



# HESED SHEL EMET HANDBOOK

*So that all Jews can be buried in dignity*

Lisa Spiegel, Program Administrator  
[HesedShelEmetPDX@gmail.com](mailto:HesedShelEmetPDX@gmail.com)

## **Contents**

### **INTRODUCTION, PURPOSE AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

- Introduction, Origin, and Purpose
- Eligibility and Administration
- Participants
- Organization of Resources and Support
- Fundraising

### **APPENDIXES**

- Appendix A (Participating Rabbis and Contact Information)
- Appendix B (Participating Cemeteries and Contact Information)
- Appendix C (Participating Funeral Homes and Contact Information)
- Appendix D (Description of a Standard Jewish Burial)
- Appendix E (Participating Hevra Kadisha Organizations and Contact Information)
- Appendix F (Members of the Jewish Agency Council and Contact Information)
- Appendix G (Intake Form)

**INTRODUCTION:** Hesed Shel Emet (“unrequited kindness”) is a program that provides Jewish burial resources for members of the Jewish community in Oregon and SW Washington in circumstances when the individual or the individual’s family cannot provide burial resources – “so that all Jews can be buried in dignity.”

**Origin:** Just before Jacob died, he asked Joseph to promise that he would not remain buried in Egypt, pleading "deal kindly and truly with me" (Genesis. 47:29). Jacob's words teach us that caring for those who are unable to return the kindness is a higher form of giving, called Hesed Shel Emet, a true kindness born of mercy and compassion, a kindness offered without expectation of reward or repayment.

In the summer of 2008, Florence, a Robison Jewish Health Center resident died with no resources, relatives, or burial plan in place. Cedar Sinai Park’s Chief Development Officer, Debbi Bodie, and cemetery chair of Congregation Neveh Shalom’s cemetery committee, helped to arrange a Jewish burial for Florence despite her circumstances. After the funeral, Ms. Bodie was concerned over how Jewish elders with a lack of resources and/or family could be buried according to Jewish law should the situation rise again. She met with Rabbi Ariel Stone, then President of the Oregon Board of Rabbis, to discuss her concerns and to set the groundwork for what would make Hesed Shel Emet a sustainable program.

**PURPOSE:** In order to form a more caring Jewish community, the Oregon Board of Rabbis and the Jewish Agency Council of Oregon came together in 2009 to do the mitzvah of *Hesed Shel Emet*, caring for the burial of those who cannot afford it and will never be able to return the kindness in order to:

- To assure that all low-income Jewish residents of Oregon and Southwest Washington can be buried with dignity in accordance with Jewish law and customs;
- To assure that a system of coordination and collaboration among Jewish agencies and congregations has been established in order to sustain this effort.

**ELIGIBILITY:**

- Open to: all Jews, regardless of affiliate status, residing in Oregon or SW Washington at the time of death. No one will be asked to prove Jewish status nor will tax documents be required to establish proof of indigence.

**ADMINISTRATION:** The **administrator** of the program is responsible for coordinating all resources whenever the support of *Hesed Shel Emet* is called upon.

Responsibilities include:

1. Establishing the need for resources (unless already established by a Rabbi or other Jewish Congregational representative)
2. Making arrangements with the funeral home
3. Making arrangements with the cemetery
4. Recruiting rabbinic participation (unless a rabbi is already involved); see note #1 under Participation.
5. Ensuring that proper staff support is provided by Jewish Federation of Greater Portland (e.g., scheduling meetings for the annual steering committee, etc.)

**PARTICIPATION:** Participating Jewish organizations in the greater Portland area include all Congregation-owned cemeteries, all Congregational leaders, all Rabbis, and all Jewish agencies which have chosen to take part. Participation is open to all Jewish groups whether they are involved in the burial of Jews or in supporting the mitzvah through contributions.

