

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 חסיד של אמנת
The Hebrew
Free Burial
ASSOCIATION

Chesed

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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 City Cemetery. Since its inception HFBA has interred over 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 6.

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UJA Federation
of New York

Silver Lake Cemetery Restoration Project

Silver Lake Cemetery, HFBA's first acquisition, opened in 1893 and was full by 1909. Over the many years since, environmental issues have challenged its conservation. Now, thanks to initial funding from a generous donor who wishes to remain anonymous, HFBA has embarked on an ambitious project to rehabilitate and restore these historic grounds.

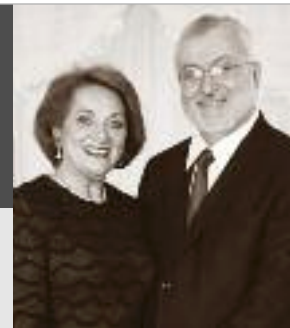


Geophysical engineers from Nova Geophysical Services marking grave rows in Silver Lake Cemetery.

HFBA was established in the 1880's, a time during which tens of thousands of Eastern European Jews immigrated to New York City. Many historical locations are part of the narrative of what became a thriving community, one which met the needs of its members, from cradle to grave. Silver Lake Cemetery is an important part of that history.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Julian and Carol Seewald and HFBA's "Leave Your Mark Campaign"



Julian and Carol Seewald were surprised to discover that they have been among the most generous donors to HFBA's "Leave Your Mark Campaign," our project to mark each and every grave in Mount Richmond Cemetery with the name and date of death of the deceased.

For the past several years, the Seewalds have made contributions for grave markers for almost 70 graves! This *chesed shel emet* (lovingkindness towards the deceased) comes naturally to the Seewalds, who both serve on the *chevra kadisha* of their synagogue, the Kingsway Jewish Center in Flatbush, Brooklyn. Julian's family has a long history of being involved with a *chevra*—members of previous generations of his family performed this mitzvah in Germany and it will continue with the involvement of Julian's youngest son.

The Seewalds are committed to continuing their effort toward making sure that no one in HFBA's cemetery lies in an unmarked grave. They believe that each and every person deserves the dignity of having their name designated above their final resting place.

"Their names must be recognized to accord their lives full dignity and as long as I can do it, I will support this effort," says Julian. His generosity has been further extended to including HFBA in his will. "Somehow," he remarked, "this mitzvah just does it for me. It feels right."

We are grateful to the Seewalds and wish them many healthy years together, enjoying their family of five married children and many grandchildren. They are models for their family and for the Jewish community. May G-d bless them and reward them for the mitzvah of *chesed shel emet* to which they are so dedicated. They are an inspiration to us all.

To participate in the HFBA "Leave Your Mark Campaign," please send a donation of \$150 per grave marker to the HFBA office in the envelope provided. You will receive a framed certificate acknowledging your generosity. Sponsor four markers and a plaque with your name will be added to the roster at the Weinberg Chapel at Mount Richmond Cemetery.

Silver Lake Cemetery Restoration Project CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

A team of archaeologists, engineers, geo-physicists, landscape architects and historians are using state of the art technology, as well as historical maps and HFBA records, to guide the reconditioning and renovation of this sacred ground. Among other challenges, problems caused by poor water drainage and tree growth will be addressed. Most important, in this six acre cemetery filled with 13,000 graves, is the identification of the many unmarked graves, at least half of which are of children. These children, victims of rampant disease and malnutrition, had parents too impoverished to afford a grave marker at the time of their deaths, leaving tiny graves unidentified. Ultimately our goal is to erect memorial markers with the names of all the decedents in the cemetery.

We hope you, our supporters, will be part of this exciting project to restore the dignity of the cemetery and the remains of those interred in its sacred grounds.

To discuss opportunities to underwrite major portions of this project, please contact Amy Koplow, HFBA Executive Director.

HFBA Helps

Juan R.* had a Jewish friend, Isaac M., who had held a steady job as a trucker for many years until he lost his position. His financial situation deteriorated so quickly that he had to move out of his apartment and began to live in his truck. He subsequently got sick, was in and out of several hospitals and ultimately died. Juan called HFBA and helped locate Isaac's sister who was in a nursing home and who authorized the burial. Juan generously donated \$500 towards his friend's interment at Mount Richmond Cemetery.



Harry S. had arranged his sister's burial with us several years ago but did not follow up with pre-need arrangements for himself. One day, a call came into the HFBA office from a detective who was investigating Harry's death. Despite the decomposition of the body, which normally creates a delay in the release of the remains for burial, because of our prior conversations with Harry, we were able to work with the Public Administrator for a quick release and Harry was given a prompt, dignified Jewish burial.

