

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 אהים 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 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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Renée Septimus, *Editor* Adam Rawson, *Designer*
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224 WEST 35TH STREET, ROOM 300

NEW YORK, NY 10001

PHONE: (212) 239-1662 • FAX: (212) 239-1981

EMAIL: INFO@HEBREWFREEBURIAL.ORG

WEB: WWW.HEBREWFREEBURIAL.ORG

*This Issue of the Chesed is Dedicated to the Memory of
DEENA KRITCHER*

HFBA AS RESOURCE AND REFERRAL

The competent staff of HFBA is often called upon as a resource in matters regarding the deaths of Jews who die outside the New York metropolitan area. Since HFBA is not a funding agency, it tries to access help from the Jewish community where the death occurred.

A call came into HFBA the Tuesday after the Super Bowl from a small town in Pennsylvania. Apparently, a twenty-five year old Jewish man, suffering from multiple sclerosis, yet still the sole support of his family, was shot after a Super Bowl party. His father had been bedridden for years with lung cancer, his mother had a brain tumor, and his sister, herself the mother of two young children, was a drug addict. Complicating matters further was the tentative ruling by the Medical Examiner that the death was an accidental suicide which made the deceased ineligible for victim's compensation which would have paid funeral and burial expenses.

Our resourceful funeral coordinator helped the caller (a Chabad representative) locate a Jewish burial society in a nearby city. She also got in touch with a local synagogue to see if the synagogue could cover the expenses of the burial. Meanwhile, a woman who belonged to the synagogue, who was a former teacher of the deceased, offered her rights to a grave, only to discover that she did not in actuality, possess those rights. Since a Jewish burial is supposed to take place as close to the death as possible, time was of the essence.

With patience and ingenuity born of experience, HFBA arranged to have the young man buried in a Jewish cemetery near his home, the costs assumed by two local synagogues.

This Issue of the *Chesed* is
Dedicated to the Memory of
DEENA KRITCHER

(January 11, 1949 – January 9, 2010)

HFBA
Helps



In the course of her research into her family's history, Deena Kritcher of Los Angeles, CA was startled to discover that she had a close connection with Hebrew Free Burial Association and remained a grateful champion of HFBA, leaving the organization a sizable bequest in her will.

Mrs. Kritcher's grandfather, Nahum Lifshitz, had immigrated to the United States in 1908 from Bialystok, Russia, with his wife Jochebed, also



known as Jenny. They settled in Brooklyn, New York and had two sons, Moses and Mrs. Kritcher's father, David, who was only two years old at the time of his father's death at the age of thirty eight, in 1917.

Like many immigrants at the time, the grief over the loss of a beloved husband and father as well as the family breadwinner, was compounded by extreme poverty which made it impossible for the young widow to afford a funeral and burial. HFBA stepped in as it had so many times in the past, and would so many times subsequently, burying Mr. Lifshitz according to the rites and rituals of the Jewish religion.

Deena Kritcher not only talked about her gratitude to HFBA. She made certain that others would be afforded the same dignified end as had her grandfather, a man she knew only from the anecdotes that survived him. Not only does his legacy live on as part of HFBA's story, hers does too.

Ernesto G.* was born in Argentina, attended university there and served in the army. He immigrated to the United States in the 1970's and worked for Boeing as an engineer. However, after being laid off two decades ago, he was unable to get back on his feet and dedicated his life to his hobbies, photography and astrology. His guardian called HFBA upon Ernesto's death in a nursing facility and HFBA gave him the dignified burial this lost soul deserved.

David K. had suffered a nervous breakdown following the death of his brother who was buried by HFBA. Several weeks after his release from the hospital, David was found by his friend in his apartment, deceased. Following the legally mandated investigation performed by the Public Administrator, David's body was released to HFBA for burial beside his beloved sibling.

Another case of a body found in an apartment concerned Sally T., discovered by her landlord, her dead dog beside her body. Sally had been a manager of a marina in San Francisco many years before but resided in an assisted living facility at the time of her death. She had lived in a foster home as a child and the foster mother had died. Relatives of the foster mother had no information about Sally. They only asked about inheriting her possessions.

**Names have been changed to protect confidentiality.*



Donate Your Vehicle
Perform the GREATEST MITZVAH!
Help bury a poor Jew.
IRS tax deduction as allowable by law. Free towing!
(212) 239-1662
info@hebrewfreeburial.org

From the MAILBAG



I'd like to tell you how I found out about your organization...

I am 57 years old and when I was a baby at 5 months old my eight year old brother tragically drowned in the East River... My mother told me that since they were so poor they couldn't afford to bury him. She turned to your organization and he was given a proper Jewish burial.

