

HFBA MISSION STATEMENT

THE HEBREW FREE BURIAL ASSOCIATION devotes its resources to performing *chesed shel emet* (the ultimate act of loving kindness). It is the only agency in the New York metropolitan area dedicated to assuring that every Jew, regardless of financial means or religious affiliation, receives a dignified, traditional Jewish funeral and burial.

אגודת אחים חסד של אמת
The Hebrew
Free Burial
ASSOCIATION

Chesed

VOLUME 14, NUMBER 3 • PESACH 2008 / NISAN 5768

THE HEBREW FREE BURIAL ASSOCIATION was formed in 1888 on Manhattan's Lower East Side by a group of philanthropic and community-minded Jews who were committed to burying their indigent dead according to Jewish tradition, rather than having them buried in a mass grave in Potter's Field. Since its inception HFBA has interred nearly 60,000 Jews in its two cemeteries. HFBA is also committed to retrieving the identities of those interred and is attempting to provide a gravestone for each unmarked grave.

For more information about how you can help please see page 8.

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UJA Federation
of New York



In the course of its 120 years of existence, since its modest beginning on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, the Hebrew Free Burial Association has buried over 60,000 Jews. Originally incorporated as *Chebra Agudath Achim Chesed Shel Emeth* (The Society of the Brotherhood of True Charity), HFBA has met the challenge of ensuring that every Jew is accorded the full dignity of a Jewish funeral and burial, regardless of who they were or in what circumstances they were living.

The many clients of HFBA are reflective of the successive groups of Jews living and dying in New York City. Our sad litany includes mothers and babies who contributed to the high maternal and infant mortality rates of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, children who died from diseases now curable with antibiotics, those whose living and working conditions created ideal circumstances for occupational hazards and the easy spread of disease, "shell-shocked" veterans unable to reintegrate into society, victims of accident and catastrophe, and refugees and immigrants who were unable to live the "American dream." Their earthly remains rest in HFBA's cemeteries, Silver Lake and Mount Richmond.

The largest such organization outside Israel, HFBA has buried 250-500 Jews each year. Certainly we hope that someday our services will be obsolete and all people will attain a good standard of living and a dignified end. However, until that time arrives, HFBA will continue its unique and valuable mission. For this, we thank you, our valuable supporters.

For more information about the Hebrew Free Burial Association, please visit our website, www.hebrewfreeburial.org.

HFBA HELPS



In order to obtain authorization for burial, the dedicated staff of HFBA spends many hours doing research to obtain various documents, releases and funds. They communicate and work with private and governmental agencies as well as with relatives who may have very different agendas and opinions about the disposal of the remains of family members. Our services include intake, obtaining permission for burial and completing complicated paperwork, as well as raising funds for the transportation, ritual cleansing and burial of our clients. Case histories cited below give a sense of the many different scenarios we confront on a regular basis.

Artie and Ben D., mentally disabled, morbidly obese twins, lived with their mother and another disabled brother, Mort. Artie died two years ago and was buried by HFBA. This past summer, Ben had fallen, hit his head and died. His mother had collapsed in shock and was taken to the hospital. Given that Mrs. D. remained in critical condition, HFBA could not get permission from her to bury her son. We succeeded in finding Mrs. D's brother on the West coast who agreed to authorize his nephew's burial. A month later, Mrs. D. succumbed to illness and was buried near her sons.

Upon Yuri Z.'s death at the age of 58, his friends located his address book and called HFBA with contact information for his relatives. It took HFBA three weeks to determine whether Yuri was Jewish and eligible for our services as well as to locate a next-of-kin. A sister in Germany wanted him buried in the FSU and a non-Jewish daughter in Moscow wanted him cremated and the ashes sent to Russia. However, since no one had the financial ability to have these wishes carried out, the women allowed a cousin in San Francisco to authorize burial by HFBA.

Dianna W. died in her apartment and was not found until the body had already badly decomposed. Because of the neighborhood and

building in which she lived, it was assumed that she was not Jewish. However, Fran K., an employee of the building in which Dianna died, knew that she had no relatives or friends but was sure that Dianna was, in fact, Jewish. Fran arranged for Dianna to be buried by HFBA, for *kaddish* to be said, and for a monument to be erected on her grave.

Brad R., a man who had developmental disabilities and had worked as a messenger, died. He was buried by HFBA next to his wife in a grave he had previously reserved "pre-need". He had also arranged a pre-need burial and grave for a profoundly retarded daughter, currently living in a residential facility, who will one day be laid to rest near her parents.

