

Chesed

אגודת חסד של אמת
The Hebrew
Free Burial
ASSOCIATION

A daughter's love inspires a donation to Silver Lake Cemetery

Leona Kern honors her immigrant father's devotion to Staten Island with a gift to HFBA

Leona Kern's father was twelve years old when he arrived at Ellis Island from Hungary. Like many ambitious Jewish immigrants from eastern Europe, Irving Klein looked up at Lower Manhattan's skyscrapers and vowed that one day he would make a mark on New York City's real estate landscape.

"My father believed he'd found the most beautiful piece of property anywhere when he set eyes on Silver Lake," Leona Kern told *Chesed*. "The neighborhood's high elevation gave him a spectacular view of Lower New York Bay, and that's why he wanted to erect his first garden apartment buildings there. My father was a builder."

Mrs. Kern could have no higher praise for the man who, along with three partners, built three six-story buildings in the neighborhood after World War II. She calls her father a visionary who anticipated the importance of middle-class housing to meet the needs of the postwar baby boom. "He saw an ideal future, and it was Silver Lake," she says.

The same visionary imagination belongs to the executive leadership of HFBA, Mrs. Kern says.



Leona Kern gets acquainted with HFBA's animal clean-up committee in 2015

"The present and future very soon become the past," says the Westchester County resident, who ran realty firm R. W. Kern, Inc. with her late husband. "That's where the need to keep Silver Lake Cemetery 'alive' comes in."

Mrs. Kern emphasizes HFBA's commitment to marking the graves of children, most of whom had once lived — and died — in tenements that were "nothing but a junk-heap of rotten lumber and brick," as novelist Michael Gold wrote in *Jews Without Money*.

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HFBA launches naming campaign at Silver Lake Cemetery to honor New Yorkers whose lives were cut short



Fourteen memorial panels will "say the name" of thousands of women, men, infants and children

Hebrew Free Burial Association has initiated a campaign to honor the lives of Celia Sultovia, Moses Weinstein, and Dora Kaiser.

These names belong to three children of the Lower East Side who were among the first to be buried at HFBA's Silver Lake Cemetery. Like thousands of their late 19th- and early 20th-century neighbors, Celia, Moses, and Dora died young from malnutrition, unsanitary living conditions, or disease.

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HFBA donor helps preserve Silver Lake Cemetery

"When you walk around Silver Lake Cemetery, you see this huge area where thousands of children are buried," Mrs. Kern says. "You can't help but be moved to action."

She continues, "As I look out at that vast sea of there's only one organization that gives Jews without means, family, or friends the traditional Jewish burial they deserve. What Hebrew Free Burial Association does is miraculous."

As somebody who carefully evaluates her many charitable commitments, Mrs. Kern believes HFBA is in a class of its own.

"You walk around Silver Lake Cemetery and you're transported to a time when few people lived past their sixties, and when great numbers of children died from diseases that are curable today with penicillin and anti-tubercular medications," she says. "You get a picture of a Jewish community that left the poverty of their Eastern European homes for the sweatshops and peddlers' carts of the Lower East Side."

Continued from front page

Preparing Silver Lake Cemetery for lasting change

Even while the "physical health of Jews was remarkably good in comparison to that of both non-Jewish immigrants and native-born Yankees,"* 13,600 Jews of the period ended up crowding into a cemetery intended for 4,000.

HFBA seeks to raise funds to underwrite a wall of remembrance so that no one is forgotten.

Collaborating with Kyle Zick Landscape Architecture, HFBA is moving forward with a wall that will "say the name" of every child, woman, and man buried at Silver Lake. The firm has designed a granite framework engraved with thirteen steel panels to honor the names recorded in HFBA's "bible," or set of meticulous handwritten burial records. A fourteenth panel will display a history of Silver Lake Cemetery and HFBA.

