

## 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.



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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 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 6.

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## THE EXTRAORDINARY IN THE ORDINARY

Articles and books about death and dying are proliferating as the subject loses its taboo.

The Jewish Week noted, in a review of Rochel U. Berman's new book, *Dignity Beyond Death: The Jewish Preparation for Burial*, that the model for modern burial societies was established in Prague in 1654. Berman describes the work of these societies (the *chevra kadisha*) in practical and spiritual terms, describing the ritual preparation for burial as well as the reactions of those who participate in this holy task. According to Berman, and reiterated in a New York Times article, the number of these groups is increasing around the United States among all the Jewish denominations. The privacy and discretion with which the *tahara* (the ritual washing and preparation) is performed, the modesty of the people involved, as well as people's anxieties about death, seem to work against educating the general public about this most special *mitzvah*. Berman wants to rectify this and to give voice to those who participate in this task and find the work to be spiritually fulfilling and emotionally satisfying.

Marilyn Johnson, in her book, *The Dead Beat: Lost Souls, Lucky Stiffs and the Perverse Pleasures of Obituaries*, describes the evolution of obituary writing. From straight reporting to taking a subjective approach, from writing about the famous and the celebrated, to including the "ordinary person" of interest to the general public, obituaries have changed over the years. The "dreary lists of dates, affiliations and survivors" was replaced by a folksy, biographical essay, often innovative and entertaining. "Across the U.S.," says Johnson, "a hybrid obituary, a cross between short stories and obits, celebrates the life of local characters, the extraordinary in the ordinary person."

### CHESED IS PUBLISHED BY

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# FLAMES

Since the dawn of man, fire has been a puzzle, defying our senses, acting as a power for creation and destruction, symbolizing the eternal and the ephemeral.

Jews welcome the *Shabbat* and the holidays by lighting candles and mark their conclusion with the *havdalah* taper. The candelabra stayed lit in the Temple and the oil in the Chanukah *menorah* burns to commemorate the historical events during Maccabean times. The *ner tamid* in the synagogue above the ark is the “eternal flame.” Yet a gust of wind can extinguish a fire.

Life is finite but, according to Jewish tradition, the soul is eternal. The book of *Proverbs*, says “*ner Hashem nishmat adam*,” the soul of man is the lamp of G-d. Each person’s soul is an expression of G-d’s infinite luminescence and presence yet man’s bodily existence is as transient as a candle’s flare. The flame of the *yahrzeit* candle reminds us of the fleeting, ephemeral nature of existence, the eternal nature of the soul and its reflection of G-d’s infinity.

As we light the Chanukah candles, let us remember, not only victory from oppression, but the celebration of light over darkness and the endurance of the soul.



## HFBA IN THE NEWS

In an October issue of *The Jewish Week*, the article “*Bayside Cemetery Mess Lands in Federal Court*” described a lawsuit that has recently been filed against a Jewish cemetery in Queens. The suit was filed against both Bayside Cemetery and Congregation Shaare Zedek, a Manhattan synagogue which the suit alleges is responsible for the poor condition of the cemetery as well as for financial irregularities. It purports to be brought on behalf of all persons, or their relatives, who have purchased perpetual or annual care contracts at the cemetery from 1970 to the present.

HFBA’s core mission is to care for and bury the bodies of indigent Jews with dignity and in accordance with Jewish tradition. However, HFBA is extremely concerned about the numerous other Jewish cemeteries in the tri-state region which are unkempt and may face abandonment in the near future. As part of

its broader mission to assure “dignity in death” for all Jews, HFBA is partnering with the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York and the UJA-Federation of New York in a new, important project, the Community Association for Jewish At-Risk Cemeteries (CAJAC). Modeled on similar community-wide organizations, CAJAC’s mission

## The Jewish Week

is to be a central repository for fundraising, endowment management and the general care of abandoned and at-risk Jewish cemeteries in New York. Gary Katz, first vice-president of HFBA, and a board member of CAJAC, is quoted in the Jewish Week article about the allocation of UJA-Federation of New York funds to hire an executive director for CAJAC and organize and implement a short term clean-up and long term plan for the maintenance of Bayside Cemetery.

We are proud that HFBA’s expertise in maintaining and restoring our own cemeteries for well over a hundred years is a unique and important contribution to the broader Jewish community.

UPON REQUEST, A COPY OF OUR ANNUAL REPORT MAY BE OBTAINED FROM OUR OFFICE, 224 W. 35TH STREET, ROOM 300, NEW YORK, NY 10001 OR FROM THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, CHARITIES BUREAU, 120 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, NY 10271.

