

HFBA is a Lifeline to Grieving Families

COVID-19 hit our poor communities hard. It brought disease and the threat of homelessness to the most vulnerable among us. For the people HFBA serves, the need has been great — for the departed as well as for their surviving family members who may require social services.

In keeping with our mission, we at times refer mourners to family service agencies. And when it's appropriate, we'll reserve graves for family members so loved ones can be near one another, even in death. Here are a few stories about families we've helped in their time of trouble:

When **Boris V.**, 93, came to the U.S. in 1991 from the Former Soviet Union, he brought his civil engineering background with him. Boris spent a lot of time in his

basement lab, a consolation when his wife died soon after their emigration. HFBA worked with Boris to bury her and, indeed, reserved a grave for him as well. Boris died in April 2020 from non-COVID-related issues. We buried him next to his wife.

HFBA sensed trouble three months later when we received a letter from Vlad, 55, Boris's son. Vlad asked if he could reserve a grave for himself — even if he committed suicide. We were alarmed and asked our chaplaincy intern to follow up with him immediately. We learned Vlad was

unemployed but had been seeing a therapist. Despite the hardships COVID-19 had brought him, he said he was not contemplating suicide "at this time."

A psychologist advised us to get in touch with the police department in Vlad's town. We did, and an officer

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Leave Your Mark

Annual grave marker delivery
'closes the circle' at HFBA

A flatbed trailer pulls past the stone columns at Mount Richmond Cemetery on Staten Island. Its load of 221 gravestones, en route all night from Georgia, will mark the final resting places of Jewish women and men, many of them indigent victims of COVID-19.

The gravestones are part of HFBA's ongoing "Leave Your Mark" campaign. The project, inaugurated in 1991, ensures that every gravesite will bear a simple stone marker. Some 20,000 previously unmarked graves now attest to Jewish lives lived battling poverty, loneliness, ill health or mental illness.

The placement of stones was accomplished in record time thanks to our dedicated office and cemetery staff.

The "Leave Your Mark" campaign continues to leave an emotional mark on HFBA's associates.



Dana Riess supervises the unloading of the truck.

"I have helped lead the campaign for several years, and I think of it as my 'baby,'" says Dana Riess, HFBA assistant office manager and quality assurance lead. "Each monument closes the circle for each person interred at Mount Richmond. Setting up a stone is truly the last act of kindness the living can bestow."

Linda Neiman, HFBA's new outreach coordinator, was so moved by the arrival of the stones that she teared

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In the Mail

October 6, 2021

Hebrew Free Burial Association
125 Maiden Lane, Unit 5B
New York, NY 10038

Dear Friends,

It's been more than fifty years since I've visited the graves of my grandparents, Marcus Lieb Weissman, who passed away on November 23, 1943, and Witte Weissman, who passed away on August 8, 1949. The month of Elul is an appropriate time to visit the graves of our loved ones. Living in Los Angeles, California has made this a bit difficult. However, this past August 2021, I knew that I would be in New York and so I made plans to have my daughter drive me from New Rochelle, New York to Staten Island. Before leaving home, I was able to go online, look up the name of the cemetery, its location, and the exact location of the two plots.

When I was a child, I remember accompanying my mother to Mt. Richmond Cemetery in the month of Elul. Living in Brooklyn, New York, and without a car, we would take buses, trolleys, and of course the ferry out to Staten Island. It was an all day activity and my mother packed sandwiches to have a picnic lunch on the cemetery grounds. I remembered that my zaidie's grave was at the end of the row because he was a Kohen.

My family, including my husband, daughter, and two teenage granddaughters, were not disappointed. We immediately found the two graves. The cemetery looked beautiful; gardeners were mowing the grass and taking care of the plots. We said the appropriate prayers and conveyed a family update. We all actually had a wonderful time and experience at the cemetery! I want to thank the Hebrew Free Burial Association for taking such good care of my immigrant grandparents and giving them a royal burial. Continue your success.

Very truly yours,

Regina Goldman

Editor's note: We gratefully acknowledge the author's generous donation to HFBA.

