

UP CLOSE

# A child survivor of the Holocaust

By **Cindy Cantrell** | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT APRIL 29, 2016

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Following last summer's publication of his Holocaust memoir, "Somewhere There Is Still a Sun," 85-year-old Michael Gruenbaum of Brookline said he has been pleased and slightly astonished by the support, awards, and numerous other honors he has received.

Most significant, however, is the news that his publisher, Simon & Schuster, has licensed rights to German publisher Rowohlt Verlag to translate his book in that country.

"Maybe I'll get my dream fulfilled to have my book read by all teenagers in Germany," Gruenbaum said.

Written with Todd Hasak-Lowy of Evanston, Ill., for middle grade readers, "Somewhere There Is Still a Sun" recounts Gruenbaum's childhood in Prague, his father Karl's murder, and the two and a half years in which he was confined at the Terezin concentration camp with his mother, Margaret, and older sister, Marietta. The title of the book is taken from Margaret's letter to relatives following their liberation in May 1945.



DENNIS DARLING

**Brookline resident Michael Gruenbaum with one of the teddy bears that his mother, Margaret, was sewing for a Nazi officer when his family was assigned to a transport train to Auschwitz.**

Gruenbaum, who immigrated to the United States with his remaining family in 1950, said some of his story was shared in the 2004 book “Nesarim: Child Survivors of Terezin” written by his late wife, Thelma. It is important, he said, that now there is a version for readers who are the same age as he was during the Nazi occupation of his native Czechoslovakia.

In fact, Gruenbaum dedicates the book to the 1.5 million Jewish children killed during the Holocaust, and specifically all the boys in school building L417 , room 7 who shared friendship, work duties, and soccer games – but also terror whenever a new list of names was posted for transport to Auschwitz.

Gruenbaum, who was signed to the trains four times, credits his survival to “my mother’s persistence and a tremendous amount of luck.” One time, for example, the family was spared because Margaret hadn’t finished sewing teddy bears that a Nazi official wanted to give as Christmas gifts.

“People always ask what I take away from all this, and it’s two things,” he said. “Don’t ever take no for an answer, and don’t be attached to property and possessions. As long as you have your health, and keep going, you can live without a lot.”

*For more information, visit [books.simonandschuster.com](http://books.simonandschuster.com).*

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