

Projects for 2012

The Matzevah Foundation will be working in the Jewish cemetery of Zambrów, Poland in partnership with the Foundation for the Protection of Jewish Heritage in Poland (FODZ). We will:

1 Raise Funds for Cleaning:

Matzevah will raise funds for cleaning Jewish cemeteries in Poland.

2 Clean Jewish Cemeteries:

Matzevah will recruit volunteers to clean and remove branches, shrubs and debris from the Jewish cemetery in Zambrów.

3 Restore Jewish Cemeteries:

Matzevah will raise funds to restore the wall around the Zambrów Jewish Cemetery.



The Matzevah Foundation, Inc. is a 501 (C)(3) non-profit and tax exempt charitable organization. We lead and facilitate Jewish Cemetery Restoration Projects in Poland in direct cooperation with Rabbi Michael Schudrich, the Chief Rabbi of Poland, the Rabbinic Council for Matters of Jewish Cemeteries and with the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland (FODZ). We work with Jewish organizations, Baptist churches, and other like-minded churches in order to organize volunteer projects as a means to care for and restore Jewish cemeteries in places where there are no longer Jewish communities.



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THE MATZEVAH FOUNDATION

MATZEVAH מצבה

REMEMBERING-RESTORING-RECONCILING

THE MISSION OF MATZEVAH

REMEMBERING

The Matzevah Foundation, Inc. is a Christian non-profit organization that serves the Jewish community of Poland by mobilizing resources to care for and preserve the Jewish heritage of Poland. It educates people regarding the Shoah (Holocaust) as it relates to Poland and its impact on Jews.

RESTORING

A group of Baptist Christians has been working with the Jewish Community of Poland in restoring Jewish cemeteries since 2005. The Matzevah Foundation, Inc. grew out of this relationship and continues to cooperate with the Jewish Community of Poland to restore Jewish Cemeteries.

RECONCILING

Our desire is to bring Christians and Jews together so that we can meet on the common ground of the Torah by joining each other in a true caring act and mutual expression of what it means to love God and love neighbor. By working together we honor the past, touch the present and impact the future.

1 Honor Jewish Heritage:

"The concept of mitzvah is singularly Jewish in that it refers not to deeds, but to behaviors that are explicitly set forth in the Torah by One God." Caring for the dead is one of the most important mitzvahs (mitzvot) that can be performed because the dead cannot do anything in return for the care. This type of care (love) is one of the highest expressions of true mercy or loving-kindness as expressed in Hebrew by, *Chesed Shel Emet* (חסד של אמת) meaning literally "kindness of truth."

2 Redeem the Memory:

During the Shoah (Holocaust), millions of Jews were murdered. Their unborn children would have been caring for their cemeteries. Because they are not here to do so, these cemeteries lie scattered across Poland uncared for, desolate and decaying. The Matzevah Foundation understands the Jewish concept of "tikkun olam" (healing the earth) and works toward restoring Jewish cemeteries as a means to redeem them, honor them, and thereby bring back the memory of Jews and their 1,000 year history in Poland.

3 Build a Bridge:

The Matzevah Foundation connects Jews of Polish descent with their past and unites (literally reconciles) the Jewish and Christian communities through a common mitzvah by participating in Jewish cemetery restoration projects in Poland. These projects are vitally important to Polish Jewish history and to the heritage of the global Jewish community.



Why Matzevah?

The name "matzevah" (מצבה) comes from a Hebrew word meaning a memorial stone that is placed at the head of a grave facing traditionally toward the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. The word matzevah reflects and captures the vision and purpose of Matzevah as it seeks to remember and honor the Jewish heritage of Poland by restoring Jewish cemeteries and reconciling Jews and Christians through participating in a common "mitzvah."

"Jewish law requires that a tombstone be prepared, so that the deceased will not be forgotten and the grave will not be desecrated." Jewish graves across Poland have been forgotten and desecrated.

A Jewish burial society called Chevra Kadisha ("Holy Society") cares for cemeteries and every Jew who dies. Due to the Shoah, these Holy Societies were nearly eradicated and the few that remain are unable to care for the 1,200 Jewish cemeteries in Poland today.



REMEMBERING
RESTORING
RECONCILING

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REMEMBERING | RESTORING | RECONCILING

REMEMBERING

MATZEVAH | *a memorial stone*

The road to reconciliation begins with **remembering**.

Today, the landscape of Poland is devoid of **the once vibrant, and as some say, "normal life,"** that existed before the Holocaust, when Poles and Jews lived together rather peaceably. During the Holocaust some 6 million Jews were murdered during the Nazi occupation.

3.5 million of those murdered were Polish Jews.

Today, scattered across Poland, **1,200 Jewish cemeteries**, as well as mass burial sites yet to be found, speak of those who were lost and of that which was lost.

The Shoah (Holocaust) took the generations of Jews who would have remembered and honored their heritage. The Matzevah Foundation remembers by educating people regarding the Shoah and **by bringing to light that which was hidden.**

RESTORING

MITZVAH | *a righteous act*

Remembering, challenges us to ask,
“What does God require?”

Jewish teachers consider that the highest expression of true mercy (loving-kindness) is to care for the dead—for the dead cannot care for themselves. Since 2005, The Matzevah Foundation has been ***serving the Jewish community of Poland by mobilizing resources to care for and preserve the Jewish heritage of Poland.***

As these cemeteries are ***brought to light***, the voice of the matzevahs become undeniable to all who see. They speak as reminders to both the absence of Jews in Poland today as well as the once thriving Jewish life and culture before the Holocaust, when Jews lived amongst Poles, for the most part, peacefully.

Through restoring cemeteries, The Matzevah Foundation is participating in "tikkun olam"—healing the earth.

RECONCILING

TIKKUN OLAM | *healing the earth*

A woman once asked us,
“Why would you, a Christian, do this for us, a Jew?”
Founder, Steven Reece replied, “**Love.**”

The Matzevah Foundation grew out of the work of a group of Christians, who walk according to the two greatest commandments given to us in the Torah—“**to love God**” and “**to love neighbor.**”

Due to the Shoah, we know that our relationship with the Jewish community is strained. However, we are bridging the gap between the Jewish and Christian communities, as well as, connecting Jews of Polish descent with their past. We do this through a common mitzvah **by caring for and restoring Jewish cemeteries in Poland.**

Along the neglected roads to Poland’s House of the Living, we join together with our friends, sharing common times of deeply remembering, practically restoring, and wonderfully reconciling.

What if, together, we began remembering and restoring?

Join us.

The Matzevah Foundation

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POJEDNANIE | *reconciliation*

WHO WE ARE

The Matzevah Foundation (TMF) was established in 2010 as a tax-exempt, 501(C)(3) non-profit corporation recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a public charity. The Matzevah Foundation seeks to remember and honor the Jewish heritage of Poland by restoring Jewish cemeteries and reconciling Jews and Christians through participating in a common mitzvah, or righteous act.

VOLUNTEER WITH US

Join us on an upcoming cemetery restoration project in Poland. Visit matzevah.org/get-involved to learn more.



CONTACT US

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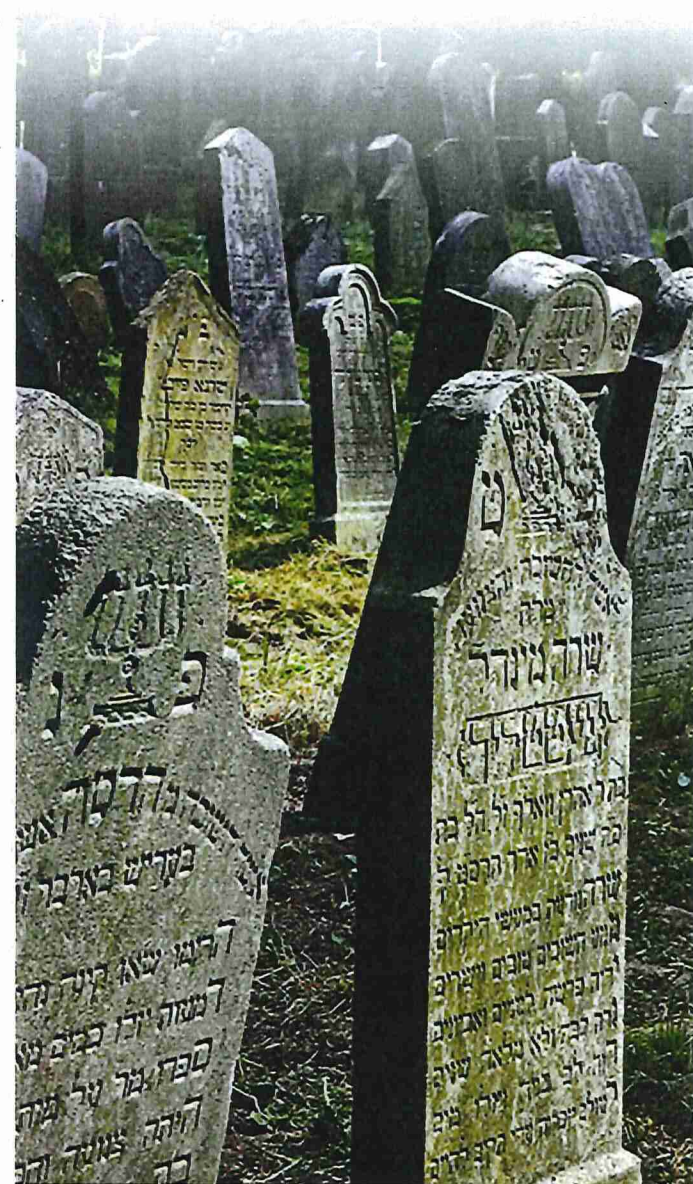
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THE
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REMEMBERING. RESTORING. RECONCILING.



REMEMBERING

Poland's landscape is devoid of the once vibrant Jewish culture that existed before the Holocaust (Shoah). Poles and Jews lived together for many generations. The horrors of the Holocaust, when 3.5 million Polish Jews were murdered, have forever changed the country.

The Matzevah Foundation seeks to remember by increasing awareness of and honoring the Jewish heritage in Poland through education and caring for Jewish cemeteries and burial sites.



RESTORING

The Matzevah Foundation mobilizes volunteers from Poland and around the world to clean, clear, and commemorate Jewish cemeteries and burial sites. This mitzvah, or righteous act, allows us to bring to light matzevah (headstones) that have not been visible for years. They serve as reminders to the absence of Jews in Poland today as well as the thriving Jewish life and culture that existed there before the Holocaust.

We partner with descendants to help reconnect them to their ancestral Polish town. Through working to restore a cemetery, families are able to discover and appreciate the Jewish legacy of their ancestors.



RECONCILING

The Matzevah Foundation grew out of the work of a group of Christians who walk according to the two greatest commandments given in the Torah - "to love G-d" and "to love neighbor."

Due to the Shoah, we know that the relationship with the Jewish community is strained. We seek to bridge the gap between the Jewish and Christian cultures, as well as connect Jews of Polish descent with their past.