The granite framework — two pillars connected by a horizontal foundation — could not be erected until the cemetery had undergone work to eliminate the pooling of water, the removal of trees that had damaged gravesites, and the stabilization of the stone wall alongside Victory Boulevard. Funding from New York State, UJA-Federation of New York, foundations, and private individuals has significantly improved the cemetery, listed in 2017 on the National Register of Historic Places.

HFBA's memorial project includes the construction of a pedestrian plaza. The area was originally the site of a caretaker's cottage, destroyed in the 1980s by fire. Visitors to Silver Lake Cemetery will be able to sit on tree-shaded benches and reflect on the Jewish lives once cut short by illness and overwork.

"I've worked with HFBA over the years on the Silver Lake preservation project," says landscape architect Kyle Zick. "My team and I have never lost sight of HFBA's commitment to humanizing every person who made Silver Lake Cemetery their final resting place. We hope everything we do will touch visitors, descendants and tourists alike who come to pay homage to some of America's first Eastern European Jews." ■

Without the risks these immigrant Jews took, "where exactly would we be today?" she asks.

Touched by a "miraculous" organization (with goats)

Mrs. Kern fondly remembers a visit she made to Silver Lake Cemetery in 2015 when she encountered a small herd of goats, brought in as an environmentally safe way to clear the property of poison ivy and other unwanted growth.

A proud donor to Silver Lake Cemetery's preservation project, Mrs. Kern looks forward to seeing the memorial panels that one day will reflect HFBA's conviction to publicly memorialize the name of every person buried in the cemetery.

"My father would be gratified knowing that down the road from his first apartment buildings overlooking Silver Lake is a tribute to the people who may once have been his friends and neighbors," she says.

To join Leona Kern in her love of HFBA and Silver Lake Cemetery, please visit www.hebrewfreeburial.org/silverlakedonations. ■

BEFORE



AFTER



Please join us in giving names to the people time has forgotten. Underwriting opportunities include:

One complete memorial panel (1,080 names): \$36,000, payable over three years

One column on a panel (75 names): \$3,600

Please donate via the QR code or contact Amy Koplou at akoplou@hebrewfreeburial.org.



SCAN TO DONATE

*"Health Conditions of Immigrant Jews on the Lower East Side of New York: 1880-1914" by Deborah Dwork.

HFBA HELPS

Jared T., 68 and mentally disabled, died earlier this year of respiratory failure. A social worker informed HFBA about Jared nearly a month after his death at a Long Island state hospital where he'd lived for the last 20 years of his life. While he had no family or friends, Jared did have a funeral arrangement with a non-Jewish funeral home. The funds available, however, were not enough to cover funeral expenses. HFBA was able to access those funds and bury him within the next 24 hours at Mount Richmond Cemetery. The only mourners were HFBA's volunteer *minyan*.

Walter Z., 75 and a German-Jewish immigrant, died of cardiac arrest at a Bronx nursing home. A young child when he arrived in New York with his parents, Walter first attended a Jewish elementary school, graduated from high school, and completed City College. His mother died before he graduated from high school; shortly thereafter, his father remarried and cut off contact with him. Walter spent many years homeless, but did have a guardian, who notified HFBA of his death. Walter's nursing home record listed a friend, but we weren't able to locate her. We buried Walter two days after his death. A cemetery visitor completed HFBA's volunteer *minyan* so that *kaddish* could be recited.

Gary K., 57, died on a Manhattan street of complications from alcoholism. His last known address was on the Bowery, but he was homeless at the time of his death. The Medical Examiner's office attempted to find Gary's next of kin. After four months, when the ME had exhausted all leads, Gary's name appeared on NaMus, the national database registry for unclaimed dead. (Gary was positively identified by his fingerprints.) Gary's father and brother were no longer living, but we located his stepmother, his only surviving family member. She told us that Gary left home at 17 when his parents separated. Gary's mother survived the 2001 attack on the Twin Towers, but died several years later from a 9/11-related illness. Four months after Gary's death, HFBA was able to give him a traditional Jewish funeral and burial. Only HFBA's volunteer *minyan* attended. ■



SCAN TO DONATE

WE ARE SO GRATEFUL FOR YOUR ONGOING HELP!