Thank You, Renée Septimus

Renée Septimus began chronicling the mission of Hebrew Free Burial Association in 2003 when she became editor of *Chesed*, our quarterly newsletter. After 19 years of tracking the stories of the indigent and the bereft, Renée is moving on to other pursuits and plans on spending more time with her family.

From her earliest days with HFBA, Renée has written stories that show the bond between generations of Jews whose ancestry is largely rooted in eastern and central Europe. In the pages of *Chesed*, she has detailed the history of HFBA's Silver Lake and Mount Richmond Cemeteries, profiled the fate of Holocaust survivors left destitute or alone in their old age, and expressed empathy for brethren whose lives were stunted by poverty or disease. As a trained social worker, Renée reminded HFBA's leaders and donors that our communal lives are defined by the Jewish calendar, and she never missed an opportunity to ask us at each *chag* to "honor our Creator by treating all of His creation with integrity, honesty, dignity and respect — for the living as well as the dead."

Thank you, Renée, for reminding us that our involvement with HFBA ennobles the dead and the living. *Hatzlacha* to you in all your future endeavors.

Support HFBA Through Your Donor-Advised Fund

You can do good — and be strategic about your charitable giving — by donating to HFBA through a donor-advised fund (DAF).

A DAF is a flexible, tax-smart investment solution for charitable giving that lets donors make and track their contributions, receive an immediate tax deduction and earmark grants from the fund over time.

Please visit www.hebrewfreeburial.org/daf or contact your financial firm for more information.

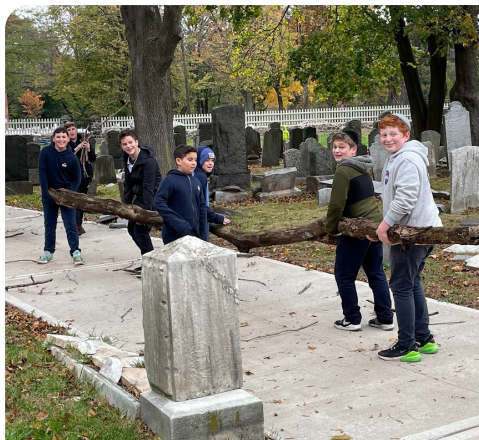
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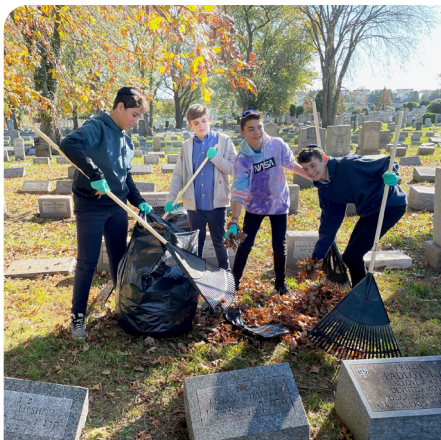
With Grateful Acknowledgment

HFBA thanks the students from these schools and organizations for volunteering their time to clear debris from Silver Lake and Mount Richmond Cemeteries:

ASHAR • Stella K. Abraham High School for Girls
The Jewish Center • Yeshiva Toras Chaim



ASHAR



Yeshiva Toras Chaim



The Jewish Center

Ежегодная доставка могильных камней «завершает круг» для усопших

Грузовик-трейлер въезжает в ворота кладбища по адресу 420 Clarke Avenue на Стейтен Айленде, везя в качестве груза 221 надгробный камень. Ежегодная доставка в этом году пришлась на 11-е октября. Камни, присланные поставщиком надгробий из штата Джорджия Еврейскому Благотворительному Похоронному Бюро (HFBA), отметят место последнего упокоения еврейских женщин и мужчин, зачастую бедных, многие из которых стали жертвами эпидемии ковида.

