

Jewish Federation Becomes Caretaker of Morton Grove Cemetery

Volunteers Sought to Help with Restoration

CHICAGO...Sept. 24, 2002--The Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago has received the title to an old Jewish cemetery in Morton Grove and has agreed to restore it. Most of the two-acre site, which is on Waukegan Road south of Dempster Street, is in Morton Grove; about one-third of the cemetery is in Niles.

Faced with repeated petitions to develop the land, while the cemetery itself is in need of repairs, the Illinois Attorney General asked the Jewish Federation/Jewish United Fund to assume responsibility for the site. The title was formally transferred to the Federation in March 2002.

Volunteers are needed to help prepare the ground for planting on October 6 from 2:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Further volunteer opportunities will be available in the spring, when the next phase of the restoration is scheduled to begin.

"Reclaiming the cemetery is not just about fulfilling religious obligations, remembering the past, or honoring the dead," said Steven B. Nasatir, President of the Jewish Federation/Jewish United Fund of Metropolitan Chicago. "This is about securing our heritage for the future. It is about not forgetting who we are and where we came from."

The cemetery originally belonged to a Jewish congregation, Keheleth Jacob, formed in 1890 by Russian immigrants; its most famous congregant was a young Benny Goodman. The last burial is believed to have happened in 1937. By the early 1970s the cemetery was in total disrepair after passing through the hands of several now defunct cemetery associations.

Requests made in 1971 and 1973 to develop the land were denied based on its zoning and use as a cemetery. In 1988, the North Suburban Synagogue Council restored part of the cemetery, while the Jewish Genealogical Society listed and mapped the graves. Volunteers recruited by the Jewish Federation/Jewish United Fund first came to the site in 1995, cleaning gravestones, cutting grass and repairing fences.

A developer purchased the land in 1996 with plans to move the graves and build a nursing home on the site. According to Jewish law, however, graves may not be moved from a cemetery for economic purposes. Further, Illinois law requires good cause, such as a threat to public health, for grave relocation.

"We hope to use the site for genealogical and educational purposes," Nasatir said. "In the meantime, we believe that simply working together in such a sacred task as restoring an historic cemetery can help forge new community bonds."

Those wishing to volunteer are asked to call JUF's TOV Volunteer

Network at 312.357.4762.

Posted: 9/24/2002

Jewish Federation Restores Historic Cemetery

The Jewish Federation is seeking volunteers to help tend an old Jewish cemetery in Niles/Morton Grove. The effort is part of the new Preservation of Historic Jewish Cemeteries Project by JUF's TOV Volunteer Network.

Kehilath Jacob Anshe Drohiczen Cemetery in Morton Grove-Niles was recently taken over and restored by the Jewish Federation after years of neglect and several attempts to develop the property.

Volunteers are needed to help tend the cemetery grounds on July 13, August 3 and 24, September 7 and 21, and October 26, at 1 p.m.

The cemetery originally belonged to a Jewish congregation, Keheleth Jacob*, formed in 1890 by Russian immigrants; its most famous member was a young Benny Goodman. The last burial is believed to have taken place in 1937. By the early 1970s, the cemetery was in total disrepair after passing through the hands of several now-defunct cemetery associations.

In 1988, the North Suburban Synagogue Council restored apart of the cemetery, while the Jewish Genealogical Society listed and mapped the graves. Volunteers recruited by the Jewish Federation/Jewish United Fund first came to the site in 1995, cleaning gravestones, cutting grass and repairing fences.

In March, 2002, the Jewish Federation formally became the caretaker of the cemetery following a request by the Illinois Attorney that it assume responsibility for the site.

In October, the TOV Volunteer Network sponsored a cleanup of the cemetery, which had served as dumping ground and was littered with refuse, including car parts, abandoned furniture and bottles.

JUF's TOV Volunteer Network is a match making service, pairing members of the Jewish community with volunteer opportunities, according to their skills, interests and availability. A national model for generating community participation, TOV was instrumental in placing more than 10,000 community volunteers.

Those wishing to volunteer are asked to call JUF's TOV Volunteer Network at (312) 357-4762.

*Keheleth Jacob is the name of the now-defunct congregation, which founded the cemetery. Kehilath Jacob Anshe Drohiczen Cemetery is the modern name of the burial ground.

Posted: 6/20/2003

MORTON GROVE: see also Chicago and suburbs

- *Beth Jacob*: also called *Keheleth Jacob Anshe Drohiczen*. {10835} Names were listed on web 5/98 as they wish to remove the bodies and build something on the grounds. Local children (?) wrecked the cemetery. Some of the headstones have since been moved to a newly constructed fenced-in area for protection. The bodies are still out in an empty field. At the current time, a developer picked up the property on a tax sale (On the death of the president of the cemetery association, nobody filed for a tax exemption so it went back on the tax role). Source: Jewel Fishkin; e-mail: xjewelx@webtv.net

Cemetery News: Jewish Federation seeks volunteers to tend cemetery

Jewish Federation seeks volunteers to tend cemetery
Niles Herald Spectator | August 28, 2003

The Jewish Federation is seeking volunteers to help tend an old Jewish cemetery in Niles and Morton Grove. The effort is part of the new Preservation of Historic Jewish Cemeteries Project by Jewish United Fund's TOV Volunteer Network.

Kehilath Jacob Anshe Drohiczen Cemetery in Morton Grove-Niles was recently taken over and restored by the Jewish Federation after years of neglect and several attempts to develop the property.

Volunteers are needed to help tend the cemetery grounds at 1 p.m. Sept. 7 and 21 and Oct. 26.

The cemetery was founded in 1890 by a Jewish congregation of Russian immigrants, Kehelth Jacob, whose most famous member was a young Benny Goodman. The last burial is believed to have taken place in 1937. By the early 1970s, the cemetery was in total disrepair after passing through the hands of several now-defunct cemetery associations.

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