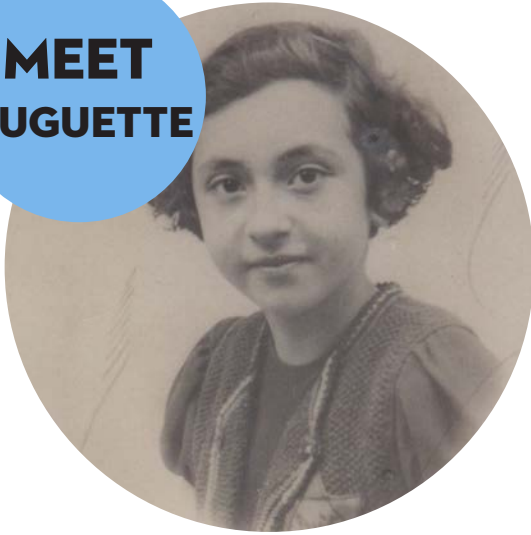# MEET MUGUETTE

Muguette in Paris, 1942.

BIOGRAPHY:

Originally from Warsaw, Poland, Muguette's parents immigrated to France in the 1920s in the hopes of escaping antisemitism. Muguette was born in 1931 and she spent her childhood in a happy home in Paris with her parents, Abraham and Bella, and her older brother, Jojo. After Muguette's father died in 1935, her mother had to support her and her brother, and she became the first foreign woman in France to obtain a worker's permit. When World War II broke out in September 1939, Muguette was evacuated to the villages of Sens and Villeneuve-sur-Yonne with her schoolmates; she was separated from her family, who found refuge in a small village called Champlost, in Burgundy. Muguette joined her family in Champlost, where they remained until the Germans invaded France in 1940. Upon their return to Paris, Muguette's family experienced the rising discrimination and persecution of Jews, culminating in the Vél d'Hiv roundup, which she and her mother miraculously escaped. Fearing for Muguette's safety, her mother sent her to the village of Bois Mouchet and then to Champlost, where the family lived safely until the end of the war. Muguette and her family immigrated to Montreal in November 1947.

You are going to read Muguette's memoir called *Where Courage Lives*.

Muguette's story is complicated and contains lots of historical information. Below are some important places and dates to know.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

Muguette's family lived in France, a country in Western Europe that was occupied by the German army in June 1940. The Germans occupied the northern part of France, called the Occupied Zone, and put in place many anti-Jewish policies. The southern part of France, called the Free Zone, was run by a new French government called Vichy that went along with German orders, and even created its own anti-Jewish policies that applied to the whole country. French police helped arrest Jews to deport to Nazi camps where most were killed, starting in 1942. For example, on July 16-17, 1942, the French police arrested nearly 13,000 Jewish men, women and children during the Vél d'Hiv roundup. The roundup took its name from the Vélodrome d'Hiver sports stadium, where thousands of arrested Jews, including Muguette's aunt, were held for days in terrible conditions. Due to the increasing risk of capture by the French police or the German occupiers, many Jews went into hiding by using false papers and pretending to be Christian. Rescue organizations and individual French citizens took risks to help Jews hide. France was liberated by the Allies in the summer and fall of 1944. Approximately 77,000 Jews in France were killed during the Holocaust, including Muguette's aunt.

"But Maman also had to contend with me. I wanted to be baptized. Now that I think about it, I realize that it was mostly not to be different from all my friends."

— MUGUETTE MYERS

WHERE COURAGE LIVES

MUGUETTE MYERS