Эти надгробия – часть продолжающегося проекта «Оставь свой след», проводимого HFBA. Проект был начат ещё в 1991 году, его цель – отметить каждую могилу простым каменным надгробием. К сегодняшнему дню более 20 тыс. прежде безымянных могил ныне свидетельствуют о еврейских жизнях, прожитых в борьбе с бедностью, болезнями и психическими расстройствами.

«Я много лет помогаю вести этот проект и уже давно отношусь к нему как к своему детищу», говорит Дэйна Риесс, заместитель менеджера HFBA и ответственная за контроль качества. «Каждое надгробие как бы замыкает круг для тех, кто погребён на кладбище Маунт Ричмонд. И установка этих надгробий – последний акт милосердия, который живущие могут совершить по отношению к усопшим».

Линда Найман, наш новый координатор информационно-образовательной программы, даже расплакалась, когда Дэйна Риесс и Эндрю Паркер, один из директоров HFBA, показали на совещании сотрудников фотографии привезённых надгробий.

По её словам, «каждый посетитель кладбища Маунт Ричмонд, увидев высеченные на этих камнях имена, понимает, что мы сделали всё возможное, чтобы сохранить память о людях».

Если Вы хотите поддержать проект «Оставь свой след», пожалуйста отметьте соответствующий квадратик на конверте с Вашим пожертвованием или посетите наш интернет-сайт <https://www.hebrewfreeburial.org/donate/>.

HFBA помогает. HFBA – это рука помощи скорбящим семьям

Пандемия Ковида-19 сильно ударила по нашим еврейским общинам. Она принесла не только тяжкий недуг, но и угрозу для самых уязвимых из нас остаться без крова над головой. HFBA осознаёт, что мы все ответственны не только перед ушедшими, но и перед выжившими членами их семей, которые нуждаются в социальной защите. Здесь мы поделимся двумя историями о семьях, которым мы помогли в это нелёгкое время:

- Ольга Г*, 75-летняя эмигрантка из Украины, прожила в США 35 лет, работая по уходу на дому. Когда Ольга жила со своей сестрой Татьяной, у неё был диагностирован рак кишечника. Спустя некоторое время в HFBA позвонила одна из ольгиных подруг и сообщила, что Ольга находится в хосписе, и что не было сделано никаких приготовлений на случай её смерти. После того, как Ольга скончалась, нам позвонили ещё раз и сказали, что ольгиной сестре Татьяне требуется помощь с организацией похорон Ольги. Когда мы связались с Татьяной, она была явно не в себе, да и её сильный акцент ещё больше затруднял общение. Как мы узнали от друзей Ольги, Татьяна тоже жила в бедности и подрабатывала продажей с тележки перед входом в синагогу. Один из друзей Ольги, наш многолетний спонсор, вызвался покрыть расходы HFBA на погребение. На похоронах присутствовали пятеро друзей

усопшей, вспоминавшие Ольгу как «очень хорошего человека, всегда заботившегося о других». После похорон мы помогли Татьяне зарезервировать место на кладбище рядом с сестрой.

- Одиннадцать лет назад 59-летний Стэнли Л* помог организовать похороны своей 52-летней сестры рядом с их матерью на кладбище Маунт Ричмонд, принадлежащем HFBA. Мы знали, что в своё время Стэнли самому потребуются услуги по погребению, и поддерживали с ним контакт. В 2020 году он позволил нам, чтобы сообщить свой новый адрес и удостовериться, что проблем с его похоронами не будет. А в феврале нынешнего года мы с прискорбием узнали от его родственника, что Стэнли, проживавший в субсидированном доме, скончался от осложнений после ковида. Мы смогли разыскать социального работника, знакомого с его ситуацией, и та предоставила необходимую информацию, благодаря которой HFBA получило на Стэнли свидетельство о смерти. Перед похоронами мы связались с Мими, двоюродной сестрой Стэнли. «У него не было ни одного хорошего дня», сказала она. «На его семью одно за другим сыпались несчастья. Надеюсь, что теперь мой брат покоится с миром». Мими была глубоко тронута тем, что HFBA связалось с ней.

Письмо в редакцию

6 октября 2021 г.

