

Steven D. Reece

From: The Matzevah Foundation <sdreece@matzevah.org>
Sent: Tuesday, January 8, 2019 10:15
To: sdreece@matzevah.org
Subject: The Matzevah Foundation 2018 Year End Report

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2018 Year End Report

As we embark on a new year, we wanted to share with you a review of our work as an organization from 2018. The Matzevah Foundation (TMF), in our eighth year of existence, continues to see growth each year. That growth comes in a variety of forms from the number of projects we complete in Poland to the number of volunteers who give of their time and resources and to the growing impact that TMF has not just in Poland but around the world. While our most visible activity occurs during the summer with our cemetery restoration and commemoration projects, our team works each month to further the scope of our work.

We are excited to share with you a snapshot of our work in 2018.

A Note From Our President

It is difficult for me to capture in a few short sentences the depth and breadth of what I experienced in leading the work of TMF over the past year. We do more than just clean and remove debris from Polish Jewish cemeteries. We are friends and advisors. We serve as confidants at times, and on other occasions, we are diplomats engaged in cultural diplomacy. We invest ourselves in the lives of people. We laugh and weep with them. We walk with them and assist them in their work. At times, we are reconcilers who bring together communities helping them work together to restore the social fabric of their collective past. We also speak for Jewish victims who no longer have a voice by locating and marking their hidden resting places and when possible we commemorate their memories. These words capture the essence of who we are and what we do. - Steven D. Reece





Winter

- Plans for summer 2018 were in full swing as we communicated with our partners
- TMF President Steven Reece traveled to Poland in March. He spent a couple of weeks driving all over Poland visiting the locations of our projects for the summer. Steven also conducted several meetings with partners such as [The Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland \(FODZ\)](#) and [Fundacja Zapomniane](#).

Spring

- Our spring board meeting was held in Franklin, Tennessee. Final approval was given on all our projects, new financial structures were discussed, and each board member gave an update on their area of responsibility.





Summer

- A full summer of work in Poland and Ukraine began!

- Rogalów and Karmanowice – TMF partnered with [Fundacja Zapomniane](#) to locate, mark and document 30 locations of forgotten mass grave sites of Jews who perished during the Shoah. Commemorations were also held in these locations.
- Częstochowa – Together with our friend Alon Goldman, a large team of volunteers from Israel and from the local community, we worked to clear a large area of this historic Jewish cemetery of fallen trees and overgrowth.
- Krzepice – We happily returned to Krzepice and enjoyed working alongside a faithful group of high school students and their teacher. Their hard work helped us get closer to our goal of a 100% clearing of this beautiful cemetery that is home to some of the only wrought iron matzevah (headstones) in Poland.
- Wąwolnica – This was our second year in Wąwolnica. We worked with [Studnia Pamięci](#) and [Ogrodnicy Pamięci](#) to clear the cemetery and held a small commemoration to replace the Star of David on a newly refurbished memorial stone.
- Przerosl – Together with a group of descendants of Przerosl, we continued clearing the Jewish cemetery in the northeast corner of Poland. More progress was made this year and we continue to enjoy our friendship with this wonderful group of dedicated descendants.
- Nasielsk – We returned for a third year of work in Nasielsk. As we near the completion of a full clearing and cleaning of this cemetery, we continue to be honored to serve alongside a faithful group of descendants who are working year-round to remember the Jewish community of Nasielsk.
- Oświęcim – Our love for this town and this cemetery continues to grow each year. We were blessed to have several local friends and members of their families join us in the work this year. We completed a thorough clearing of overgrowth throughout the cemetery. [The Auschwitz Jewish Center](#) honored TMF with the

placement of a plaque on the outer wall of the cemetery that marks our many years of partnership. We are grateful for their friendship and are deeply honored with this recognition.