Participation includes:

1. Rabbis will officiate on a rotating basis where possible, as appropriate to family sensitivities.
2. Cemeteries will provide space on a rotating basis where possible. Where rotation is not appropriate (i.e. in the case of a family member who should be buried in a specific cemetery), financial reimbursement will cover up to a set amount of the cost, depending upon fundraising.
3. Funeral homes commit to a low set price for a strictly defined Jewish burial.
4. *Hevra Kadisha* organizations are called upon to donate their services.
5. Jewish agencies: helping to identify and gather funds and in-kind resources

**ORGANIZATION OF RESOURCES AND SUPPORT:** Support for Hesed Shel Emet is both financial and in-kind. The program's administrator provides ongoing coordination for Hesed Shel Emet while the steering committee provides direction and support. The following measures have been taken to ensure the sustainability of Hesed Shel Emet:

- Creation of a \$500,000 endowment for indigent burials.
- Annual fundraising, as necessary, to assure maintenance of adequate funds for indigent burials. May use funds for educational outreach programming.
- Ongoing coordination among all Jewish cemeteries regarding agreement to provide burial plots for indigent Jewish deceased.
- Ongoing coordination with funeral homes regarding management of costs for indigent burial.
- Ongoing collaboration with *Hevra Kadisha* Committees.
- Development and refinement of criteria to determine eligibility for indigent burial.
- Ongoing development of the formal procedure for application and support, and coordination of that support.

**FUNDRAISING:**

- **Hesed Shel Emet** fundraising shall be timed to coincide with *Yizkor* of either the Pesakh or Shavuot festival observance so as not to conflict with High Holy Days *Yizkor* fundraising appeals already in place in some congregations.
- **The Oregon Jewish Community Foundation** will establish a *Hesed Shel Emet* fund under **OJCF** supervision and provide a link on its website for donations.
- **The Jewish Federation of Greater Portland** has established a *Hesed Shel Emet* page and a link on its website for donations. [www.jewishportland.org/hesed](http://www.jewishportland.org/hesed)

**STEERING COMMITTEE:** The steering committee represents the responsible and affected organizations that meet regularly to oversee the Hesed Shel Emet program and offers the program administrator any needed support and guidance. The steering committee consists of:

- Committee Chairperson: Rabbi Ariel Stone
- Co-Founder & Ex-Officio Committee Member: Debbi Bodie
- Hesed Shel Emet Program Administrator: Lisa Spiegel
- One representative from Cedar Sinai Park: Kimberly Fuson
- One representative from Jewish Family & Child Service: Ruth Scott
- One representative of the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland: Marc Blattner
- One representative of the Oregon Jewish Community Foundation: David Forman
- One representative of the Oregon Board of Rabbis: Rabbi Eve Posen
- Community Chaplain: Rabbi Barry Cohen
- Two additional at large rabbinical representatives (one of which is a congregational Rabbi): Rabbi Abby Cohen and TBD
- One at large congregational representatives either executive officers or congregational representatives: Joshua Kashinsky
- One Chabad Rabbi: Rabbi Motti Wilhelm
- Two at-large community representative: Rivkah Coburn and Charlie Rosenblum
- One representatives of each *Hevra Kadisha*:  
David Lewis/Sharon Fendrich, Chevra Kavod Hamet  
Ivan Gold, Portland Hevra
- Staff support provided by Jewish Federation of Greater Portland,  
Julie Alferez

**APPENDIX A: Participating Rabbis  
Oregon Board of Rabbis**

**Portland area**

Rabbi Benjamin Barnett  
[info@havurahshalom.org](mailto:info@havurahshalom.org)  
(503) 248-4662  
Havurah Shalom (Reconstructionist)

**Rabbi Alan Berg**

[rabbiberg@beithav.org](mailto:rabbiberg@beithav.org)  
(503) 310-9184  
*Beit Haverim (Reform)*  
*West Linn*

**Rabbi Michael Cahana**

[rabbicahana@bethisrael-pdx.org](mailto:rabbicahana@bethisrael-pdx.org)  
(503) 222-1069  
*Beth Israel (Reform)*

**Rabbi Barry Cohen**

[chaplain@jewishportland.org](mailto:chaplain@jewishportland.org)  
(503) 892-7401  
*Community Rabbi*

