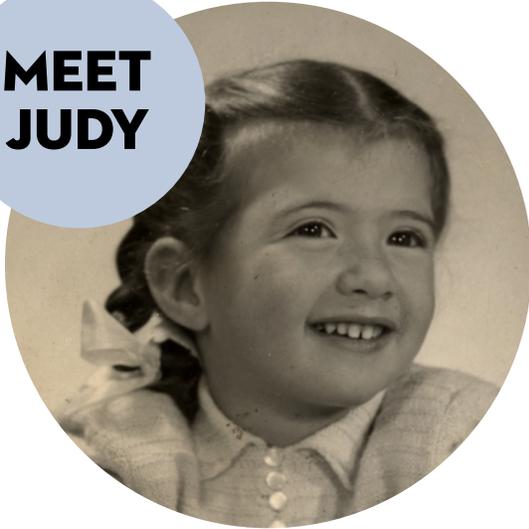


MEET JUDY



Judy at five years old. Budapest, Hungary, 1942.

BIOGRAPHY:

Judy was born in Hungary in 1937 and was the only child in her family. Her ancestors had lived in Hungary for generations and were well-established there. When the German army occupied Hungary in 1944, Judy's father arranged for false identity papers to show that Judy was a Catholic girl and he looked for a safe place for her to hide. First Judy stayed in a Catholic convent, and then she hid in the apartment of a close family friend in the city of Budapest. There she experienced the Siege of Budapest – the battle between the Soviet and Romanian armies on one side and the German and Hungarian armies on the other, which included close to two months of air raids on the city. Judy's parents had been sent to a German concentration camp called Bergen-Belsen, but they survived the Holocaust and returned to Hungary in 1945. The family moved to Canada in the late 1940s and settled in Montreal.

“There was now only Ilona, Ili, and nobody would spit at her and call her ‘Büdös Zsidó’ (Stinking Jew) as one of my father’s labourers had done to the other me. She did not wear a yellow star. She had become a ‘real’ Hungarian girl.”

– JUDY ABRAMS

Judy Abrams is a Holocaust survivor who immigrated to Canada after the war and settled in Montreal. You can learn about her experiences by reading her memoir, *Tenuous Threads*, or on the digital resource Re:Collection.

Below is some background that will help you understand Judy's story.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

Judy's family lived in **Hungary**, a country in central Europe located southeast of Germany. Hungary had a large Jewish population, many of whom had lived in Hungary for generations. In the years leading up to World War II and the Holocaust, Jews in Hungary experienced rising discrimination from the Hungarian government. During the early years of the war, the Hungarian government was an **ally** of Nazi Germany and discriminated against Hungarian Jews, but did not deport them. This changed in March 1944 when the alliance between Hungary and Germany broke down, and the German army occupied Hungary. Immediately the persecution of Hungarian Jews increased and they were forced into ghettos and deported to Nazi camps where most were killed. Many Hungarian Jews hid in the homes of Christians to escape capture. Deportations stopped in mid-1944, but the Hungarian fascist **Arrow Cross** brigades continued to hunt and murder Jews until Hungary was liberated by the Soviet army in early 1945. Approximately **569,000** Hungarian Jews were killed in the Holocaust.

