



## OPATIJA RETREAT CROATIA

“THANK YOU. THANK YOU. THANK YOU. I CANNOT SAY ANY MORE THAN THANK YOU,” LEA KRIESBACHER QUIETLY AND EARNESTLY SAYS. She rushes on, “If I have one word, it is a dream that for the past four years has come true.”

Lea is one of about 70 survivors who attend the Winter Retreat in Opatija organized by the Holocaust Survivors of Croatia and funded by the Claims Conference.

Like most participants, she spends half of the year looking forward to the trip and the other half remembering and smiling, flipping through the photos.

On the Adriatic Sea, Opatija is renowned for its healing air. But it is not for the air alone that these survivors come. They come for the camaraderie, and an itinerary full of lectures, sightseeing, long walks on the coast, invigorating exercise, and shared meals.

Lea was in the Budapest Ghetto and the Auschwitz transport, as were many of Croatia’s survivors. “But I don’t want to tell you about that. We must look forward and not backwards. I need to tell you what a healing process this trip is for survivors,” she says. Jelica, a toddler when she was deported, concurs. “It was perfect,” Jelica states.

“Good for my health,  
and good for my soul.”