**Rabbi Shelton Donnell**

[rsjdonnell@gmail.com](mailto:rsjdonnell@gmail.com)  
(971) 245-5124

**Rabbi Elizabeth Dunsker**

[rabbidunsker@jewishvancouverusa.org](mailto:rabbidunsker@jewishvancouverusa.org)  
(360) 896-8088  
*Congregation Kol Ami (Reform)*  
*Vancouver*

**Rabbi Daniel Isaak (Emeritus)**

[disaak@nevehshalom.org](mailto:disaak@nevehshalom.org)  
(503) 246-8831  
*Neveh Shalom (Conservative)*

**Rabbi Rachel Joseph**

[rabbijoselph@bethisrael-pdx.org](mailto:rabbijoselph@bethisrael-pdx.org)  
(503) 222-1069  
*Beth Israel (Reform)*

**Rabbi Emily Kaper-Mater**

[emily@pdxopenbeitmidrash.org](mailto:emily@pdxopenbeitmidrash.org)  
*Portland Open Beit Midrash*

**Rabbi David Kosak**

[dkosak@nevehshalom.org](mailto:dkosak@nevehshalom.org)  
(503) 246-8831  
*Neveh Shalom (Conservative)*

**Rabbi Gary Oren**

[rabioren@shaarietorah.org](mailto:rabioren@shaarietorah.org)  
(503) 226-6131  
*Shaarie Torah (Conservative)*

**Rabbi Eve Posen**

[rabbieve@gmail.com](mailto:rabbieve@gmail.com)

(503) 246-8831

*Neveh Shalom (Conservative)*

**Rabbi Laurie Rutenberg**

[gesher@comcast.net](mailto:gesher@comcast.net)

(503) 246-5070

*Gesher: A Bridge Home*

**Rabbi Gary Schoenberg**

[gesher@comcast.net](mailto:gesher@comcast.net)

(503) 246-5070

*Gesher: A Bridge Home*

**Rabbi Ariel Stone**

[rabbiaristolstone@gmail.com](mailto:rabbiaristolstone@gmail.com)

(503) 473-8227

*Shir Tikvah*

**Rabbi Joey Wolf**

[joeywolf51@gmail.com](mailto:joeywolf51@gmail.com)

*formerly Havurah Shalom*

**Rabbi Mel Young**

[melinyoung@sbcglobal.net](mailto:melinyoung@sbcglobal.net)

**Outside Portland**

**Rabbi Emanuel Ben-David**

(541) 488-6423

[Bendavid.e@charter.net](mailto:Bendavid.e@charter.net)

*Ohala - Ashland*

**Rabbi Julie Benioff**

(541) 488-2909

[rabbijulie@emekshalom.org](mailto:rabbijulie@emekshalom.org)

*Temple Emek Shalom - Ashland*

**Rabbi Philip Bressler**

(314) 537-5120

[rabbi@beitam.org](mailto:rabbi@beitam.org)

*Beit Am - Corvallis*

**Rabbi Jacqueline Brodsky**

[lachayyim@yahoo.com](mailto:lachayyim@yahoo.com)

(541) 488-0004

*Congregation Mayim Shalom*

*Southern Oregon Coast*

**Rabbi Yossi Feintuch**

[rabbi@jccobend.com](mailto:rabbi@jccobend.com)

573-881-4088

*Shalom Bayit - Bend*

**Rabbi Eli Herb**

(503) 362-5004

[rabbi@tbshalom.org](mailto:rabbi@tbshalom.org)

*Temple Beth Shalom - Salem*

**Rabbi Sue Morningstar**

(541) 482-2032

*Havurah Shir Hadash (Renewal)*

*Ashland*



**Rabbi Ruhi Sophia Motzkin Rubenstein**

(541) 484-6053  
rabbiruhi@tbieugene.org

*Temple Beth Israel -Eugene*

**Rabbi Jonathan Seidel**

[jonseidel@aol.com](mailto:jonseidel@aol.com)

(541) 434-6551

*Or haGan - Eugene*

**Rabbi David Zaslow**

[shalomrav@aol.com](mailto:shalomrav@aol.com)

