be and why?
- 6 Does the fact that much of the story is told from the perspective of children of different countries, faiths and ethnic backgrounds tell us something about the message of the film?
- 7 Write on a small sheet of paper one phrase or idea that demonstrates one thing you have learned, felt or decided as a result of watching this film.
- 8 Why do you feel that prejudice can exist?

## Activities:

### Below are images from 'Inside Hana's Suitcase'

- 1 List the images in chronological order.
- 2 Which country do these images take place in?
- 3 What are these images telling us about the film?
- 4 What is the image that resonates most with you?



Image A



Image B



Image C



Image D

**Activities:**



# Glossary:

**Antisemitism:** Systematic prejudice against Jews

**Concentration Camp:** A place where enemies, perceived undesirables and other are “concentrated”, or all placed together in one controlled environment, usually very unpleasantly.

**Death Camps:** A concentration camp utilized for the sole purpose of murdering camp inmates.

**Discrimination:** Is the result of individual and/or group prejudices. There are many forms; exclusion, economical, physical, and in the case of the European Jews, genocide.

**Genocide:** The deliberate and systematic extermination of a national, political, or cultural group.

**Gestapo:** Was the official secret police of Nazi Germany beginning in April 1934.

**Ghetto:** A portion of a city walled off in which Jews were forced to live, the standard of living is extremely low.

**Holocaust:** Greek for “Burnt Offering” and the term given to the Nazi program to annihilate the European Jewry.

**Iglau:** A Gestapo prison where Karel Brady was sent before being deported to Auschwitz.

**Juden:** the German word for Jew.

**Liberation:** The Allied troops liberated the ghettos and concentration camps in 1944-45.

**Nazi (National Socialism Workers Party):** Political party headed by Adolf Hitler who took power in Germany in 1933. After taking control of the government, The Third Reich was created establishing the Nazi’s as the only German political party.

**Nove Mesto:** Moravian town where the Brady family lived.

**The Nuremberg Laws:** Legalized the targeting of Jews.

**Racism:** The irrational belief that race account for the variation in human behavior, ability and intelligence.

**SS:** An elite quasi military unit of the Nazi party that served as Hitlers’ personal guard and as a special security force in Germany and the occupied countries.

**Star of David:** An emblem originally used for as a protection against evil spirits. The Nazi party used it to identify Jews and it has become a universal symbol of Judaism. Jews in the Ghettos were forced to wear a white armband with the Star of David.

**Stonozka:** The centipede song, a favorite song of Hana Brady’s that she used to recite with other children while in Auschwitz.

**Swastika:** The emblem for Nazism which was an ancient Indian symbol for peace. It has been co-opted and will forever be associated with the evils of the Nazi regime.

**Third Reich:** The Nazi regime who took power in Germany from 1933-45

**Theresienstadt:** The Czech town of Terezin which was converted into a Jewish Ghetto where all Czech Jews were sent before being deported to Auschwitz.

**Waisenkind:** the German word for orphan.



