

# Saving the Children

It was a fall morning in 2009 when 22 people traveled to London to thank Nicholas Winton. They could have passed for a retirement home social club. All were in their 70s and 80s.

But this was no social trip. It was a journey of gratitude. They came to thank the man who saved their lives; a stooped centenarian who met them on this train platform just as he did in 1939.

Max Lucado – in his book *You Changed My Life: Stories of Real People with Remarkable Hearts* – tells about this man and what he did.



Nicholas Winton was a 29-year-old stockbroker at the time Hitler's armies were ravaging the nation of Czechoslovakia, tearing Jewish families apart, and marching parents to concentration camps. No one was caring for the children.

Winton got wind of their plight and resolved to help them. He used his vacation to travel to Prague, where he met the parents who, incredibly, were willing to entrust their children's future to his care. Returning to England, he worked his regular job on the Stock Exchange by day and advocated for the children at night.

He convinced Great Britain to permit their entry. He found foster homes and raised funds. He scheduled his first transport on March 14, 1939, and accomplished seven more over the next five months. His last trainload of children arrived on Aug. 2, bringing the total of rescued children to 669.

On Sept. 1, the biggest transport was to take place, but Hitler invaded Poland and Germany, closing borders throughout Europe. None of the 250 children on that train were ever seen again.

After the war, Winton didn't tell anyone of his rescue efforts, even his wife. In 1988, she found a scrapbook in their attic, with all the children's photos and a complete list of names. She prodded him to tell the story.

As he has, rescued children have returned to say thank you. The grateful group includes a film director, a Canadian journalist, a news correspondent, a former minister in the British Cabinet, a magazine manager, and one of the founders of the Israeli Air Force.

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There are some 7,000 children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren who owe their ancestry to Winton's bravery. He wears a ring given to him by some of the children he saved. It bears a line from the *Talmud*, the book of Jewish law: "Save one life. Save the world."

What a remarkable story Lucado has shared. And what a remarkable man who is the subject of it.

Winton's life shows that one person, with purpose and determination, can make a difference in the lives of others.

And it is what we in Life Care, Century Park and Life Care at Home are called to do.

– Beecher Hunter