(541) 488-0772

*Havurah Shir Hadash (Renewal)*

*Ashland*

**APPENDIX B: Participating Cemeteries and Contact Info Portland Area:**

**Congregation Ahavai Shalom Cemetery**

(503) 246-8831  
9323 SW 1st Ave  
Portland, Oregon 97219

**Congregation Beth Israel Cemetery**

(503) 222-1069  
426 SW Taylors Ferry Rd  
Portland, Oregon 97219

**Congregation Kol Ami Cemetery**

(360) 896-8088  
Vancouver, Washington

**Kol Shalom JCRV**

(503)246-4251  
300 SW Taylors Ferry Road  
Portland, OR 97219

**Congregation Neveh Zedek Cemetery**

(503) 246-8831  
7925 SW Canyon Lane  
Portland, Oregon 97225

**Congregation Shaarie Torah Cemetery**

(503) 226-6131  
8013 SE 67th Ave  
Portland, Oregon 97206

**Havurah Shalom Cemetery**

(503) 248-4662  
5656 SW Humphrey Blvd.  
Portland, Oregon 97221

**Kesser Israel Cemetery**

(503) 222-1239  
6509 SE Nehalem St.  
Portland, Oregon 97206

**P'nai Or JCRV**

(503) 246-4251  
300 SW Taylors Ferry Road  
Portland, Oregon 97219

**Shir Tikvah JCRV**

(503) 246-4251  
300 SW Taylors Ferry Road  
Portland, Oregon 97219

## **Outside Portland Area:**

### **Waverly Cemetery in Albany**

(541)928-3145  
SE Albany & SE Salem Rd.  
Albany, Oregon 97321

## **APPENDIX C: Participating Funeral Homes**

### **Holman's Funeral Service**

[info@holmansfuneralservice.com](mailto:info@holmansfuneralservice.com)  
(503) 232-5131

### **Riverview Cemetery Funeral Home**

[info@riverviewcemetary.com](mailto:info@riverviewcemetary.com)  
(503) 246-6488

## **APPENDIX D: Description of Standard Jewish Burial**

- Basic services of funeral director and staff
- Arrangement conference with family or responsible party
- Preparation and filing of necessary authorizations and permits
- Recording vital statistics
- Coordinating arrangement with Cemetery and/or other parties involved with final disposition
- Other operational business expenses
- Transfer of remains to the funeral home (mortuary ambulance)
- Refrigeration, holding and care of un-embalmed remains
- Use of equipment and staff for a funeral ceremony
- Funeral vehicle and driver to transport casket to cemetery
- State of Oregon/Washington Death Certificate filing fee
- Traditional Nahum Orthodox Casket (Plain Pine Box)
- Concrete sectional grave liner (required)
- 16" x 8" unpolished grave marker
- Chevra Kadisha Ritual including shroud

## **APPENDIX E: Participating *Hevra Kadisha* organizations**

### **Chevra Kavod Hamet**

[chevrakavodhamet@gmail.com](mailto:chevrakavodhamet@gmail.com)

Sharon Segal

(503) 703-8788 cell

(503) 297-7500 hm

sharon-segal@comcast.net

### **Hevra Kadisha**

[webmaven@beitam.org](mailto:webmaven@beitam.org)

541-753-0067

*Mid-Willamette Valley*

### **The Portland Hevra**

Michael Rosenberg

(503) 519-2454

*Tigard*

## **APPENDIX F Participating Jewish Agencies**

### **Jewish Federation of Greater Portland**

[info@jewishportland.org](mailto:info@jewishportland.org)

(503) 245-6219

### **Jewish Family and Child Service**

[info@jfcs-portland.org](mailto:info@jfcs-portland.org)

(503) 226-7079

### **Oregon Jewish Community Foundation**

[davidf@ojcf.org](mailto:davidf@ojcf.org)

(503) 248-9328

### **Cedar Sinai Park**

[kimberly.fuson@cedarsinaipark.org](mailto:kimberly.fuson@cedarsinaipark.org)

(503) 535-4300