

Chesed Shel Emet: The Truest Act of Kindness

By Brian Yesowitch, President, Hebrew Cemetery Association Board

Our Cemetery Association Board is filled with volunteers, young and old, who come from many different hometowns and backgrounds. Aside from the fact that all of us are Jewish, another trait that unites us is our desire to perform "chesed shel emet" – the truest act of kindness.

The medieval French Rabbi known to us as Rashi considers performing the mitzvot surrounding Jewish burials "chesed shel emet." This comes from the story of Jacob asking Joseph to not bury him in Egypt. In Genesis 47:29, "The time drew near that Israel must die; and he called his son Joseph and said to him: 'If I have found favor in thy sight, deal kindly and truly with me; bury me not, I pray, in Egypt.'" Rashi's explanation is: "The kindness shown to the dead is a true kindness, for (in such a case) one does not expect to be repaid." (Rashi's commentary on Genesis 47:29)

At the Cemetery Association, we don't believe that the act of "chesed shel emet" ends with the funeral. Our Association board members, Director and grounds keepers work to ensure that the headstone markers (some of them erected over 140 years ago) continue to be cared for and legible. For the families of the recently deceased, visiting the cemetery and seeing that their family's plots are in a dignified and beautiful setting is very important. For other visitors, immersing themselves in over 100 years of Jewish tradition becomes an important experience - one that leaves an impression and provides enrichment for months to come.

It is in that spirit that we would like to invite the community to join us at the Cemetery on Sunday, September 20 at 10:30 AM for this year's Annual Memorial Service. 5775 has been a year filled with many challenges for the Jewish people. Individually, as well, we all recognize there has been loss, grief, illness, and sadness in our lives and in our neighbors' lives. For many in Charlotte, the Annual Memorial Service can be the most meaningful and enriching experience during the High Holy Days. Last year, the service was led by twelve clergy members representing seven area congregations. We expect a similar turnout this year. We have shaded accommodations for 600 participants. All are welcome to attend this free event. One doesn't have to be a member of an area synagogue to participate. One doesn't have to even have family buried in our Cemetery. We are sincere with the declaration, "All are welcome." Upon conclusion of the service, all are welcome to visit the Memorial Building featuring the Mindy Ellen Levine Chapel. Tours will also be given of our Blumenthal Memorial Garden along with the historic section of the Cemetery, which includes Jewish graves dating back to 1870.

Membership to our Hebrew Cemetery Association is an affordable \$72 annually. It always pays to pre-plan your funeral expenses. Contact our Director, Sandra Goldman (director@hebrewcemetery.org or 704-576-1859) to receive information or arrange a meeting to discuss plot availability and pricing.

Have you considered adding the Hebrew Cemetery to your es-



tate planning? We are in our 3rd year of participation in the Create Your Jewish Legacy program through the Foundation for the Charlotte Jewish Community. Our Director Sandra Goldman can walk you through the process of turning an existing financial vehicle into a bequest to support the long term maintenance and upkeep of our community's oldest institution that continues to serve the Jewish people of this region. My wife Martha and I have made our commitments along with nearly 30 other individuals and families. I hope you will join us.

Additionally, our community supports needy individuals with reduced cemetery fees during their time of loss. You can make a contribution of any amount to the Steinberger Funeral Assistance Fund on our website www.hebrewcemetery.org or by contacting our Director, Sandra Goldman, at 704-576-1859 or director@hebrewcemetery.org. Don't forget to "like" our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/HebrewCemetery. Our #ThrowbackThursday posts have gotten so popular; they will be featured in the September issue of Charlotte Magazine.

"Chesed Shel Emet" — the truest act of kindness. The idea has been around since biblical times and it continues to serve our community today. All of us at the Hebrew Cemetery Association wish you and your family a Shana Tova U'mtukah. ✪



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Scott is a long time community volunteer, leader, and sponsor in the Jewish community since 1985. Both he and Tricia, along with their dental team, volunteer their time and expertise to make a positive impact in our community.

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2nd Annual CJFF Fan Appreciation Day Wrap Up

Capacity crowds enjoyed a full day of great movies, entertaining speakers, delicious food and community fun at the Charlotte Jewish Film Festival's 2nd Annual Fan Appreciation Day event that took place on July 19 at Regal Ballantyne Village Stadium Theaters.

Highlights included Ziggy Gruber and Erik Greenberg Anjou leading an insightful and funny tour of the deli world, the inspiring story of the establishment of the Israeli Air Force and a tailgating party before Paul Hirschberger and Koren Cohen tackled the American style football league that is currently thriving in the holy land.

And of course, there was the Inaugural CJFF Chicken Soup Contest.

A huge shout out to the six amazing chefs who shared their tasty creations with CJFF fans – Shellie Barer (Mommy's Soup), Giosue Coppola/Portofino's Ristorante (Minestra Di Pollo E Vedure), Sandra Goldman (Goldie's Soup), Jered Mond/Izzy's Catering (Momma Rita's Soup), Melanie Rowe/Melanie Rowe Catering (Meli's Deli Chicken

Soup), and Janice Zacks (Finkel's Hindl Zup Mit Michael's Homemade Lochshen).

Jered Mond/Izzy's Catering won the Fan's Favorite Award for Momma Rita's Soup while celebrity judges Ziggy Gruber, Erik Greenberg Anjou, Jon Dressler (Dressler's Restaurant and Dogwood Southern Table and Bar), Frank Scibelli (FS Food Group), and Amy Rogers (WFAEats) chose Shellie Barer's Mommy's Soup for the Critic's Choice Award.

Frank Scibelli commented afterwards "the soups were great examples of Jewish comfort food, the kind of soups that make you



Ziggy Gruber and Janice Zacks (photo by Peter Safir).



want to catch a cold."

Thank you again to everyone who made 2015 another record-breaking year for the CJFF and we look forward to seeing you at the movies – please check out all the details on the 2015 FallFlicks' lineup at charlottejewishfilm.com or on page 1 and page 34. ✪



Shellie Barer and Jered Mond hold their trophies (photo by Marissa Brooks).

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704.401.5280 P • 704.314.4258 F
SRIZZO@SRIZZOLAW.COM
SRIZZOLAW.COM