Steven M. was a resident of New Jersey but died in a hospice in the Bronx. A security guard at the hospice alerted HFBA that the body had been taken to a morgue in that borough. Since New York and New Jersey follow different protocols, it took HFBA some time to secure a release from the Bergen County, New Jersey Surrogate. By that time the unclaimed body had been transferred to a local medical school for anatomical study. Fortunately, HFBA was able to intercede in time to prevent the body's desecration. Steven was buried by HFBA.

SERVING THE RUSSIAN COMMUNITY

Over the last decade, approximately 40% of HFBA's clients have been immigrants from the Former Soviet Union. Experience has shown that although their Jewish identity may have been denied or hidden in the FSU, they still wanted to be buried as Jews. HFBA's embrace of the Russian community extends, not only to our funeral services, but to ensuring that this community has easy access to HFBA documents, forms, website and newsletter, all of which are available in Russian translation.

HELPING HFBA HELP

FUNDS:

Your financial donations as outlined and described on the last page of the *Chesed* allow HFBA to continue its work.

VOLUNTEER:

Time is also a valuable contribution.

We are very grateful to the many school, synagogue, youth and family groups who give of themselves and of their valuable time by participating in HFBA's Cemetery Clean-Up Project.

School volunteers:

This past fall the Rosenbaum Yeshiva of North Jersey and the Abraham Joshua Heschel High School of Manhattan sent students to help out at Silver Lake Cemetery. Heschel's senior class returned to work again in March as did Ma'aynot Yeshiva High School for Girls. In addition, other school groups have already made plans to come in the spring.

Individual and group "clean-up" volunteers:

We encourage you to call our office to volunteer your time as an individual or as part of a group to help clean, clear and maintain our Silver Lake Cemetery in Staten Island.



ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL HIGH SCHOOL OF MANHATTAN



ROSENBAUM YESHIVA OF NORTH JERSEY



MA'AYNOT YESHIVA HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

ANNUAL CHESED DAY

SUNDAY, MAY 4, 10 A.M.

*Call us to let us know you are coming
as an individual or as part of a group to
help clean, clear and maintain our
Silver Lake Cemetery in Staten Island.*

*Weather permitting • Directions available on our website
www.hebrewfreeburial.org*

**For more information call Amy Koplow or
Andrew Parver at 212-239-1662.**

THE HFBA STAFF – WHO WE ARE

AMY KOPLOW

Executive Director

HFBA's Executive Director Amy Koplow oversees and manages the many facets of the HFBA enterprise. As HFBA's spokesperson, she communicates with city agencies, clients, donor organizations, the HFBA Board of Directors, as well as the general public. She is responsible for fundraising and supervising the maintenance of the HFBA infrastructure which, over the last three years has included a project to restore and rebuild a retaining wall in one of HFBA's cemeteries. All aspects of the work done by HFBA pass her desk. Amy notes that "HFBA is a much more complex organization than most people realize. Not only do we arrange funerals and burials, we also perform social services and act as advocates for the most vulnerable of New York City's Jewish population."

Amy is originally from the Boston area and graduated from Brandeis University. She has been at the helm of HFBA since 2000. Amy lives in Riverdale and has two daughters.



coordinating all funeral arrangements for HFBA. A self-described "detail- oriented" person, Rhonda is involved from the first phone call to HFBA to the last moment of burial. She handles the intake from the referring agency or individual, tracks down all relevant information, acquires whatever funds are available to help defray the costs, and makes all arrangements having to do with the funeral. All contacts are recorded in great detail for future inquiries and for the HFBA archives.

Rhonda does her work with a diplomat's finesse and a strong commitment to *chesed*. She lives with her husband of forty years, Seymour and together they have three children and six grandchildren.

HELEN VOLSHONOK

Associate Funeral Coordinator

Helen generally assists Rhonda with funeral arrangements and helps our Russian-speaking clients when they have suffered a loss.



RABBI ELCHONON ZOHN

Rabbinic Advisor

Rabbi Zohn, the director of the Vaad Harabonim of Queens Chevra Kadisha and founder and director of the Association of Chevros Kadisha, is a renowned authority on Jewish burial and is HFBA's *halachic* authority. He lectures widely and is a consultant both locally and nationally on complex issues relating to unusual situations involving cases with medical examiners, and deaths due to disaster, crime, and disease.



IRINA NIDERMAN

Records Specialist

Irina, the most recent addition to our staff, deals with cemetery issues and outreach to the Russian community.



RABBI SHMUEL PLAFKER

Cemetery Chaplain

Rabbi Plafker, who has worked with HFBA for eighteen years, performs all HFBA funerals. He officiates at gravesites where at times he is the only one present. When there are mourners, Rabbi Plafker is a warm, comforting presence. He encourages friends and family members to talk about the deceased and creates an impromptu eulogy based on their reminiscences.