You can support HFBA's mission by making a donation at www.hebrewfreeburial.org/donate, or use our QR code.

A solemn day to visit cemeteries

On Tisha B'Av, we remember the destruction of the Jewish temple and the loss of loved ones

Tisha B'Av, or the ninth of Av, is a solemn day of fasting when Jews around the world remember the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, first in 586 B.C.E. and then in 70 C.E.

Jewish tradition has it that the redemption of the Jewish people — *ge'ula* in Hebrew — will come about on Tisha B'Av when all Jews recognize their covenantal obligation to the Almighty. In the words of the prophet Zechariah, the day of mourning will then become a day of "joy and gladness — a happy festival for the House of Judah."

Gittin 16a in the Talmud notes that it is customary to visit a cemetery on fast days. HFBA's Mount Richmond Cemetery will be open to visitors on Tisha B'Av, Sunday, August 3, from 9:00 AM to 3:45 PM. ■



Rome's "Arch of Titus" was commissioned by Emperor Domitian in 81 CE — 11 years after the destruction of the Jewish temple and after the death of his brother Titus. The construction likely involved a mix of artisans, slaves, and prisoners of war, including Jews from the sacking of Jerusalem.

Дочь жертвует на кладбище Сильвер Лейк в память об отце

Отец Леоны Керн прибыл на Эллис Айленд из Венгрии в двенадцатилетнем возрасте. Глазая на небоскрёбы Нижнего Манхэттена, Ирвинг Кляйн, как и многие нацеленные на успех еврейские иммигранты из Восточной Европы, пообещал себе, что когда-нибудь и он оставит свой след в зданиях Нью-Йорка.

Вскоре после Второй мировой войны он это обещание выполнил. Ему особенно полюбился район Сильвер Лейк на Стэйтен Айленде, и вместе с тремя партнёрами по бизнесу он построил здесь три шестизэтажных многоквартирных дома, утопающих в зелени.

«Мой отец был убеждён, что нашёл самое красивое место, когда увидел район Сильвер Лейк», рассказала нашей газете «Хесед» дочь Ирвинга, Леона Керн. Госпожа Керн считает, что её отец точно предвидел, насколько важно строить жильё для удовлетворения запросов нарождающегося среднего класса – «бэби бумеров». По словам госпожи Керн, исполнительное руководство HFBA тоже обладает точным видением будущего.

«HFBA – единственная организация, предоставляющая малообеспеченным евреям, у которых нет ни семьи, ни друзей, традиционное погребение, соблюдающее достоинство усопших», продолжает госпожа Керн. «Еврейская Благотворительная Похоронная Ассоциация творит настоящее чудо».

Госпожа Керн гордится тем, что является одним из постоянных доноров проекта по сохранению кладбища Сильвер Лейк. Она с нетерпением ожидает увидеть новый дизайн мемориальных панелей – воплощение желания HFBA публично увековечить имя каждого человека, похороненного на кладбище.

«Мой отец был бы доволен, зная, что буквально рядом с первыми построенными им жилыми зданиями с видом на Сильвер Лейк увековечена наша дань уважения к тем, кто мог когда-то быть его друзьями и соседями», – говорит она.

HFBA запускает кампанию на кладбище Сильвер Лейк, чтобы увековечить имена нью-йоркцев, чьи жизни рано оборвались

Еврейская Благотворительная Похоронная Ассоциация начала кампанию в честь Селии Сультовики, Моисея Вайнштейна и Эли Сахновица. Как и тысячи их соседей и современников конца XIX – начала XX века на Нижнем Ист-Сайде, Селия, Моисей и Эли умерли молодыми от недоедания, антисанитарии или болезней. Эти трое детей были среди 13,600 евреев, которых похоронили на кладбище, рассчитанном всего на 4,000 человек.

