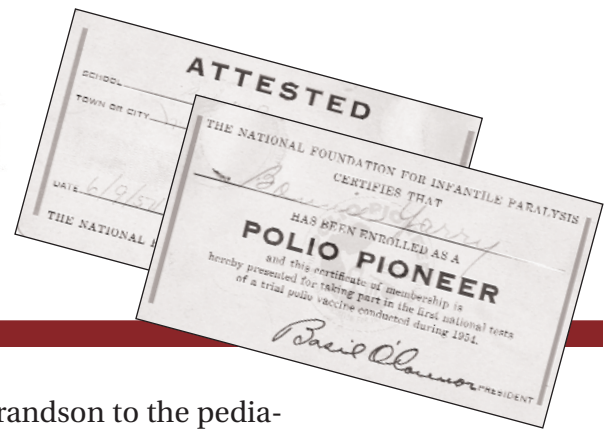


Polio Pioneer

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Recently, I accompanied my daughter and four-year-old grandson to the pediatrician's office. Justin was due for his polio inoculation. It rekindled memories more than a half-century old.

In 1954, I was a tiny peg in Dr. Salk's success story as one of the original Polio Pioneers. I still have the certificate and pin to prove it. We were New York City second graders—guinea pigs for the vaccine's trials, some receiving the live (attenuated) poliovirus and others receiving a placebo.

At monthly intervals, our class traipsed down to P.S. 148's makeshift infirmary, a kindergarten classroom filled with New York Health Department doctors and nurses prepared to inoculate us. Oh, the wait, the tension, the fear, as we lined up in the hallway creeping our way inside the classroom, parallel to the white, portable, hospital dividers.

Polio had already hit my family. Daddy had told me his recollection from when he was four years old, the same age my grandson is now.

"I remember my sister climbing on her butt up the five flights of stairs to our apartment on South Third Street in Williamsburg. She started by sitting backwards on the bottom step, then put both hands behind herself on the next step up, and lift herself up to that step with the strength of her arms. Then she went to the next step and the next until she arrived to the top of the landing. Once there, she scooted along on her arms and bottom until she rounded the corner and began the fifteen-step ordeal again.

"My sister's emotional strength was the opposite of her useless legs. I was proud of my sister."

Upon hearing the nurse call, "Next," I abandoned my reverie and stepped behind the curtain. With butterflies in my stomach, I stuck out my arm, never looked at the needle, waited for the prick and then the pain. I heard others cry, but I didn't. I thought of Aunt Mary and wanted her to be proud of me. ●

Resources for Preparing for Emergencies

The US Department of Homeland Security has divided the job of preparing for emergencies into three groups of tasks.

- **GET A KIT** of emergency supplies. When preparing for a possible emergency situation, it's best to think first about the basics of survival: food, clean air and warmth.
- **MAKE A PLAN** for what you will do in an emergency. Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so plan how you will contact one another and review what you will do in different situations.
- **BE INFORMED** about what might happen. Disaster preparedness accounts for man-made disasters as well as natural ones.

For more details and copies of check-off lists and forms, log onto www.ready.gov. For a print copy of "Preparing Makes Sense. Get Ready Now," call 800-237-3239 or 800-464-6161 TTY.

INFORMATION FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES: June Isaacson Kailes (jik@pacbell.net), Disability Policy Consultant, Los Angeles, CA, maintains an extensive up-to-date listing and links of "Disaster Resources for People with Disabilities and Emergency Managers" at www.jik.com/disaster.html.