RHONDA STEIN

Funeral Coordinator and Office Manager

For fourteen years, Rhonda has used her extensive experience in business



AND WHAT WE DO

GREGORY SCHWARTZMAN *Cemetery Superintendent*

In Gregory's nearly 10 years as cemetery superintendent he has made major infrastructure improvements to Mount Richmond Cemetery. He works closely with Rabbi Plafker and assists as a translator for grieving Russian friends and family.



ANDREW PARVER *Director of Education and Outreach*

After working part-time at HFBA for two years while attending Yeshiva University, Andrew joined the HFBA staff full-time coordinating volunteer activities, speaking about our work at



schools and conferences and fostering relationships with social service agencies such as nursing homes and senior centers. Andrew brings enthusiasm and commitment to HFBA's mission and says, "There is nothing else like the feeling of helping those who have no one else to help them."

Andrew and his wife live in Teaneck with their young son, Akiva.

MARILYN SHAPIRO *Data Associate*

Marilyn, HFBA's data associate, manages our database and processes donations. She has been a hardworking and loyal employee of HFBA since 1995.

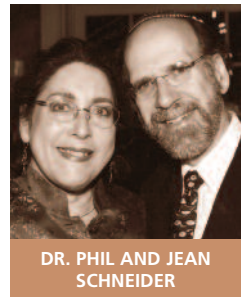


ANNUAL RIVERDALE BREAKFAST HONORS DR. PHIL AND JEAN SCHNEIDER

For years, Riverdale's Ortho-dox community has hosted an annual fundraising Breakfast for HFBA.

This year, for the first time, the entire Riverdale Jewish community, represented by congregants of Orthodox, Conservative and Reform synagogues, joined together on Sunday, March 16th for this important event. Chaired by Andrea Harris and held at the Riverdale Jewish Center, those at the breakfast honored Phil and Jean Schneider. In their quiet dedi-

cation to acts of *chesed*, the Schneiders have touched many lives across the denominational spectrum.



DR. PHIL AND JEAN
SCHNEIDER

It is fitting that all Jews, regardless of their affiliation, support HFBA's work as HFBA uniquely performs its services for any and all of New York City's Jews.

HFBA SPEAKERS BUREAU

HFBA speakers are available to speak about *chesed shel emet*, Jewish funerals and burials and New York City's Jewish poor. Please call Executive Director Amy Koplow to arrange a visit to your synagogue or other Jewish community group.

Please...

If you own any graves in the New York metropolitan area that you no longer anticipate using, please consider donating them to HFBA. A tax deduction would apply.

and Thank You...

*to the family and friends of **Adele Calo z"l** who continue her legacy of generosity to HFBA by donating in her memory.*

РУССКИЙ ДАЙДЖЕСТ

120 лет Еврейской Благотворительной Похоронной Ассоциации (HFBA)

1888-2008

HFBA

Еврейская Благотворительная Похоронная Ассоциация (HFBA) занимается организацией похорон малоимущих членов еврейской общины на протяжении 120 лет. С момента основания Ассоциация похоронила более 60,000 евреев.

Первоначально Ассоциация носила название Похоронное Братство Истинной Благотворительности (Chebra Agudath Achim Chesed Shel Emeth). Основной функцией Ассоциации являлась организация бесплатных похорон малоимущих евреев. HFBA - единственная благотворительная организация в районе Большого Нью-Йорка, которая заботится о том, чтобы каждый еврей независимо от материального положения и уровня религиозности, был похоронен достойно, в соответствии с еврейскими законами и традицией.

За эти годы Ассоциация похоронила несколько поколений евреев Нью-Йорка. Наши печальные страницы – это женщины-роженницы и грудные дети, ставшие составной частью высокого уровня смертности в 19-ом и в начале 20-го столетия. В этом трагическом списке: дети, умершие от болезней, которые сегодня лечатся антибиотиками; люди, жившие в антисанитарных условиях, где быстро распространялась инфекция и чья работа была связана с постоянным риском для жизни; инвалиды и ветераны войны, не сумевшие приспособиться к новым условиям; жертвы аварий и катастроф; беженцы и иммигранты, не вписавшиеся в общество «Американской мечты».

Сегодня HFBA является самой крупной еврейской благотворительной похоронной организацией за пределами Израиля. Ежегодно нам приходится хоронить от 250 до 500 человек. Конечно, мы надеемся, что придет время, когда люди перестанут нуждаться в наших услугах. Мы надеемся, что настанет время, когда каждый член общества достигнет высокого уровня жизни и достойных почестей в ее конце. Однако, пока такое время еще не наступило, HFBA ежедневно исполняет свою нелегкую, но необходимую миссию. Поэтому мы благодарим всех, кто оказывает нам поддержку и помощь.

