

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 ארים חסד של אמר
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 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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UJA Federation
of New York

HFBA NOTES THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TRIANGLE SHIRTWAIST FIRE

The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire began in the late afternoon of Saturday, March 25, 1911.

This terrible tragedy resulted in the deaths of 146 people, mostly Jewish and Italian immigrant women, some as young as 15 years of age. The blocked exits, lack of sprinklers, and firefighters' ladders and hoses that were too short, conspired to give the workers the lethal choice of being burned alive or jumping to their deaths.

This watershed event in the labor history of the United States resulted in safer working conditions and the growth of unions to protect factory workers. It also inspired relief organizations to collaborate to help the survivors.

The Hebrew Free Burial Association buried 23 of the victims.

Michael Hirsch has made it his life's mission to research and restore the graves of the victims of the Fire. He has been in touch with the families of Kalman Donick, Louis Rosen, Beckie Koppelman and Dinah Greenberg all of whom rest at HFBA's Mount Richmond Cemetery. Mr. Hirsch also took it upon himself to raise funds to mark the graves of Fire victims Bertha Kulla and Pauline Horowitz and to replace the headstone of their colleague, Jacob Bernstein, which sustained damage over 100 years.

The indefatigable Mr. Hirsch tenaciously set about to locate the family of Sonia Wisotsky and informed them of Sonia's burial at



SONIA WISOTSKY,
TRIANGLE FIRE VICTIM

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

*HFBA is a grateful beneficiary of William Solomon's generosity.
To learn more about including HFBA in your will or estate plans, as well as the best way to recognize
your commitment now, please call HFBA Executive Director Amy Koplow at (212) 239-1662.*

In Memoriam: **William Solomon**

June 18, 1911-December 25, 2009

By Renée Septimus

Until recently, I did not know his back story. I never thought to ask. To me, my sister and brother, cousins and eventually our spouses and children, he was just “Uncle Willy.” Though he stood not much more than five feet tall, he was an enormous bundle of warmth, love, fun and humor bundled into a small package. He loved people and people loved him.

Willy Solomon was born in Poland, the youngest of five siblings who came together to the United States in 1914, before the World War I. His oldest sister, only sixteen at the time, managed the home while the younger four children went to school. Willy was particularly close to the uncle who helped the young family when they arrived in America and due to this influence, Willy’s commitment to observant Judaism remained strong throughout his life.

SHIRTWAIST FIRE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Mount Richmond. The family had no idea where Sonia rested, and Sonia’s grandniece Esther Mosak and her husband Joel drove in from Illinois to visit her resting place, certainly the first time this grave was visited in a century.

HFBA is proud of the part we played following the tragic events of the Fire. We are grateful to all our donors who continue to ensure that no one who leaves this world leaves it alone or unrecognized.

To learn more about the Fire visit the website of the Kheel Center for Labor-Management Documentation and Archives, Cornell University.

Like many G.I.’s in the 1940’s, Willy left behind a sweetheart when he entered the army, serving state-side as a sergeant. Upon his discharge in 1946, his engagement broken, he settled on the Upper West Side of Manhattan and resumed the partnership he had before the war with a brother-in-law in a business, manufacturing and selling paper, cartons and boxes.

After retiring, Willy traveled yearly to Israel for extended visits. Fiercely independent and realistic, he planned for his old age and as he entered his nineties, he moved to an assisted living facility in Tel Aviv. There he continued to make friends, beloved by the staff and residents alike.

I never saw Uncle Willy frowning or dejected, even though he must have had a full measure of life’s sorrows, including loneliness. To avoid being a burden, he went to extremes – checking himself into and out of the hospital, sitting *shiva* alone for his sister without notifying his friends. We should have known and we should have been there, of course. Our caring for him was as great as his was for us.

Uncle Willy was not related by “blood.” He was connected to us through long standing loving connections over four generations. We loved Uncle Willy because of who and what he was. And he loved us and life itself because of who and what he was.

The world is a little colder without his warmth and good cheer. But all of those he touched in his long lifetime, will remember, recall and smile.