# HFBA HELPS



**M**argery lived alone for many years after divorcing and losing custody of her son Robert when he was 17 years old. Since then, she had had no contact with her only child. For about three months prior to her death, she had been in and out of hospitals and when she finally died, her friend and health care proxy, Minna, contacted us. HFBA managed to locate the son who gave permission for his mother to be buried by HFBA. Despite the estrangement, he attended the funeral with his friends and even brought Minna with him to the cemetery. One can only hope that Robert achieved some measure of consolation, peace, and closure by being there.

**I**n 1998, Mr. Freed was buried by HFBA in Mt. Richmond Cemetery after dying in a nursing home where he shared a room with his wife of many years. Although Mrs. Freed was already quite ill and suffered from dementia, she survived nine more years. HFBA buried her next to her husband.

**M**r. Baum was Jewish although his wife was not. When he died, Mrs. Baum, lacking financial resources, was content to have him buried in a city cemetery, anonymously and with no Jewish funeral rites. A neighbor intervened and Mr. Baum was buried near a relative who had been previously buried by HFBA.

*\*Names have been changed to protect confidentiality.*

## *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 the contribution would be much appreciated.*

## *and Thank You...*

*...to the family and friends of **Ethel Konigsberg** ז"ל who continue her legacy of generosity to HFBA by donating in her memory...*

*...to **Herbert Gross** who has established an endowment fund, in memory of **Sol and Sarah Gross**, to annually fund a grave marker for the "Leave Your Mark Campaign."*

After many years, the **Jewish Community Center of Spring Valley** has closed its doors. They have taken care to transfer the responsibility for maintaining their cemetery, which dates to the 1920's, to HFBA to ensure its careful preservation in the future. Anyone with questions about that cemetery should contact HFBA.

## **DONATE TO HFBA USING YOUR AMERICAN EXPRESS CARD!**



**T**hrough AMEX's Giving Express Program, you can make a tax-deductible donation to HFBA while earning double AMEX Membership Reward Points from now through the end of the year. To donate, please visit [www.hebrewfreeburial.org](http://www.hebrewfreeburial.org).

## **HFBA DVD NOW AVAILABLE!**

A new video about HFBA is viewable on our website, [www.hebrewfreeburial.org](http://www.hebrewfreeburial.org). To request a free DVD, please contact us at: [info@hebrewfreeburial.org](mailto:info@hebrewfreeburial.org) or call **212-239-1662**.





# WE THANK OUR VOLUNTEERS...

**W**e are very grateful for the many acts of *chesed shel emet* performed by our volunteers at Silver Lake Cemetery.

New to the HFBA team are the 30 students who came to clean and clear debris from **HAFTR High School**, the 160 students who worked over two days from the **Solomon Schechter High School of Westchester** and the family members and individuals from **Congregation Beth Abraham** of Bergenfield, N.J.

Our friends at the **Stella K. Abraham High School for Girls**, the **Davis Renov Stahler Yeshiva High School**, the **North Shore Hebrew Academy High School** and the **Rambam Mesivta** returned again to donate their time and energy with dozens of their students.

*Thank you and yashar kochachem!*



HAFTR HIGH SCHOOL



SOLOMON SCHECHTER H.S.  
OF WESTCHESTER



CONGREGATION BETH ABRAHAM



STELLA K. ABRAHAM H.S. FOR GIRLS

RAMBAM MESIVTA



NORTH SHORE HEBREW  
ACADEMY H.S.

DAVIS RENOV STAHLER YESHIVA H.S.

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO VOLUNTEER IN OUR OFFICE OR ARE PART OF A GROUP WILLING TO WORK AT OUR CEMETERIES, PLEASE CALL HFBA DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND OUTREACH, ANDREW PARVER AT (212) 239-1662.**

## EXTRAORDINARY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Sometimes there is no one to commemorate the “extraordinary” in an individual’s life. Forgotten while alive, many are also forgotten in death. No one remembers the life story that will go to the grave. No one steps forward to claim a body, to make certain that it is tended by the community and buried.

The Hebrew Free Burial Association acts as the “community” for the forgotten. The members of our *chevra kadisha* administer to the deceased, our rabbi performs a dignified burial and our “Leave Your Mark” campaign raises money to mark each grave. We value each person, in life and in death, and recognize that even the most “ordinary” person is “extraordinary.”

