

Hebrew Cemetery Association

By Lorrie Klemons, publicity

In the book *Life Can Be This Good* by Richard Carlson, the author talks about life as a few dozen white spots against a background. The white dots represent the "highlights" of life - birth, weddings, promotions, achievements, and so forth. The background represents the rest of it - day-to-day life. While most of us are tempted to see only the highlights as miraculous and exciting, the trick is to see the rest in the same light.

How do we find miracle and excitement in our day-to-day life? How does one find the awesomeness of God's creation in the mundane of everyday living? Once we find out how to achieve that, everything changes as we realize that life can truly be magnificent.

One of the ways we can find the magnificent excitement in everyday living is by becoming God's partner in spreading good deeds and good will. By entering

into such a partnership, we become one with God, truly being created in His image. By doing mitzvot, it is as though we complete the divine mission here on earth. By reaching out to our fellow human beings, we create an angelic chorus of mitzvot and holiness that fills the universe with melodious harmony. What a miraculous feat for mere man and woman to achieve.

At this secular time of year when everyone promises to make "good" resolutions, make a commitment to yourself to see mundane life as miraculous and exciting. Only then can you really appreciate the sanctity of everyday life and the awesomeness of God's creation. In this year of 2011 (5771), sanctify your own life by sanctifying the eternal life of Jews who preceded you in eternal life. You can do this by becoming a member of the Charlotte Hebrew Cemetery Association. ☆



Hebrew Cemetery Association

Resettlement Brings Opposing Forces Together

By Karen Brodsky

A personal story Ellen Dubin, executive director of Carolina Refugee Resettlement Agency (CRRA), likes to tell relates the meeting of a Bosnian Muslim and an Eastern Orthodox Serb following the collapse of Yugoslavia. The Bosnian arrived in Charlotte and was resettled by HIAS NC as the agency was called. He acclimated very well.

Dubin asked him to help resettle a Serb family. It made sense. They spoke the same language. The Bosnian was hesitant. "No, they smell bad," he said. Dubin was insistent, citing all the help he had received from HIAS, so he acquiesced. When the Serb arrived Dubin told him that a refugee from Bosnia was going to help him get acclimated. The Serb wasn't happy. "Can someone else help?" he said. "They smell."

Then they met each other and discovered an absence of olfactory offense. Still, the Bosnian only reluctantly helped the Serb. Dubin repeatedly threw them together. In the end they visited each other's homes and broke bread.

Often among refugees CRRA resettles, many of the traditional negative beliefs they hold are shattered. The shared experience and the trials of resettlement bring them together. Beginning in 2005, Jews came from Uzbekistan, Moscow and Ukraine. Christians came from Moldova and Ukraine. Muslim Meskhetian Turks (who also speak Turkish) arrived from Georgia and Uzbekistan. United by the Russian language, religion was not a day-to-day issue for these refugees. Remarkably the groups mixed.

They also came to realize that, once in Charlotte, they were more alike than different.

CRRA's clients are resettled in various apartment complexes in East Charlotte. Thus CRRA has created "pseudo communities," or little villages - a patchwork quilt of Bhutanese, Burmese, Montagnards, Somalis, Iranians and Iraqis, to name a few. They come to Charlotte with little or no experience with diversity. Some have only negative experiences with diversity. They come from relatively homogeneous commu-

nities. Here they learn to accept—and respect—each other. Recently a friendship has blossomed between a Bhutanese man and a Somali man.

Ever since Englishman Israel Zangwill coined the metaphor of the melting pot from his play *The Melting Pot* in 1908, various other authors, sociologists, and presidents have debated and opined that the idea of an American melting pot is erroneous. President Jimmy Carter said, "We become not a melting pot but a beautiful mosaic. Different people, different beliefs, different yearnings, different hopes, different dreams."

In the refugee community, CRRA has found that the yearnings, hopes and dreams are very similar. All hope their children will become self-sufficient and educated. Several dream that they will be able to buy a house or a car. Many have.

They all share the hope with every American that they will enjoy good health and happiness.

CRRA provides hope for the hundreds of refugees it resettles each year. Last year alone the agency resettled 345 refugees — the largest number CRRA ever resettled in a single year. CRRA needs your help to continue its important work. Call 704-535-8803 or e-mail info@carolinarefugee.org to donate furniture. Donate online at www.carolinarefugee.org. ☆

"Only for God does my soul wait in silence, for my deliverance is from God. Only God is my rock, my deliverance, my fortress; I shall not be shaken."

— Psalm 62:6-7



Charlotte Jewish Preschool

2011 Enrollment begins at our

OPEN HOUSE

Friday, January 14 • 9:30am

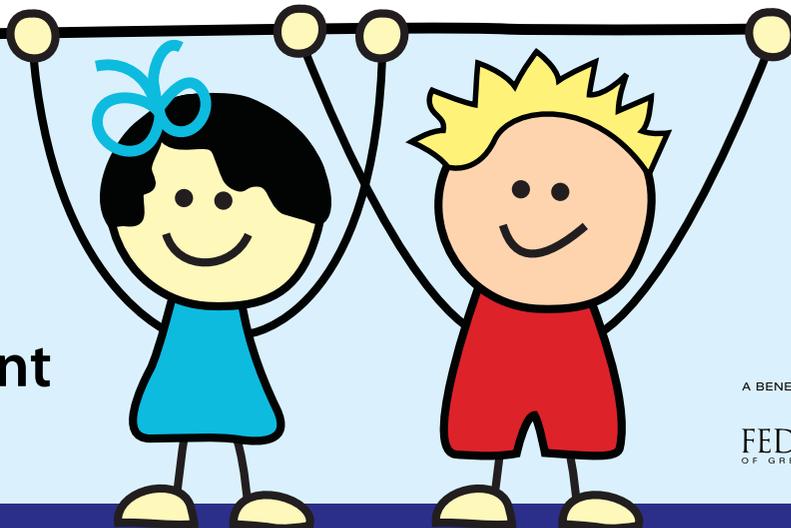
Half & Full Day Preschool

Ages 1 to 6

Qualified, experienced teachers

Safe, secure nurturing environment

Educational excellence



A BENEFICIARY AGENCY OF
JEWISH FEDERATION
OF GREATER CHARLOTTE

5007 Providence Road, Bldg. F • 704-944-6777 • www.cjpkids.org

CJP is a collaboration of Temple Beth El, Temple Israel and the Levine Jewish Community Center.