HFBA HELPS

FROM THE MAILBAG



I am writing to tell you of the beautiful experience my family had when we came to Mount Richmond Cemetery to bury my youngest brother...My 88-year old mother was going to bury her youngest and we were concerned about her...

We were met by Rabbi Plafker who led us in a most sensitive and meaningful ritual...He allowed time for all to share feelings, and let my mother speak as much as she needed to. He explained clearly the meaning and importance of various elements of the funeral and left us all feeling blessed to be part of this ritual...

We are overwhelmed by the grace that has prompted your organization to not only fill this important need in the Jewish community, itself a mitzvah, but to provide so much beauty and comfort as you do so.

Thank you again for making this an experience my family will cherish.

*Sincerely,
Anne Corey*

A young person's death is particularly challenging. HFBA was recently called to bury a 35 year old Israeli woman who had become ill with breast cancer shortly after her marriage three years prior. The immigration attorney working on her case fraudulently skipped town with her money. Her distraught husband called HFBA following his wife's death after only 30 hours in hospice.

George M., an Argentinean immigrant, had first come to HFBA's attention when we buried his mother several years ago. Because of delays and distractions in governmental offices dealing with impoverished decedents, George's own case only came to our attention several months following his death. Because of his isolated existence, his body was not found until three months following his demise. Despite the difficulties, George received a dignified burial by HFBA.

Mickey E.'s death came to HFBA's attention from a chaplain at a Brooklyn hospice. Mickey had died from complications of HIV and his stepmother planned on cremating his remains. Because the stepmother was not a blood relative, HFBA was able to get permission from the Public Administrator to bury him and did so at no cost to his stepmother.

Zora K.'s mother was buried by HFBA in 1998. In 2009, following a house fire started by her drunken husband's cigarette, Zora suffered irreparable lung damage from smoke inhalation. She died destitute in a nursing home, and HFBA buried her near her mother.

**Names have been changed to protect confidentiality.*

Q&A

Q: ***Why are there different sections in a Jewish cemetery for various "societies?"***

A: Burial "societies" were made up of people with a common heritage, value system, ancestral birth place, profession, or other mutuality. They formed groups to purchase burial plots in which they would be put to rest in close proximity to each other.

WE THANK OUR VOLUNTEERS

Thank you to the following schools whose students have spent time cleaning and clearing the debris in Silver Lake Cemetery. May they have many opportunities to engage in chesed and mitzvot!

- The Abraham Joshua Heschel High School
- ASHAR
- Brooklyn Heights Group of Synagogue Youth (BHGSY)
- Davis Renov Stahler Yeshiva High School (DRS)
- The Frisch School
- Jewish Educational Center (RTMA)
- Ma'aynot Yeshiva High School for Girls
- North Shore Hebrew Academy High School
- Rosenbaum Yeshiva of North Jersey (YNJ)
- Solomon Schechter School of Queens (SSSQ)
- Solomon Schechter School of Westchester (12th Grade)
- Solomon Schechter School of Westchester (9th Grade)



THE FRISCH SCHOOL



JEWISH EDUCATIONAL CENTER (RTMA)



DAVIS RENOV STAHLER YESHIVA HIGH SCHOOL (DRS)



ASHAR



BROOKLYN HEIGHTS GROUP OF SYNAGOGUE YOUTH (BHGSY)

Community Events



Join HFBA in Staten Island on Sunday, December 19th, at the Young Israel of Staten Island, 835 Forest Hill Road, at 9:30 AM for our first community breakfast, chaired by Manny Saks and Abe Newman.



We are grateful to the Staten Island community for not only organizing *minyanim* (prayer quorums) at the local HFBA cemetery, Mount Richmond, but also for hosting this fundraising event.

For more information, please call the HFBA office.

The Annual HFBA Riverdale Breakfast took place on Sunday, November 14th at the Riverdale Jewish Center. The honorees were Rabbi Michael Stein of the Riverdale Jewish Center and Carole Oshinsky of the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale. The social hall was filled with over 150 supporters of HFBA and friends and family of the honorees. Many thanks to the Riverdale community for its continued generous support of HFBA.