# РУССКИЙ ДАЙДЖЕСТ

## ДОЛГ ЕВРЕЙСКОЙ ОБЩИНЫ ПЕРЕД УМЕРШИМИ

Тора учит нас, что человек создан по образу Вс-вышнего, и душа каждого из нас несёт в себе «искру Божью». Поэтому каждый человек заслуживает уважительного отношения, независимо от его жизненных достижений. Этот принцип также распространяется и на ушедших в мир иной. Проявлением заботы о душе умершего является почтительное отношение к его телу согласно еврейским религиозным обычаям. Испокон веков эту обязанность в еврейской общине исполняли специальные похоронные общества, называемые «Хевра Кадisha», что в переводе обозначает «Святое Братство». Работа в «Хевра Кадisha» считается проявлением истинного милосердия - *Chesed Shel Emet*, потому что исполняющий её не рассчитывает на ответную благодарность. Согласно недавним публикациям в газетах *New York Times* и *Jewish Week* синагоги, принадлежащие к самым разным направлениям иудаизма, стали формировать свои похоронные общества, состоящие из добровольцев - членов синагог. Интервью с добровольцами показывают, что они считают участие в работе «Хевра Кадisha» исключительной честью и духовным вознаграждением.

К сожалению, в конце своей жизни не все окружены заботливыми родными или друзьями, которые могут проследить за организацией похорон по еврейскому обычаю. Более того, высокая стоимость похоронных услуг доступна далеко не всем семьям. Благотворительное Похоронное Общество HFBA выступает в качестве «Хевра Кадisha» для тех членов еврейской общины, которые закончили свои дни в бедности и одиночестве, а также для тех, чьи семьи не имеют достаточных средств, чтобы обратиться в коммерческий похоронный дом. Следуя принципу, что каждый еврей заслуживает быть похороненным по традициям своей веры, а не в общей могиле на городском кладбище, уже более 100 лет мы помогаем организовывать еврейские похороны малоимущих. HFBA участвует во всех аспектах организации похорон, начиная с подготовки тела умершего и заканчивая сбором средств на памятники для людей, не имевших родственников. Работники нашей «Хевра Кадisha» совершают ритуальное омовение тела покойного (*tahara*), облачают его в погребальные одежды (*tahrihim*) и читают надлежащие молитвы. Похороны происходят под руководством нашего раввина, а памятники заказываются из пожертвований, собранных по инициативе «*Leave Your Mark*». Благодаря нашему вмешательству, эти не получившие должного внимания при жизни люди не будут забыты. Все, кто оказывает щедрую помощь нашей организации, участвует в исполнении одной из самых важных заповедей иудаизма - *Chesed Shel Emet*.

## ПОМОЩЬ HFBA: ИЗ НАШИХ АРХИВОВ

После развода и оформления опекунов на отца ребёнка Марджери прожила много лет не общаясь со своим сыном Робертом. О смерти Марджери нам сообщила её подруга Минна. Еврейское Благотворительное Общество HFBA сумело не только разыскать давно потерявшего контакт с матерью сына, но и получить от него, как от ближайшего родственника, необходимое разрешение на похороны. Роберт приехал на кладбище вместе с друзьями, позаботившись о том, чтобы и Минна смогла прийти на похороны подруги. Хотелось бы думать, что участие в похоронах матери послужило Роберту утешением и помогло, хоть в какой-то мере, принять их нелёгкие отношения.

## ВЕЧНОСТЬ ДУШИ

С тех пор как человек научился пользоваться огнём, пламя служит одновременно символом создания и разрушения, вечности и бренности земного существования. Традиция зажигания поминальной свечи на годовщину смерти напоминает нам о двойственной сущности человеческого бытия: о недолговечности пребывания человека на этой земле и о вечности его души. Недаром в Книге Притч говорится, что душа человека подобна лампе Г-сподней ("нер Хашем нишмат адам"), несущей Его нескончаемый свет. Так и зажигание праздничных свечей на Ханукку напоминает нам не только о победе над угнетателями и возобладанием света над силами тьмы, но и о бессмертии души человека.

## БЛАГОДАРНОСТЬ ДОБРОВОЛЬЦАМ ЗА ПОМОЩЬ

Мы очень признательны всем добровольцам за их участие в проведении работ по благоустройству наших кладбищ: Mt. Richmond and Silver Lake. Среди них - члены синагоги **Congregation Beth Abraham**, Bergenfield, NJ, и школьники средних и старших классов из **HAFTTR High School**, **Solomon Schechter High School of Westchester**, **Stella K. Abraham High School for Girls**, **Davis Renov Stahler Yeshiva High School**, **North Shore Hebrew Academy High School** and the **Rambam Mesivta**.

## РАСПИСАНИЕ РАБОТЫ КЛАДБИЩА MT. RICHMOND

Воскресенье – Четверг	с 9:00 утра до 3:45 дня
Пятница	с 9:00 утра до 1:00 дня <u>ровно</u>
Суббота	Закрывается на Шаббат



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:



LEO PLATZ

THOMAS H. MAUPIN

LAURENCE AND ELIZABETH ROSENBERG

ALICE WEISS

FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF ETHEL KONIGSBERG

DR. BETH M. SIEGEL

STEPHEN AND SHARON WIEDER

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.