Дорогие друзья,

Прошло уже больше полувека с моего последнего посещения могил моих дедушки и бабушки, Маркуса Лейбы Вайссмана, скончавшегося 23-го ноября 1943 года, и Витте Вайссман, умершей 8-го августа 1949 года. Месяц Элул – самое подходящее время для посещения могил близких. Но то, что мы живём в Лос Анджелесе, делает это трудным. Тем не менее в августе нынешнего года я планировала посетить Нью-Йорк. Моя дочь отвезла меня из городка Нью-Рошель до Стейтен Айленда. Ещё перед поездкой я смогла узнать из интернета название и адрес кладбища и точное расположение двух могил.

Моя семья – муж, дочь и две внучки – не были разочарованы. Мы без труда нашли могилы. Кладбище очень красиво обустроено, мы видели как садовники косят траву, ухаживая за участками. Мы получили прекрасные впечатления от посещения кладбища! Я хочу поблагодарить Еврейское Благотворительное Похоронное Бюро за заботу о могилах моих дедушки и бабушки, приехавших сюда иммигрантами, и за организацию для них торжественных похорон.

Искренне ваша,
Реджина Голдман

От редакции: мы сердечно благодарим автора письма за щедрое пожертвование

Счастливой Хануки!

Мы всё ещё боремся с пандемией ковида-19, и Ханука призывает нас вспомнить немногочисленный отряд маккавеев, победивший могущественную греко-сирийскую армию благодаря единой цели – защитить Второй Храм. Пусть же каждая новая ханукальная свеча укрепляет наше единство и придаёт нам силы преодолеть этот кризис общественного здоровья, чтобы мы продолжали заботиться о наших общинах, и чтобы мы продолжали испытывать благодарность Вс-вышнему за его необыкновенные чудеса.

HFBA is a Lifeline ...continued from page 1

there was assigned to do a wellness check on Vlad.

We also connected with Vlad's daughter, Rica. She filled us in on Vlad's emotional state: Ever since Vlad was diagnosed with terminal cancer, his own purpose in life had been to take care of his father. He felt lost now.

Rica said she was amazed by HFBA's commitment to her family eighteen months after Boris's death — and grateful to us for reserving a grave for Vlad. She assured us she would keep an eye on her dad.

Despite being physically and mentally challenged, **Stanley L.**, 59, helped bury his 52-year-old sister 11 years ago in Mount Richmond Cemetery near their mother. HFBA knew Stanley would need burial services one day and we kept in touch with him. He called us in 2020 to give us his new address and to ask about his grave.

Sadly, we learned from a cousin that Stanley died in February 2021 of COVID while living in subsidized housing. We were able to locate a social worker familiar with Stanley's situation. She gave us the information we needed to file for his death certificate. Before the funeral, we spoke with Mimi, another cousin, who said Stanley had never had a good day. "His whole family suffered one misfortune after another," Mimi told us. "I hope my cousin is at peace now." She was deeply grateful for HFBA's outreach.

Hannah C., 69, nearly ended in NYC's City Cemetery on Hart Island. She had struggled for decades with mental illness and dementia. With no money set aside for a funeral, Hannah's husband Ira — a patient at a Veterans Administration hospital — felt he had no choice but to permit Hannah's burial in a mass unmarked grave.

A VA rabbinic chaplain learned about Hannah and contacted the medical records department at the local hospital where she had died. He asked that the hospital cancel the body's transfer to City Cemetery so he could help Ira arrange a traditional Jewish funeral.

Ira himself had to undergo a medical procedure and could not attend the funeral for his wife of 40 years. When he discovered that Hannah would receive a traditional Jewish burial at HFBA's Mount Richmond Cemetery, he wept. Working with the VA rabbi, HFBA reserved a grave for Ira alongside his wife.

Olga G., 75, an immigrant from Ukraine, spent 35 years in the United States as a domestic and home attendant. She was living with her sister Tatiana when she was diagnosed with colon cancer.

