

“MY FATHER AND MOTHER SAID WE’D LEARN TO LOVE EACH OTHER”

(Fiddler on the Roof)

Ruth Fallman’s incredible story began in 1939 when she was four years old, in a Deaf school in Berlin. Being both Jewish and Deaf, she and her little friends faced almost certain death at the hands of the Nazis.

Her Headmaster had to make the agonising decision of choosing just ten children to take with him on the Kindertransport to England. Miraculously Ruth was one of them.



Ruth with her brother Karl

Little Ruth found herself placed in the Residential School for Jewish Deaf Children.

Homesickness was a daily companion. But with a positive attitude and a determination for which she would become renowned, she worked hard and became a star pupil.

Ruth’s family initially went to Shanghai in China. Tragically, her grandma and brother returned to Germany thinking they would be safer there. They were never seen again.

When peace eventually prevailed, Ruth received a message via the Red Cross that her mother and father were in America and had sent for her.

Now this strong independent girl, who had learnt to survive the entire war on her own, was to be reunited with both of her beloved parents.

One day she met Harold, a tall, good-looking young Deaf man who was on holiday from London. He was a carpenter and fell head over heels for Ruth. Across 3000 miles of Atlantic Ocean, they had a long distance relationship. Harold told Ruth that he loved her and wanted to marry her. Ruth ran to her father for advice!

She said that she liked Harold and knew that he was a good person who would look after her, but she didn’t know if she loved him. Her father said that he was a healthy young Jewish man with a trade and that love would come in time - so she said yes!

Harold and Ruth settled back in London and have enjoyed nearly fifty years of a close, loving marriage together ... so her father was right.



Their relationship with JDA is as old as their marriage.

And as they have aged, just like so many of our members, Ruth and Harold have come to need JDA a great deal more.

Harold has a chronically bad back and Ruth has serious mobility issues which leave her reluctantly reliant on others in order to get around and cope with everyday living. She also has carpal tunnel in her hands which makes signing (her only means of communication) a struggle.



Last year, Ruth became confined to their top floor flat for many weeks with the lift frequently broken. It was time for a new home.

Moving house is one of the most stressful times in one’s life. However, **JDA took responsibility for all aspects of the move.** We found them an accessible warden-assisted flat close to JDA, negotiated the purchase and sale of their old flat, patiently helped them to trawl through decades of memorabilia, packed up their worldly goods, arranged respite care for Ruth while we prepared the new flat and supported them through the trauma of moving.

Janine, their Support Worker, has now put a home care package in place. She visits several times a week and accompanies them to medical appointments, advocating and ensuring that Ruth and Harold understand and are able to follow medical instructions.

Ruth is extremely intelligent and it’s hard for her to face the fact that her body is ageing. But **Janine works hard to ensure that Ruth and Harold maintain a level of independence with the security of JDA’s support.**

Ruth is far too proud to let us know how much JDA means to her, but her smile says it all.

We now need to raise £600,000 each year, and carry out over 2,000 personal support interventions – enabling Deaf people like Ruth and Harold to cope with the challenges of everyday life.