HFBA планирует собрать средства на «стену памяти», чтобы не были забыты имена тысяч еврейских женщин, мужчин и детей той эпохи.

Фирма Кайл Зик, занимающаяся ландшафтной архитектурой, вместе с HFBA проработала дизайн пешеходной аллеи, идущей вдоль тринадцати стальных

панелей в рамке из гранита. На этих панелях будут имена всех, старательно записанных в погребальных книгах HFBA. Четырнадцатая панель представит краткую историю кладбища Сильвер Лейк, а также историю евреев Нижнего Ист-Сайда, в основном иммигрантов, похороненных здесь.

Пожалуйста, помогите нам отметить имена всех тех, кто был забыт.

Варианты пожертвований:

Полная мемориальная панель (1,080 имён): \$36,000 с выплатой в 3 года

Одна колонка на панели (75 имён): \$3,600

Оформите пожалуйста пожертвование через QR-код или связавшись с Эми Коплоу по электронной почте: akoplow@hebrewfreeburial.org.

HFBA помогает

Джаред Т., страдавший от психического заболевания, скончался в 68 лет в начале этого года от лёгочной недостаточности. Он умер в одной из государственных больниц Лонг-Айленда, где он пробыл последние 20 лет своей жизни. Соцработник сообщил HFBA о смерти Джареда только месяц спустя. Хотя у него не было ни семьи, ни друзей, у Джареда была предварительная договоренность о погребении с нееврейским похоронным бюро. Однако имеющихся средств было недостаточно для покрытия расходов на похороны. HFBA смогла получить доступ к этим средствам и похоронить Джареда буквально в следующие 24 часа на нашем кладбище Маунт-Ричмонд. В последний путь Джареда провожал только миньян добровольцев HFBA.

Уолтер З., еврейский иммигрант из Германии, умер в 75 лет от остановки сердца в доме престарелых в Бронксе. Уолтер приехал в Нью-Йорк с родителями ещё будучи маленьким ребенком. Сначала он ходил в еврейскую начальную школу, затем окончил среднюю школу и Сити-колледж. Мать Уолтера умерла, когда он был ещё школьником, а отец вскоре снова женился и прекратил общение с сыном. Уолтер много лет был бездомным. У него был опекун, который и уведомил HFBA о смерти Уолтера. В записях дома престарелых была указана подруга Уолтера, но мы не смогли ее найти. HFBA провела похороны Уолтера через два дня после его смерти. Посетитель кладбища помог составить миньян добровольцев HFBA, так что по Уолтеру смогли прочитать кадиш.

Завтрак в еврейской общине Ривердейла с вручением ежегодных наград

В этом году завтрак еврейской общины Ривердейла в северном Бронксе радовал как разнообразием отменных блюд, так и длинным списком жителей Ривердейла, посвятившим в прошедшем году свои силы и время местным синагогам, школам и общинным центрам. На торжественном мероприятии 4 мая были вручены награды Артуру и Элейн Блум; Хелен Крим; Деборе Лупкин-Гросс и Фреду Шугармену. Наши поздравления всем награжденным!

HFBA welcomes an impressive board member

Alan Samuels: In his own words



Honestly, I didn't know about HFBA until I got involved as a lay leader with UJA-Federation of New York — one of the organization's funders. I was immediately drawn into HFBA's behind-the-scenes mission of *chesed shel emet*. I was equally fascinated by the investigative work HFBA does to ascertain an individual's Jewish background. The focus isn't only

on the poor. It's also on the unclaimed and unnamed. Our work is so poignant.

I'm very data-focused at the climate risk analytics start-up where I work. Our goal is to analyze and predict the impact that climate and weather will have on the earth's surface over the next decades. It's not too much of a stretch to say that HFBA's cemeteries are affected by potentially catastrophic events such as hurricanes, rain, and flooding. As a board member, I'm in a position to help HFBA address these episodes if and when they arrive.