HFBA received a phone call from one of Olga's friends

to say that Olga was in hospice with no provisions made for her burial. Yet another friend called after Olga died to say that Tatiana needed help with burial arrangements. Another called with an offer to help defray our burial costs.

Tatiana was distraught when HFBA spoke with her. We learned that Tatiana, like her sister, was impoverished and panhandled in front of a *shul*.

The five mourners at Olga's funeral remembered Olga as a "very good person, always concerning herself with other people's welfare." After the funeral, we helped Tatiana reserve a grave next to her sister.

Wiola R., 64, arrived from Poland 35 years ago and most recently worked for the NYC Board of Education. She shared an apartment in the Bronx with Alek, a brother she adored and admired for his service in the Israel Defense Forces. Alek called HFBA to say that his sister died at home of heart disease. Through his tears, he told us that their Holocaust survivor parents were buried in Mount Richmond. Unfortunately, he was mistaken, and we buried Wiola in a lone grave.

Alek was not well enough to participate in person at the funeral, and Rabbi Shmuel Plafker, HFBA's cemetery chaplain, put the service on speakerphone for him. Alek was inconsolable. After the burial, we shared Alek's contact info with Bronx Jewish Community Council as we believed he would benefit from their social services.

Remember HFBA in Your Will

Give a Gift That Lasts Forever and Costs Nothing Today

The pandemic has shown us how crucial a will is for ourselves and our loved ones. Writing a will can help you:

- Assign guardians for your children and your pets.
- Make a plan for your assets and possessions.
- Remember HFBA and other organizations you care about.
- Dictate your funeral wishes.

FREEWILL 

Use "FreeWill," a no-cost tool that takes 20 minutes to create or update a will. You can find it at www.hebrewfreeburial.org/freewill.

Create your legacy and protect what matters to you.

**Your help is needed
now more than ever.**



Donate online at
www.hebrewfreeburial.org/donate

Giving on our secure website is easy
and efficient!

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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125 Maiden Lane, Unit 5B, New York, NY 10038

Phone: (212) 239-1662 • **Fax:** (212) 239-1981

info@hebrewfreeburial.org

www.hebrewfreeburial.org

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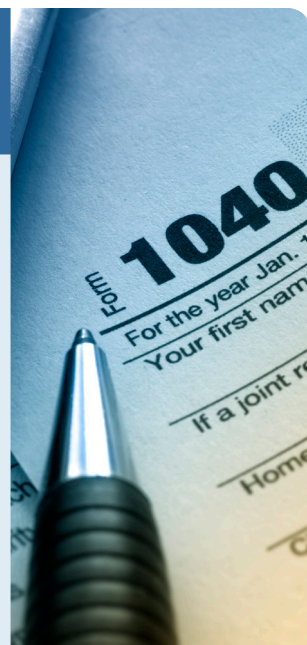
Give from your IRA

A tax-free IRA gift is a powerful way to support our sacred work while reducing your future tax burden and meeting your required minimum distribution for 2021.

Donate stocks

Many HFBA supporters donate appreciated stocks to support our mission while also legally avoiding capital gains tax.

For more information contact
Amy Koplow, HFBA executive director,
212-239-1662.



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*Rabbi Shmuel Plafker inspects
delivered gravestones.*

up when Riess and Andrew Parver, HFBA director of operations, shared photos and recapped the delivery at a staff meeting.

"When I do my outreach, I always note that how you leave the world is as significant as how you enter it," Neiman says. "Whoever visits Mount Richmond and sees a name on a stone knows we did our best to preserve that person's memory. Our work at HFBA is sacred."

"Leave Your Mark" is funded entirely by individual donations. To support our campaign, check the appropriate box on the enclosed donation envelope or visit <https://www.hebrewfreeburial.org/donate/>.

Chanukah asks us to remember the small band of Maccabees that overcame the mighty Syrian-Greek army and that was united in its dedication to the Second Temple. Let each new candle give us the strength and unity to emerge from our public health crisis, committed to our people and grateful to the goodness of G-d's miracles.



HAPPY CHANUKAH!