Информацию о работе HFBA, Вы можете найти на сайте:
www.hebrewreburial.org

Ежедневная работа HFBA

Наши сотрудники проводят большую и кропотливую работу. Мы координируем весь процесс похорон, оформляем все необходимые документы, получаем разрешение на захоронение, а так же собираем материальные средства на транспортные, ритуальные и похоронные расходы. Много труда занимает поиск информации и документов. Нам приходится контактировать как с частными компаниями и официальными организациями, так и с родственниками покойного, которые зачастую имеют разные планы и мнения по поводу похорон члена их семьи. Несколько нижеизложенных примеров помогут Вам лучше понять проблемы, с которыми мы сталкиваемся в нашей ежедневной работе.

Арти и Бен Д., психически нездоровые близнецы, жили с матерью и братом. Арти умер два года назад и был похоронен HFBA. Прошлым летом Бен упал, ударился головой и скончался. Мать получила шок и попала в госпиталь. Так как она была в критическом состоянии, наши сотрудники не могли получить от нее разрешение на похороны, и тело сына долгое время находилось в морге. После продолжительного поиска HFBA разыскала в Сиэтле дядю Бена, который дал нам разрешение похоронить Бена рядом с Арти. Через месяц миссис Д. умерла и тоже была похоронена около ее сыновей.

Юрий З. скоропостижно скончался в возрасте 58 лет. Его друг нашел записную книжку покойного и сообщил HFBA информацию о родственниках, проживающих за границей. Три недели ушло на то, чтобы удостовериться, что Юрий был евреем и найти его родственников. Сестра требовала похоронить Юрия в России, а дочь - не еврейка хотела, что бы отца кремировали, а пепел послали в Россию. Однако, так как никто из них не располагал финансовой возможностью исполнить свои пожелания, женщины уполномочили кузена дать HFBA разрешение на похороны.

Работа в русской общине

За последние два десятилетия около 40 % похорон, которые организует HFBA составляют иммигранты из бывшего Советского Союза. В связи с антисемитизмом в бывшем Советском Союзе многие люди скрывали свою принадлежность к еврейской вере, однако, сегодня они хотят быть похоронены, как евреи. Деятельность HFBA заключается не только в похоронных услугах. Наша Ассоциация снабжает общину информацией, обеспечивает быстрый доступ к документам и формам HFBA, постоянно обновляет сайт и страницу новостей на русском языке.

HFBA 1888-2008

HFBA нуждается в Вашей помощи

Денежные фонды

Ваши пожертвования помогут HFBA продолжать свою работу.

Волонтеры

Волонтеры также вносят значительный вклад в наше дело. Мы благодарны школам, синагогам, молодым людям и семьям, которые вложили много труда и своего времени, помогая нам.

Школы – волонтеры

Прошлой зимой Розембаум Ешива из Северного Нью – Джерси и Абрахам Джошуа Хешел Школа из Манхэттена прислали своих учеников помогать нам убрать листья и прочий мусор на Силвер Лайк кладбище. Отряды добровольцев многих школ также запланировали принять участие в уборке территорий кладбищ этой весной.

Добровольцы

Дорогие друзья! Мы будем Вам очень признательны, если Вы окажете нам помощь по уборке и приведению в порядок Силвер Лайк кладбища в Стайтен Айланде. Пожалуйста, сообщите нам о своих намерениях заблаговременно по телефону: (212)239-1662.

Ежегодный День Милосердия

Мы приветствуем всех желающих принять участие **4 мая в День Милосердия** в весенней уборке Силвер Лейк кладбища в Стайтен Айланде.

Наш адрес Вы найдете на сайте: www.hebrewfreeburial.org
Вы можете также позвонить Эми Коплоу или Андрию Парвер по телефону: (212)239-1662

Сотрудники HFBA

Эми Коплоу, Директор

Многогранна работа директора HFBA. Эми Коплоу представляет нашу Ассоциацию, контактирует с официальными учреждениями, должностными лицами, клиентами, спонсорами, членами совета директоров HFBA, а также с общественностью и частными лицами. Она несет ответственность за сбор денежных средств, надлежащее исполнение поставленных задач, содержание в порядке инфраструктур HFBA, включая также недавнюю реставрацию и перестройку каменной ограды на одном из кладбищ. Все аспекты работ, осуществляемых HFBA, первоначально решаются за ее столом. Эми считает, что “многие люди не представляют насколько сложна работа HFBA. Мы занимаемся не только организацией похорон, мы также оказываем всевозможные социальные услуги и

выступаем в качестве адвокатов наиболее социально уязвимой части еврейского населения Большого Нью-Йорка”.

