

Hebrew Cemetery Association

By Lorrie Klemons, Publicity

The holiday of Chanukah falls on the 25th day of Kislev. Chanukah is a joyous time for Jews as we globally celebrate our freedom and victory over evil. We Jews are fortunate to enjoy many special days for such celebration throughout our calendar year and life continuum.

At the end of a joyous marriage ceremony, it is Jewish tradition for the groom to break a glass. This occurs immediately before that matrimonial kiss that enjoins two souls forever. There are many theories as to why we perform this traditional breakage at each Jewish wedding. The more prominent one, however, seems to be that along with our great joy and celebration, we must always remember the destruction of our temple, and how that destruction so dramatically impacted our people and the practice of our faith. It is a tradition that symbolizes our eternal yearning for the re-building of our temple.

Jews must never forget the martyrs (both Jewish and Gentile) that came before us. Those brave heroes and heroines fought our battles so that we could enjoy the freedoms that we have today. And

those freedoms are not to be taken lightly for they did not come without great struggle, sacrifice, and loss. At Chanukah we must take time to pause and remember the Maccabees who fought so bravely to maintain the sanctity of our holy temple and our rightful place amongst the other peoples of the world. And while we remember the Maccabees during this Chanukah celebration, let us not forget the others who so valiantly fought ... and sacrificed... to guarantee the freedoms that we enjoy today. In her book *Talking To God*, a collection of personal prayers, Rabbi Naomi Levy writes a "Prayer of Remembrance for Fallen Heroes":

"Some might have stood by, but you stood up. You gave your lives so that others might live. We are indebted to you, we are humbled by you. When all hope was lost, when the world seemed like a dark and heartless place, you restored our faith in people and our trust in God. You taught us hope, and fearlessness, and honor. We miss you. We will never forget your heroism. We will teach our children and grandchildren about your courage in the face of danger. We will try with all our might to live

up to the example you have set. We will not ignore human suffering, we will not be indifferent to the cries of those in pain; you did not die in vain. You have changed us. You live on inside us, in pride and in love. May God watch over you as you watched over us. Rest in peace. Amen."

If you would like to make a donation to memorialize a loved one, send your check payable to the Hebrew Cemetery to 4229 Peggy Lane, Charlotte, NC 28227. For more information about membership benefits, graves, prepaid funeral costs, endowments, and/or including the cemetery in your estate planning, contact Executive Director, Sandra Goldman at 704-576-1859 or 704-944-6854 or director@hebrewcemetery.org. Visit the cemetery website at www.hebrewcemetery.org.

Directions to the cemetery: Providence Rd, north into and through uptown; right onto Graham St.; follow Graham for about two miles; left at fork in road onto Statesville Ave.; travel about 1/2 mile, the cemetery entrance will be on your left. ☆

Bring the Miracle of Chanukah to a Refugee Family

By Karen Brodsky

"It is a miracle!" These are four words our caseworkers hear in a variety of languages upon occasion, after HIAS NC has resettled refugees in Charlotte. It is common to hear them from refugees who send for their family members. For many it is a long-held dream that they will see their loved ones again.

In this Chanukah season of celebrating miracles, we, too, are fortunate to be able to light our Chanukah menorahs in safety and security with our loved ones. Our refugees revel in the freedoms they enjoy in the U.S.

In reality, the miracles do not come easily, but, in some ways,

they are miracles. They happen because of an alphabet soup of U.S. government and worldwide agencies, private donations, non-governmental agencies (NGOs), and a small group of employees at HIAS NC, based in Charlotte.

In Federal Fiscal Year 2009, ended September 30, the agency settled 240 refugees, more than in any previous year.

That means that for these refugees HIAS NC found and furnished apartments, provided culturally appropriate food, took them to the Health Department, the Department of Social Services for food stamps and Medicare, applied for their Social Security cards, registered their children in



David and his Burmese mom celebrate his first birthday. A baby born in the US, he carries an American name.

school, and evaluated them for English as a Second Language and employment services. That is just in the first 30 days.

For the first 30 days, HIAS NC receives a grant called Reception and Placement (R&P) from the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM). The agency receives only \$425 per refugee to provide all the services. This must pay for a deposit on an apartment, first month's rent, a \$200 deposit to Duke Power, food, a cash allowance, and required furniture and furnishings.

Continuation of the R&P grant is contingent upon several requirements dealing with the safety of apartments, availability of furniture and household items, linens, cleaning supplies, toiletries, and food.

The Chanukah season in Charlotte is usually chilly, and there are never enough blankets in the refugee community. Many refugees come from Southeast Asia and East Africa, where the climate is relatively warm. It

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To learn more please contact Phil Warshauer, Executive Director of the Foundation for the Charlotte Jewish Community at 704-973-4544 or pwarshauer@charlottejewishfoundation.org

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