My mother recently passed away... In going through... her... papers, I came across my brother's... grave card. Now I knew where he was buried... I went for the first time to visit his grave and prayed that he would have a (grave)stone. He did.

In honor of my mother's memory, I am sending a donation to be placed for other graves to be marked. I cannot begin to tell you how pleased I feel that your organization helped my family in their time of need and that my brother has a proper resting place at Mt. Richmond (Cemetery). Thank you for this burial association from the bottom of my heart.

Eve Salinas

INCREASED NEED FOR SERVICES

eJewishPhilanthropy.com recently reported that non-profits are struggling to meet the demand for increased services. 85% of organizations expect an increase in demand this year and only 9% expect this year to be financially easier for the people they serve. Yet despite these challenges, non-profits are taking significant steps to meet the needs of their communities. Although many have expanded existing programs and the number of clients they serve, 37% have reduced annual expenses, 36% are relying more on volunteers and 47% have partnered with another organization to improve or increase services.

As a Jewish non-profit agency, HFBA struggles to meet the needs of its clients. As of June 1, we arranged 162 burials for needy Jews in 2011. With your continued help, HFBA will never have to deny anyone a dignified Jewish burial.

Q&A

Q: *Does one sit shiva and observe mourning rituals for stepparents?*

A: Most *poskim* (Jewish legal decisors) agree that one is allowed, but is not required, to perform Jewish mourning rituals in the case of stepparents and step siblings. It is recommended that each case be brought to a rabbi for adjudication.

HELPING HFBA

In the course of doing genealogy research, Robert (Bob) Altabet discovered that his relative, Leon Gabay, originally from Turkey, and an unemployed factory worker at the time of his death in 1947, had been buried in HFBA's Mount Richmond Cemetery.

Several years later, it came to Bob's attention that HFBA could benefit from his expertise in strategic planning. This year, Bob has been a most valuable resource, volunteering his time and expertise.

Thank you, Bob!

If you can give of your time, talent or skill to help HFBA, please call Executive Director, Amy Koplow (212-239-1662).

WE THANK OUR VOLUNTEERS

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

If you would like to help, either as an individual or as part of a group, please call the HFBA office at 212-239-1662.

- Yavneh Academy
- Manhattan Day School
- Shalhevet High School for Girls
- Oheb Shalom Congregation Men's Club (S. Orange, NJ)
- The Abraham Joshua Heschel High School



MANHATTAN DAY SCHOOL



OHEB SHALOM CONGREGATION MEN'S CLUB



SHALHEVET HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

DID YOU KNOW...

Sephardic Jews are descendants of the Jewish communities of Spain and Portugal which were expelled during the Inquisition in the late 15th century. The term "Sephardic" Jewry has come to include "Mizrachi" Jews who are descended from Jews of the Muslim Middle East and North Africa. Ashkenazi Jewish communities trace their origins to Christian Europe. Mourning rituals are among the many customs that the two communities practice somewhat differently.

Among many Sephardim, the tearing of the mourner's garment (*kriah*) takes place upon the return from the cemetery, rather than prior to the funeral as in Ashkenazi circles. Syrian Jews blow a shofar in the chapel after reciting *kaddish*, prior to leaving for the cemetery. Mourners in the *shiva* house sit on the floor on pillows, not on low stools. Food is laid out for visitors throughout the week of *shiva* and the mourner is comforted with the words, "May you be comforted from Heaven" when the visitor leaves the *shiva* house. In some Sephardic communities, *shiva* ends with a special meal and eulogies for the deceased.

РУССКИЙ ДАЙДЖЕСТ

Этот номер «Хесед» посвящен памяти Дины Критчер (11 января 1949 – 9 января 2010)

Изучая семейную историю, жительница Лос Анжелеса Дина Критчер с изумлением обнаружила давнюю связь своей семьи с Еврейским Благотворительным Похоронным Бюро (HFBA). Оказалось, что её дед, Нахум Лифшиц, эмигрировал в США в 1908 году из Белостока со своей женой Йохевед. Пара поселилась в Бруклине, где у них родились два сына: Мозес и Давид – будущий отец г-жи Критчер. Давиду было всего два года, когда Нахум скончался, не дожив до сорока. Горе от потери отца и кормильца усугублялось крайней бедностью. Молодая вдова была не в состоянии оплатить похороны мужа. Как и во многих подобных случаях, HFBA помогло этой семье, похоронив Нахума Лифшица согласно еврейским законам и традициям.