- Rohatyn, Ukraine – TMF crossed borders this year and traveled to Ukraine! We worked in the Old Jewish Cemetery in Rohatyn with our friends at [Rohatyn Jewish Heritage](#). We were joined by several members of the U.S. Peace Corps and local Ukrainian friends to begin the first major clearing this cemetery has had in many decades.
- Steven Reece participated in the [International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies](#) in Warsaw





Fall

- AP News released an [article](#) and [video](#) covering the work of Steven Reece and TMF during our time in Ukraine
- Our fall board meeting was held in Lookout Mountain, Tennessee. A complete review of our projects was conducted, initial discussions for 2019 took place, as well as vision casting for the next year for our organization.
- Steven Reece attended two film screenings at the L.A. Jewish Film Festival for a documentary film in which he appears. [“In the Presence of Their Absence”](#) is a documentary by filmmaker Donna Kanter. After the premiere of the film, Steven was part of a couple of panel discussions highlighting our work in Poland and the importance of remembering.
- Our Giving Tuesday campaign surpassed our one-day goal! We raised over \$1,500 in one day which easily passed our \$1,000 goal.
- We received our largest donation in our history from a partner. This donation is helping us to purchase a vehicle in Poland in 2019.

FUN STATS FROM 2018

8: THE NUMBER OF YEARS TMF CELEBRATED AS AN ORGANIZATION IN DECEMBER

465: THE NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS WHO WORKED WITH TMF DURING SUMMER 2018

1,000: THE TOTAL NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS WHO HAVE WORKED WITH TMF SINCE OUR BEGINNINGS IN 2010.

13: THE NUMBER OF COUNTRIES REPRESENTED BY OUR VOLUNTEERS

25: THE NUMBER OF PROJECTS WE HAVE COMPLETED SINCE OUR BEGINNING

Coming in 2019

- Steven Reece will be speaking at the Scottsdale Community College 7th Annual Genocide Conference in Scottsdale, Arizona in April
- Announcement of TMF's 2019 cemetery restoration and commemoration projects coming in late March to early April
- Purchasing a vehicle in Poland
- New website

Administration

The Matzevah Foundation operates as a tax-exempt 501(C)(3) non-profit corporation recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a public charity. Our board is made up of the following team members:

Steven D. Reece – Founder and President of The Matzevah Foundation

Kevin Little – Treasurer

JoAnn Siegienski – Secretary

Elaine Brown – Director of Development

John Mark Folker – Director of Operations in the U.S.

Rachel McRae – Director of Communications

Przemek Panisuk – Director of Operations in Poland

We also have a dedicated team of volunteer staff that support the efforts of our organization in a variety of ways. In 2019 we will be looking to revise and expand our Advisory Board who will provide insight, advice, and encouragement in various aspects of our work.



Financial

Our cemetery restoration and commemoration projects for 2018 were fully funded through donations from private individuals and organizations. We are grateful to those who faithfully give each month and throughout the year. All donations we receive support not only our projects in Poland but also administration and operational needs.

We receive countless hours of volunteer work from our board, volunteer staff, and project volunteers. There are many people who give of their time, talents, and finances to help further the work of The Matzevah Foundation. We cannot put a value on all the many ways people give to our work... we are extremely grateful!



Thank you
FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Will You Join Us?

There are a couple of ways you can be a part of our work in Poland:

Volunteer: We will be announcing our project schedule for the summer of 2019 by April. We invite you to submit a [volunteer application](#) and join us for one of the projects this year.

Financial Giving: As our organization grows in scope and impact, so do our needs for funding. We can not do this important work in Poland without financial gifts from you. Will consider one partnering with us in 2019?

Become a Monthly Donor

Set up a recurring monthly donation through PayPal and make an easy donation each month. Choose amounts of \$25, \$50, \$100 or more to give each month. Visit [our website](#) for a link to our PayPal today!

Or you can give monthly by writing a check made payable to The Matzevah Foundation and mail to:

The Matzevah Foundation
2020 Fieldstone Pkwy, Suite 900-246
Franklin, TN 37069

The Board of Directors, along with President Steven Reece, sincerely thank you for your engagement, investment, and support of our work in 2018. We look forward to sharing more stories and more progress in our work in 2019.



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