Martin W. worked for the city and died of cancer at the age of sixty-seven. We were called by an acquaintance who knew that Martin's mother was Jewish and had been buried in a Staten Island cemetery. It turned out that HFBA had buried Martin's mother and we knew that she had a son, David who was in a facility for the developmentally disabled. We located David and he was able to sign a release for his brother Martin's burial. Since David was unable to attend the funeral, our rabbi conducted the service speaking into his cell phone, with David on the other end.

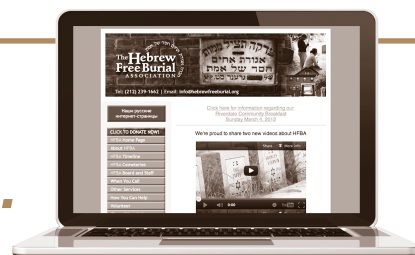
**Names have been changed to protect confidentiality*

Q&A

Q: *Is above-ground burial in a mausoleum permitted according to Jewish tradition?*

A: According to Jewish tradition, the only acceptable burial practice is the interment of remains directly in the earth, allowing for the decomposition of the body "from dust to dust." Above-ground burial is strictly prohibited.

Take a Look...



Our website, www.hebrewfreeburial.org, has lots of information about our organization. You can view three films about our work, sign up for our e-Newsletter, receive a copy of our DVD or become a fan on Facebook. **Take a look!**

We Thank Our Volunteers

We thank the following groups of volunteers for their efforts cleaning and clearing Silver Lake and Mount Richmond Cemeteries:

- The Frisch School
- Oheb Shalom Congregation Men's Club (S. Orange, NJ)
- Sinai Schools
- Stella K. Abraham Yeshiva High School (SKA)
- United States Military Academy at West Point
- Yavneh Academy
- Yeshiva Derech HaTorah
- April 22nd HFBA Community Chesed Day volunteers

We especially want to acknowledge the group of cadets from United States Military Academy at West Point.



Cadets removing a section of a fallen tree in Silver Lake Cemetery.

On March 25, a volunteer army of 11 inspiring cadets marched into Silver Lake Cemetery in formation, surveyed the situation, and organized to clear downed trees and other rubble. In four hours they accomplished an incredible amount, unfazed by the weight of the debris they hauled and loaded into the waiting dump truck. And the most remarkable part was that the cadets thanked us for giving them the opportunity to do the work!

To read a complete account of this story, please read Amy Koplow's blog post in the Huffington Post: <http://huff.to/LBv8eu>

To schedule a visit for your group, please call the HFBA office.



Dear HFBA

I want to take this opportunity to thank you, Rhonda and Rabbi Plafker.

The service today was so meaningful and brought such dignity to the burial of my dear cousin Monica.

...I was told that my cousin was failing and I knew that soon the decision that was imminent would fall to me. I did not know how I would be able to afford to bury her in the plot that was set aside for her next to her dear parents. She had no money, only the small amount left in her account at the nursing home where she had spent the last 6 years of her life unable to move from her bed. I was afraid that the only choice available to me would be to let the city bury her in potter's field.

This caused me many sleepless nights ... Then I found you!!!

I cannot express how much today meant to me. If it were possible that my aunt (Monica's mother) and my own dear mother could smile today...they would have, in spite of the sadness of losing her, the dignity with which she left this life and with which her remains were given up to the earth will stay with me forever.

The ease you afforded me in handling every detail was an absolute relief.

Monica now rests in the place where she belongs and it is all due to the incredible mitzvah that you all perform at the Hebrew Free Burial Association...

With my deepest thanks...

**Names have been changed to protect confidentiality*

РУССКИЙ ДАЙДЖЕСТ

Проект по восстановлению кладбища Сильвер Лейк

Еврейское Благотворительное Похоронное Бюро (HFBA) было основано в 1880-е годы, когда десятки тысяч восточноевропейских евреев иммигрировали в Нью-Йорк. Многие места в городе являются частью исторической повести об этой процветающей общине, заботившейся о своих членах от рождения до могилы. Кладбище Сильвер Лейк – важная часть этой истории.

Кладбище Сильвер Лейк – первое приобретение. Оно открылось в 1893 году и к 1909-му году было уже заполнено. С тех самых пор проблемы с окружающим ландшафтом препятствовали работам по содержанию кладбища. Сегодня же, благодаря щедрости дарителя, пожелавшего остаться неизвестным, HFBA начинает смелый проект по восстановлению и приведению в должный вид этого исторического участка земли.

В числе трудностей, которые придется преодолеть – плохой дренаж территории и медленный рост деревьев. Но главная задача – среди 13 тысяч могил, теснящихся на шести акрах земли, постараться идентифицировать множество неотмеченных могил, из которых около половины составляют могилы детей. Родители этих детей, умерших от эпидемий и плохого питания, были слишком бедны, чтобы оплатить хотя бы небольшой памятник на могиле. Наша цель – поставить памятники всем умершим, похороненным на этом кладбище.

