

# SECOND GENERATION



## Renee BALABAN

“My Name is Renee Balaban and I am a Second Generation Holocaust Survivor. From the moment I learned my family history, I wondered how my life would be today if the Holocaust didn't happen?

**I wondered what type of family I would be part of if 98% of them had not perished in concentration camps?**

**Year after year, I asked myself... “Who Am I?” It's a hard question to answer. I know that I am a product of an era long gone, and someone who has been trying to find her roots in Austria, the Czech Republic, and Poland. It has been very difficult to get answers and when I do the information is incomplete.**

**My parents, Suzanne Katz Balaban and Maximillian Balaban were born and raised in Vienna, Austria. In 1938 my mother's parents, Paul Katz and Johanna Diamant Katz after being hounded by the Gestapo decided to leave for America with their two daughters, Suzanne Katz and Ruth Edith Katz. My mother was able to send papers to her boyfriend, Maximillian Balaban to get him out of harms way as he was arrested a few times and thrown in jail. He arrived in America in 1939.**

**My older sister, Miriam Balaban Lubinsky, my younger sister, Eileen Balaban Eisenberg and I, Renee Balaban were all born in America, a country that saved our parents lives. It was hard for our family but they were grateful for the opportunity to start a new life and learn a new language.**

**As I grew up and heard that a land called Israel was created on the ashes of six (6) million Jewish children and adults, I felt like a miracle was given to the Jewish People. It was a place where God gave his children the Ten Commandants and also the right of return to rebuild their lives and a new nation. He gave them a new home, a new life, and hope to have Peace one day.**

**As I pause, my mother just asked me to listen to the comments she wrote and as she started to read the names of her grandmother, grandfather, aunts, uncles, and cousins she cried for the loss of such a wonderful family who went up in ashes.**

**It made me think about the “A Letter to the Stars” Program educating high school students about the Holocaust and Austria's part in the death of so many Jewish People who helped build Austria over the centuries.**

**It made me wish that the “A Letter to the Stars” Program could be a permanent educational program in Austria.**

**If we do not learn about other religions and ethic customs, we will hate ....**

**If we do not try to make the world a better place to live in, then we will be doomed ...**

**If we cannot stop terrorism, there will be no future for the next generation.**

**My wish is for all future generations to learn and remember mans inhumanity to others and never let it happen again. It starts now with the Austrian High School Students and hopefully continues year after year not only in Austria but in other countries all over Europe. The future of the world is in their hands and in their hearts to remember, “Never Again ... Never Again.”**

# A LETTER TO THE STARS