Узнав об этом много лет спустя, Дина Критчер выражала свою благодарность HFBA не только словами, но и делами. Она стала активно поддерживать HFBA, в том числе выделив нашей организации значительную сумму в своём завещании. Этим она помогла обеспечить достойные проводы в последний путь многим людям, так же, как когда-то это было сделано для её деда, человека, которого она никогда не видела и знала только по семейным рассказам. Имена Нахума Лифшица и Дины Критчер всегда останутся в истории HFBA.

Вопросы и ответы

Вопрос: Есть ли обязанность сидеть шиву (семь дней скорби) по отчиму или мачехе?

Ответ: Большинство авторитетов по еврейскому праву согласны, что соблюдение ритуалов скорби в случае смерти отчима, мачехи или сводных братьев или сестёр разрешено, но не является обязательным. Рекомендуются советовать с раввином в каждом отдельном случае.

Вопрос: Почему во время еврейских похорон и на еврейских могилах не увидишь цветов?

Ответ: Исторически разные народы использовали бальзамы, специи, воскурения или цветы, чтобы заглушить запах разлагающегося мертвого тела. Согласно еврейским законам, любое бальзамирование запрещено, и евреев хоронят вскоре после смерти. Поэтому в цветах нет необходимости, к тому же цветы на могиле ассоциировались у евреев с языческими обрядами погребения, поэтому еврейская традиция не одобряет их использование. Считается также, что оставить что-то «живущее» на могиле оскорбляет память того, кого уже нет среди живых.

HFBA как источник информации

Знания наших сотрудников – важный ресурс, который часто используется, когда евреи умирают вдали от района Большого Нью-Йорка. Поскольку HFBA не может предоставлять денежную помощь напрямую, мы всегда

пытаемся добиться финансовой поддержки от местных еврейских общин.

Однажды в нашем офисе раздался звонок из маленького городка в Пенсильвании. Некий молодой человек был случайно застрелен во время вечеринки после розыгрыша Большого Кубка. Несмотря на то, что у него самого был рассеянный склероз, он был единственным кормильцем для своей семьи. Оба его родителя болели раком, а у сестры, страдавшей наркотической зависимостью, было двое малолетних детей. Дело осложнялось ещё и тем, что заключение медицинского осмотра допускало возможность самоубийства. Это лишало семью погибшего компенсации для жертв несчастных случаев, которая могла бы покрыть расходы на похороны и погребение.

Наша сотрудница, отвечающая за организацию похорон, помогла звонившему (представителю Хабада) найти еврейское похоронное общество в ближайшем городе. Она также связалась с местной синагогой на предмет покрытия расходов на похороны. Важно было не упустить время, поскольку еврейские законы предписывают хоронить умерших сразу после смерти.

Благодаря терпению и изобретательности нашей сотрудницы, HFBA смогло организовать похороны молодого человека на еврейском кладбище недалеко от его дома. Две местные синагоги разделили расходы на погребение.

HFBA помогает

- Эрнесто Г* родился в Аргентине, где отслужил в армии и учился в университете. Он эмигрировал в США в семидесятых и работал инженером на одном из заводов Боинга. После увольнения двадцать лет назад Эрнесто не смог снова устроиться и увлёкся фотографией и астрологией. Когда он скончался в доме престарелых, его опекун позвонил в HFBA, которое смогло организовать для Эрнесто достойные похороны.
- Давид К. перенёс нервный срыв после смерти брата, похороны которого были проведены при помощи HFBA. Через несколько недель после выхода из больницы Давид был найден мертвым в своей квартире. После полагавшегося по закону расследования обстоятельств кончины, проведённого администрацией города, тело Давида было передано HFBA, которое организовало его похороны рядом с любимым братом.
- Салли Т. была найдена мёртвой в своей квартире в доме для пожилых. Салли когда-то работала управляющим в одном из яхт-клубов Сан Франциско. Ребёнком она жила в приюте и затем с приёмной матерью, но её приёмной матери к тому времени не было в живых, а родственники той не имели о Салли никаких сведений. Их беспокоило только оставшееся после Салли наследство. Несмотря на все эти трудности, HFBA взяло на себя организацию похорон.

* имена изменены



Thanks to the Staten Island Guardsmen Veterans Organization & 1st Battalion, 51st Regiment, 88th Brigade, New York Guard, for marking 331 veterans graves at Mount Richmond Cemetery in honor of Memorial Day.

STAY CONNECTED!

If you would like to sign up for HFBA's e-Newsletter, or if you'd like to receive a copy of our DVD, please send an e-mail to info@hebrewfreeburial.org.

To become a fan of HFBA on Facebook, please visit www.facebook.com/hebrewfreeburial.

To follow us on twitter, please visit www.twitter.com/hfba.



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.



Original *pushka* from 1909 at HFBA's Mount Richmond Cemetery

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