HFBA помогает

- У Хуана Р* был друг, еврей по имени Исаак М., много лет работавший водителем грузовика. Потом Исаак потерял работу, его финансовая ситуация быстро ухудшилась, и он выехал из своей квартиры и стал жить в грузовике. Затем Исаак серьезно заболел, и после пребывания в нескольких больницах, умер. Хуан позвонил в HFBA, которое помогло отыскать сестру Исаака, проживавшую в доме для престарелых. Сестра дала разрешение на похороны. Хуан сделал щедрое пожертвование (500 долларов) на похороны своего друга Исаака на кладбище Маунт Ричмонд.
- Несколько лет назад Гарри С. договорился с нашим офисом о похоронах своей сестры, однако он не позаботился заранее об организации своих похорон. И вот в HFBA позвонил следователь, занимавшийся смертью Гарри. Благодаря нашим прошлым переговорам с Гарри, его останки были быстро, без обычных в таких случаях задержек, переданы нам общественным городским администратором. Гарри С. получил своевременные, достойные похороны по еврейскому обряду.

* имена изменены

В офис HFBA:

Я хочу поблагодарить вашу организацию, в особенности Ронду и Рабби Плафкера.

Сегодняшняя погребальная служба была полна глубокого смысла, это были достойные похороны моей двоюродной сестры Моника*.

...Когда я узнала, что моя сестра угасает, то поняла, что вскоре именно мне придется решать вопросы организации ее похорон. Я не видела возможности оплатить ее погребение на заранее отведенном участке рядом с ее родителями. У нее на счету почти не осталось денег. Последние шесть лет она провела в доме для престарелых, прикованная к постели. Я боялась, что придется дать ее похоронить на общегородском кладбище для бездомных. Но после многих бессонных ночей я узнала о вашей организации !

Не могу выразить, сколь много это для меня значило. Если бы моя тетя – мать Моника, и моя собственная мать были здесь, они бы, несмотря на скорбь потери, просветлели бы лицом, видя с какими торжественностью и достоинством провожали из жизни мою сестру. Память об этой церемонии останется со мной навсегда.

С глубочайшей благодарностью, ...(подпись)

* имена изменены

Вопросы и ответы

Вопрос: разрешает ли еврейская традиция погребение «над землей», в мавзолее или склепе?

Ответ: Согласно еврейским законам погребение в земле является единственным дозволенным способом захоронения, позволяющим телу разложиться, ибо сказано «из праха ты взят и возвратишься в прах». Погребение над землей строго запрещено.

Наша благодарность

Мы хотим поблагодарить следующие группы волонтеров за работу по расчистке кладбищ Сильвер Лейк и Маунт Ричмонд:

- Yavneh Academy (средняя школа «Явне»)
- Sinai Schools
- Stella K. Abraham Yeshiva High School
- The Frisch School (школа для старшеклассников)
- Oheb Shalom Congregation Men's Club, S. Orange, NJ
- United States Military Academy at West Point (Военная Академия Вест Пойнт)
- Yeshiva Derech HaTorah

Мы в особенности хотим поблагодарить группу кадетов из Военной Академии в Вест Пойнт. Двадцать пятого марта к кладбищу Сильвер Лейк строевым шагом подошла группа из 11 кадетов. Произведя быструю разведку, они принялись за расчистку территории от поваленных деревьев и другого мусора. Всего за 4 часа они оттащили и погрузили в грузовик невероятное количество тяжелых деревьев и обломков. И самое удивительное: закончив, кадеты поблагодарили нас за возможность проделать всю эту работу !

The “Three Weeks:” Rejecting *Sinaht Chinum*

The “three weeks” from the 17th day of the Hebrew month of Tammuz, to the 9th day of the month of Av (this year coinciding with the dates July 7th to the 29th), are the most mournful days in the Jewish calendar. They commemorate the destruction of the ancient city of Jerusalem and its Holy Temple by the Babylonians in 586 BCE and again, by the Romans in 70 CE. The Rabbis tell us that the Temple was destroyed because of *sinaht chinum*, unwarranted hatred among Jews. Unfortunately, to this day, dislike and disrespect persist in pockets of the Jewish community among

Jews who believe and practice differently from one another.

HFBA believes that everyone is created in the image of G-d and refuses to discriminate among Jews. All Jews, regardless of their affiliation, are given the same dignified burial in our cemetery. Our mission is to do our work with respect for our brothers and sisters, regardless of who they were and what they did during their lifetimes. In this way, we reject *sinaht chinum* and embrace our people with compassion and love.

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 \$15 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 and receive a generous tax deduction.

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 Mount 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.

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