Эми родилась в Бостоне, закончила Brandies University. Эми возглавляет HFBA с 2000 года. Эми живет в Ривердале, у нее две дочери.

Ронда Стейн, Менеджер

В течение 14-ти лет опытная и знающая Ронда координирует похороны в HFBA. Как она сама себя называет, «обстоятельная и кропотливая», Ронда руководит всем процессом – от первого звонка с печальным известием до момента погребения. Она принимает сообщения от соответствующих агентств и частных лиц; собирает всю относящуюся к делу информацию; ухитряется раздобыть денежные средства на покрытие расходов; делает все необходимые распоряжения, которые требуются для проведения похорон. Вся информация поминутно и в деталях записана и зарегистрирована ею для последующих запросов и архива HFBA. Ронда дипломатична и милосердна. Почти 40 лет Ронда живет со своим мужем Сеймором на Ошенсайте в Лонг Айланде. У них трое детей и шесть внуков.

Помогают Ронде в работе энергичная и толковая координатор **Елена Вольшонок** и **Ирина Нидерман**. Они также принимают участие во всех проблемах HFBA, связанных с русской общиной.

Раввин Шмуел Плафкер

Более 20 лет раввин Плафкер проводит похороны в строгом соответствии с еврейскими законами и традицией. Иногда случается так, что он в одиночку провожает умершего в последний путь. Если на похороны приходят близкие, раввин Плафкер с большим сочувствием и теплотой поддерживает их в эту трудную минуту. Часто он просит родных и друзей поделиться воспоминаниями о покойном.

Несомненно, раввин Плафкер абсолютно прав, полагая что у Б-га были веские основания определить его на эту должность.

We are pleased to announce that the following names have been added to our

Leave Your Mark

Donor Plaque in the Weinberg Chapel
at Mt. Richmond Cemetery:



BETH SUSAN CHIGER
REBECCA AND CHARLIE FELDMAN
MARC G. FRIEDMAN
CHARLES AND RIKI GEDINSKY
DRS. FELIX LEO AND MIRIAM GLAUBACH
SHIRLEY FINKELMAN LOWENSTEIN
THOMAS H. MAUPIN
CEIL AND DAVID OLIVESTONE
BARBARA SERIL
THE SILVERWEED FOUNDATION

Please consider adding your name by sponsoring
four grave markers for unmarked graves for \$600.

CHESED SHEL EMET—HOW YOU CAN HELP

PLACE HFBA *tzedakah* boxes in a house of *shiva* or in your home, school or local kosher establishment.

CELEBRATE a *simcha* or commemorate a loss with HFBA cards. Cards cost \$10 and can include a personalized message.

ENROLL a Bar/Bat Mitzvah in our “Mitzvah Circle” by suggesting a gift to HFBA to your guests. The generous child who shares his/her *simcha* in this way receives a framed certificate.

DONATE your property, used vehicle or boat to HFBA.

ESTABLISH an HFBA Forever Gift Annuity or Charitable Trust Plan. In addition to the guaranteed income and tax benefits, these plans ensure that HFBA’s promise of a Jewish burial to future generations of indigent Jews will be fulfilled.

REMEMBER to include HFBA in your will with a bequest.

CONTRIBUTE to HFBA to ensure an annual *Yahrzeit* reminder for your lost loved ones.

“LEAVE YOUR MARK” by sponsoring a grave marker for an unmarked grave for a donation of

\$150 and you will receive a framed certificate. Sponsor four markers and a plaque with your name will be added to our roster at the Weinberg Chapel at Mt. Richmond Cemetery.

ARRANGE for *kaddish* to be said for the eleven month mourning period following a death of a relative or friend for a donation of \$360.

INSTITUTE a perpetual *Yahrzeit Kaddish* for your loved one for a donation of \$180.

SPONSOR perpetual grave care for an indigent’s grave for \$600.

VOLUNTEER with your friends, classmates, fellow group members, or family at our cemeteries as part of our Cemetery Clean-Up Project.

GIVE us your old *talleisim* for use as part of the dress for deceased men who HFBA will be called upon to bury.

USE your clerical skills in our midtown office as a volunteer.

GET INVOLVED as a professional with HFBA by donating your expertise and skills in an area that can help us.



Original pushka from 1909 at
HFBA’s Mount Richmond Cemetery

PLEASE HELP OUT TODAY BY SENDING A DONATION IN THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE.