

Markuszów Jewish Cemetery

July 14-23, 2016

Submitted by Rachel McRae, JoAnn Siegienski and Steven D. Reece



TITLE OF PROJECT: Markuszów Jewish Cemetery Restoration Project

DATE OF PROJECT: 14-23 July, 2016

LOCATION: Markuszów, Poland

TEAM LEADERS:

- Rachel McRae (BBC Team)
- Steven Reece
- Przemek Panasuik (TMF Advisory Board Member)
- This is a partnership with FODZ as part of their “Adopt a Cemetery” initiative

PARTICIPANTS:

- Elaine Brown (TMF Board Member, BBC)
- Cindy Jones (TMF Advisory Board, BBC)
- Bruce Mussey
- Caylee Dugger (BBC)
- Dan Oren Team is a descendent from a Markuszow resident.
- Dan leads a team of 11 from Connecticut and NY
- Teresa + 4 volunteers (from Studnia Pamięci)
- No local scouts participated.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:

- Clear and restore cemetery.
- Cemetery is roughly 120 yards long by 50 yards wide (.45 hectare)
- Partnered with Dan Oren
- Partnered with Teresa Kilmowicz of Studnia Pamięci (Well of Memory)

GOALS OF PROJECT:

- Complete cleaning and clearing of the cemetery.
- Assist with the rededication ceremony.
- Build relationship with Jewish partners (build bridge to Jewish descendant’s group for dialogue)
- Build relationship with Polish partners (engage and develop local leadership)

LODGING:

- Dan Oren coordinated lodging for all people.
- 18 people stayed in:

Lubelskie Stowarzyszenie Agroturystyczne-Barbara Pawłowska
Bronice 51A,

24-150 Nałęczów
woj. Lubelskie
Polska

- Rachel coordinated for BBC team for time in Warsaw for 4 people
- Steven took care of his and Bruce's accommodations as needed – Bruce stayed one night in hostel, then accompanied team to Markuszów, where he stayed with everyone else; he returned and stayed with me in Warsaw

TRANSPORTATION:

- Dan arranged all transportation for his group and a good bit for the rest of the group, as well i.e. daily transport from Agrotourist hotel to cemetery, trip into Lublin (for fun?) and the BBC team and Przemek back to Warsaw at conclusion of the project.
- Przemek helped coordinate train tickets from Warsaw to Lublin

PRELIMINARY BUDGET: (if any)

- None as far as I can tell/none submitted

PREPARATION OF VOLUNTEERS:

BBC team:

- Rachel met with them a couple of times, covered materials that church provided for all missions teams;
- covered schedule for trip;
- details of the work;
- what to expect from the Polish culture;
- how to interact with our Jewish partners (???)

Rachel sent Dan information on:

- packing tips,
- cemetery work tips, and
- helped to coordinate gifts for those we came in contact with.

Email was heavily used to discuss logistics and needs between Dan, Steven, and Rachel. Dan and Steven had a couple of phone calls.

- Steven worked with FODZ
- Steven sent TMF Volunteer Orientation to Dan for distribution to his team
- Dan coordinated much of the logistics, accommodations and rededication ceremony on behalf of TMF while checking in w/ Dan and Rachel along the way

- Elaine = designated point-person for all TMF receipts and records
- Documents completed prior to trip: BBC purchased Travel Insurance in late April through church
- Dan's team has their own insurance (as per Rachel)

EXPECTED OUTCOME OF TRIP:

- Complete cleaning and clearing of the cemetery.
- Assist with the rededication ceremony.
- Build relationship with Jewish partners.
- Build relationship with Polish partners.

ACTUAL OUTCOME OF TRIP:

- Accomplished goals and more
- Work went beyond the expected– the cemetery was cleared in 3 working days, relationships and a community developed, dialogue began)
- Great relationships developed between TMF and Dan's team as a result of the discussions that happened while working, laughing, living and singing together
- Turnout at rededication ceremony exceeded expectations – approximately 90+ attendees with a couple of news crews and writers in attendance, as well

PARTNERSHIP WITH LOCAL COMMUNITY:

- Rachel's words are "to some degree" progress was made towards the goal of partnering with the local community:

There were many people who wandered by during the week to see what we were doing. We had a couple of older men help with some small work at the end of the week. The turnout at the ceremony was a great sign of interest in the cemetery. Will it result in care for the future? We don't know. We did have one gentleman say he would help to spray the area with weed killer (it has since been decided that spray will not be used) but his willingness to do it was very genuine and when we left, we felt he would follow through.

- In the absence of a Matzevah member, the team feels there is some measure of hope that someone might tend the cemetery; Studnia Pamięci (Well of Memory) is Lublin-based (that's close to Markuszów) & committed to frequent check

CONTACT WITH LOCAL JEWISH POPULATION?

- None reported

EDUCATION R.E. HOLOCAUST?

- None reported

– Monika Krawczyk of FODZ along with several others spoke at the dedication ceremony about the importance and role the Jewish cemetery plays in memory and instruction regarding past mistakes.

VOLUNTEER FEEDBACK

American Volunteers?

- Volunteers were not asked for their feedback

Polish Volunteers? – No one asked.

- Volunteers were not asked for their feedback

BUDGET & EXPENSES: (actual versus estimated)

- As per Rachel, Elaine will provide upon her return.
- Individual costs & Project costs (things Matzevah paid for)

Working Budget:

\$5,680.00 (Funds deposited prior to project; other funds have been deposited since project)

Expenses:

Please note that TMF was the single payer, meaning TMF collected and disbursed the following funds:

Transportation (Dan's Team): \$935.56

Hotel/Meals: \$1,320.61

Meal (in Lublin): \$318.91

Local Travel: \$418.25

Honorarium: \$104.56

Toilet: \$49.67

Debris removal: \$214.35

GRAND TOTAL PER PERSON:

Elaine

GRAND TOTAL FOR MATZEVAH:

Elaine

PROBLEMS, ISSUES, THE UNEXPECTED:

- Elaine and Rachel did realize that they needed a daily accounting of food and lodging costs but “Dan lined all of that information up and they had a total cost but found that they needed the itemized cost (of food and lodging?) but were able to obtain the itemization – (Elaine)

FOLLOW UP:

- TMF has donated a mid-sized, semi-professional weed eater to Studnia Pamieci
- Studnia Pamieci will soon return to the Markuszów Jewish cemetery to do some residual cleaning
- TMF will consider a joint Jewish cemetery project with Studnia Pamieci in the Lublin area for 2017
- Dan Oren has approached FODZ and ESJF (European Jewish Cemeteries Initiative) about building a wall/fence around the cemetery

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

Best Practices:

1. Common goals established prior to project
2. Worked collaboratively (and respectfully)
3. Local liaison vital (Studnia Pamięci)
4. TMF provided equipment, technical and financial management of project
5. Meeting with mayor prior to project inception
6. FODZ administrative support in securing permissions and installation of memorial
7. Oren family planned work and installation of memorial
8. Combined team met with local leadership prior to ceremony
9. Personal visits with neighbors raised awareness and attendance in memorial ceremony
10. Communal housing and meals key element in building sense of community and cooperation
11. Daily (evening and morning) debrief discussions facilitated dialogue
12. Collaborative pre-planning assisted in the execution or implementation of the project

PLANS TO RETURN?

None at this time.

GOOD STUFF TO KNOW:

WHY did people volunteer for this project?

- TMF volunteers – continued involvement in our work

- BBC volunteer Caylee Dugger – attracted to work b/c of interest in history and the Holocaust. She wanted to come last year but was unable.
- Dan's team – Family "pilgrimage" and the friends that joined the Oren family... several have family roots in Poland and it was a chance to explore those. All wanted to support Dan's mission.

HOW WAS THE GROUP OF VOLUNTEERS ASSEMBLED?

- TMF volunteers – committed in the winter / spring of 2016
- BBC volunteer – learned about trip through the church and promotion of the journey through the church bulletin, website. Organization done by the church initially before it was passed on to me as the team lead for BBC.
- Dan's team – through relationship with Dan and his family