L TO R. MINNA SEITELMAN, HFBA TREASURER; ANDREW FEINMAN, CO- PRESIDENT; RABBI MICHAEL STEIN AND CAROLE OSHINSKY, HONOREES; AMY KOPLOW, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR; DAN WERLIN, CO-PRESIDENT; ANDREA HARRIS, BREAKFAST CHAIR AND BOARD MEMBER.

РУССКИЙ ДАЙДЖЕСТ

HFBA к столетию пожара на швейной фабрике в здании «Треугольник»

Пожар на швейной фабрике в здании «Треугольник» (на Пятой Аvenues) начался в конце дня в субботу, 25 марта 1911 года. Эта страшная трагедия унесла 146 жизней, большей частью еврейских и итальянских девушек-иммигранток. Некоторым было всего пятнадцать лет. Запертые двери, недостаточное количество огнетушителей и слишком короткие для многоэтажных зданий лестницы и шланги пожарных – всё это привело к тому, что люди либо сгорели заживо, либо разбились насмерть, выпрыгнув из окон.

Это событие стало водоразделом в истории охраны труда в США. Оно привело к улучшению безопасности на рабочих местах и способствовало росту профсоюзов для защиты прав фабричных рабочих. Оно также побудило благотворительные организации скоординировать свою работу в помощи выжившим.

Отблеск пожара в наши дни

Уже в наше время Майкл Хирш выбрал делом своей жизни исследовать и восстановить могилы погибших в пожаре. Он регулярно переписывается с семьями Кальмана Доника, Луизы Розен, Бекки Коппельман и Дины Гринберг, которые покоятся на кладбище HFBA Маунт Ричмонд на Staten Island.

Г-н Хирш также взял на себя сбор пожертвований на установление именных табличек на могилах Берты Кулла и Полины Хоровиц, а также на замену надгробия на могиле Джейкоба Бернштейна, которое разрушилось за эти сто лет.

...Тогда, после пожара, Еврейское Благотворительное Похоронное Бюро (HFBA) организовало погребение двадцати трёх из числа погибших. С тех пор нашей организации было и есть чем гордиться. Мы хотим поблагодарить наших спонсоров, помощь которых позволяет нам делать так, чтобы для покинувших этот мир смерть не была ни одинокой, ни быстро забытой.

Вопросы и ответы

Вопрос: Почему на еврейских кладбищах отдают особые участки для различных «сообществ»?

Ответ: В похоронных «сообществах» состояли люди из одних и тех же мест, или люди одной профессии, у которых были общие жизненные ценности и культурное наследие. Эти сообщества приобретали участки на кладбищах, чтобы после смерти покоиться «среди своих».

Наша почта

Я пишу, чтобы поделиться впечатлениями всей нашей семьи от похорон моего младшего брата на кладбище Маунт Ричмонд. Мы очень переживали из-за моей 88-летней матери, которой выпало хоронить своего младшего ребёнка. Нас встретил г-н Плафкер, раввин HFBA, который провёл всю церемонию с большой деликатностью. Он отвёл время чтобы мы, особенно моя мать, могли высказать свои чувства. Р. Плафкер доходчиво объяснял различные аспекты погребального обряда, так что мы чувствовали особенное тепло от участия в церемонии похорон...

Мы глубоко тронуты тем, что ваша организация не только выполняет важную миссию в еврейской общине, но и делает это с такой мягкостью и величием. Благодаря вам, мы всегда с умилением будем помнить об этом грустном для нашей семьи событии. Искренне Ваша, Энн Кори

HFBA помогает

- * Смерть молодых всегда труднее принять. HFBA недавно похоронила 35-летнюю израильтянку, заболевшую раком груди вскоре после замужества три года назад. Её адвокат по иммиграционным делам скрылся из города, мошеннически прихватив деньги своей клиентки. Муж усопшей позвонил нам в полном отчаянии из клиники, где она скончалась.
- * HFBA узнала о смерти Микки Е* от капеллана одной из больниц Бруклина. Микки скончался от осложнений СПИДа, и жена его отца планировала кремировать останки Микки. Но поскольку мачеха не является кровным родственником, HFBA добилась разрешения от городского офиса общественного администратора на погребение Микки по еврейскому обряду. HFBA не потребовала платы у мачехи Микки.

** имена изменены*

Дела нашей общины

Приходите на Staten Island в воскресенье, 19-го декабря, в синагогу Young Israel of Staten Island, по адресу 835 Forest Hill Road, на наш первый общинный завтрак, проводимый для сбора средств.

Мы благодарим еврейскую общину Стэйтэн Айленда как за организацию этого события, так и за регулярную организацию миньяна на кладбище Маунт Ричмонд, на похоронах.

За дополнительной информацией звоните в офис HFBA.

Как вы можете помочь Еврейскому Благотворительному Похоронному Бюро

Есть множество способов поддержать работу HFBA в деле помощи малоимущим евреям и в поддержании в достойном состоянии кладбища, принадлежащего HFBA. Вы могли бы:

- * Включить HFBA в список ежегодных пожертвований благотворительным организациям
- * Пожертвовать деньги HFBA в честь или в память кого-то из близких
- * Пожертвовать в пользу HFBA собственность, автомобиль или лодку
- * Указать в Вашем завещании Hebrew Free Burial Association (HFBA) в качестве одного из наследников
- * Заплатить \$180 с тем, чтобы мы организовали чтение «бессрочного» кадиша в годовщину смерти Ваших близких

Пожалуйста, присылайте пожертвования во вложенном конверте

HOW YOU CAN HELP HFBA

There are many ways to help HFBA help the Jewish indigent and maintain the association's historic cemeteries with dignity.

Thelma Drier established a charitable gift annuity in memory of her husband Elmer in 2003. We were sad to learn of her death in October. Her memory is blessed.

Please Consider:

- Including HFBA in your end-of-year charitable contributions
- Giving to HFBA in honor, or in memory, of someone you care about
- Organizing a fundraising event in your community
- Donating your property, used vehicle or boat to HFBA
- Establishing an HFBA Forever Gift Annuity or Charitable Trust Plan
- Remembering HFBA in your will with a bequest
- Establishing a perpetual *yahrzeit kaddish* for your loved one for a \$180 donation
- Sponsoring perpetual grave care for an indigent's grave for \$600
- Sponsoring an edition of the *Chesed* or the monthly e-newsletter

Please help out today by sending a donation in the enclosed envelope or for more information, please call HFBA Executive Director Amy Koplow at (212) 239-1662.

MATCHING GIFTS PROGRAM

You can double, or even triple the value of your gift to HFBA if your company offers a Matching Gift Program.

Many thanks to the following companies whose matching gifts programs have contributed to HFBA since September:

- Bank of America
- Pfizer
- Merck
- Unum Group
- Mutual of America

Fall Chesed Day

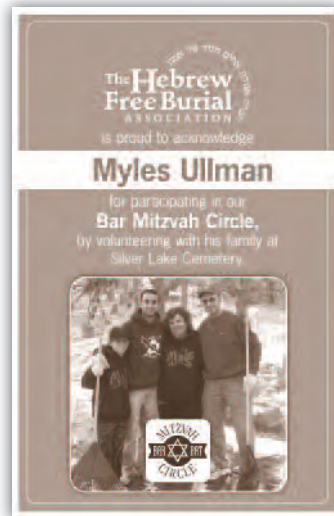
On Sunday, October 31, more than 25 volunteers from all over the tri-state area gathered at Silver Lake Cemetery for HFBA's Fall Community Chesed Day. Our volunteers demonstrated that Silver Lake Cemetery is the entire community's responsibility. We thank them, and hope you'll join us for our Spring Community Chesed Day. Stay tuned for more information!

MAZAL TOV!

A Bar or Bat Mitzvah is an important event in the lives of young Jews.

In addition to the traditional celebration of this rite of passage, many young people are choosing to commemorate this important milestone by participating in a "chesed project."

We salute and thank **Myles Ullman** for volunteering with his family and friends at Silver Lake Cemetery and **Shoshana Jeselsohn**, a student at Yeshivat Noam, for making a generous donation to HFBA as part of their transitions to Jewish adulthood.



Mazal tov v'tizku l'mitzvot!

May you have many more opportunities to do *mitzvot*!