More important, I've worked with many organizations at different stages of their development. I'm familiar with the evolution of technologies and software, and I can help HFBA update its donor database and track its daily operations. I've

already begun helping transition the board to new data systems.

It may sound odd to hear that I view this organization as an interesting challenge.

Real estate. HFBA owns Mount Richmond Cemetery and Silver Lake Cemetery. Preserving them in perpetuity is meaningful for religious, community, and educational reasons.

Endowment. Like all not-for-profits, HFBA needs a sustainable, long-term source of capital independent of its fundraising efforts. A strong endowment ensures a reliable income stream, even during periods of economic uncertainty, such as HFBA experienced during COVID-19.

Marketing and fundraising. Every small not-for-profit faces spending caps and donor retention. HFBA, whose mission has been unchanged since 1888, must continually find effective ways to reach out to nursing homes, community groups, and government agencies. And educating unaffiliated Jews about the sanctity of a traditional burial is even more urgent today than it was 137 years ago.

Legacy and future goals. One day HFBA will need a third cemetery — and determining where it will be is something to plan for today.

For somebody like me, who enjoys thinking about how different systems interact with each other, working with the HFBA board of directors is a great fit. This small organization is confronting some big challenges. There's no shortage of work for us to do. ■

Community breakfast serves up annual award recipients

Longtime community commitment was on display in HFBA's selection of honorees

HFBA's annual Riverdale community breakfast, held May 4th at the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale, featured a roll call of Riverdalians who have strengthened the greater community through their volunteer commitments:

Arthur and Elaine Bloom, Community Service Award. A preschool director for 25 years, Elaine now sits on the executive board of the Jewish Early Childhood Association. Artie, a retired CPA, has served on the Riverdale Y's board of directors for 20+ years. The couple has been active in their shul since 1997.

Helen Krim, Tikun Olam Award. A Bronx resident for the past 27 years, Helen has contributed to the communal spirit at her temple by writing its *purimspiels* and taking on crucial executive roles.

Deborah Lupkin-Gross, Avodat Hashem Award. A performer at the local Y's theater productions, Deborah has worked more than 15 years in the field of adult health care.

Fred Sugarman, Chessed Shel Emet Award. Fred's service to HFBA includes his tenure as president and board member.

Congratulations to this year's award recipients for their devotion to the Riverdale Jewish community. ■



Front row, from left: Helen Krim, Elaine Bloom (honorees), and Amy Koplow (executive director). Back row: from left: Audrey Trachtman, Shari Safran, Stefanie Ruch (board members); Deborah Lupkin-Gross, Fred Sugarman, Arthur Bloom (honorees); Andrea Harris (event chair & board member); Doron Bar-Levav, Daniel Pilarski, Bryan Alter, and Donny Tuchman (board members).



Dedicated students from YULA Girls High School (Los Angeles, CA) put their *chesed* values to work at Mount Richmond Cemetery. One of YULA's principals had volunteered for HFBA when she was a student in New York. For a class trip to the Big Apple, she organized this *chesed* project.



Students from Temple Beth-El Mevor Chayim (Cranford, NJ) contributed several hours of work to beautify the cemetery grounds.

Donate your appreciated stocks

If you've got appreciated assets and you're looking to provide immediate support to our community, you can maximize your impact while also maximizing your savings by donating to HFBA. When you cash out your stocks, you are required to pay capital gains tax. If you transfer the stock directly, however, you will be able to deduct the full amount of your stock, completely avoiding capital gains tax.

For more information visit: www.hebrewfreeburial.org/stocks

A lasting impact with HFBA

FREEWILL

You can include Hebrew Free Burial Association in your estate plan at no cost to you. A legacy donation in your will helps HFBA in its mission to treat every Jew with the respect so integral to Jewish law and tradition, regardless of financial status. Get started by visiting www.hebrewfreeburial.org/freewill. If you've already included us in your will, let us know by visiting the same site. We are deeply grateful to you for your support.

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