

The Holocaust Survivor Support Fund



JUNE 2025

HSSF HELPS WITH FINAL MOMENTS

In late 2024, the Holocaust Survivor Support Fund helped with the burial of a survivor who had little to no funds. HSSF did not act alone but as part of a community that came together to meet the need and the moment to assist this survivor in a meaningful way at the end of life.

The story starts in 2022 when the survivor, Aaron (name changed for privacy), connected to a local community member who introduced him to Rabbi Gedalya Hertz of Chabad of North Fulton. Aaron had been through severe medical issues, and it was unclear whether he would survive. Aaron and Rabbi Hertz connected spiritually, and when death seemed near, Aaron shared with Rabbi Hertz that he wanted a Jewish burial.

Fortunately, Aaron survived this medical scare and began to put some funds away. Being on Medicaid, it was financially difficult. Aaron was a proud man of limited means, but he did not want to burden anyone, so he saved a little at a time.

In 2024, Aaron was nearing death and had to decide about funeral arrangements. With what limited funds he saved, he could only afford cremation services, and the path seemed set. Rabbi Hertz heard of Aaron's passing and the final arrangements within hours of his death, and remembered how Aaron wanted a Jewish burial.

Rabbi Hertz and Rabbi Hirshy Minkowicz, both of Chabad of North Fulton, worked to make this final wish possible through community engagement.

Several immediate and coordinated acts beyond what they could accomplish alone needed to take place: halting the cremation, acquiring a cemetery plot, and securing funds to cover the funeral services and the headstone.

With the plan for cremation halted and the necessary approvals received, Rabbi Minkowicz connected with me as chair of the Holocaust Survivor Support Fund convened by Jewish Federation of Greater

Atlanta to see what could be done to help financially. HSSF immediately stepped up, knowing Aaron's financial situation, and covered the funeral expenses discounted by Dressler's Jewish Funeral Care. Chabad of North Fulton secured a cemetery plot and ensured there'd be a minyan for the funeral.



The journey did not stop there. HSSF also learned that Aaron's son was across the country and couldn't get to Atlanta quickly. Travel would have been by car, taking many days. Through additional private outreach I secured funds to fly the son, uniting him with his father, in this final moment of honor and respect. All these actions occurred in two days so Aaron could have a proper Jewish burial.

Rabbi Hertz shared, "It is incredible that every person that participated was giving to a total stranger, to help with a Jewish burial." Anat Granath, a JF&CS social worker noted, "We are so grateful to the Holocaust Survivor Support Fund for being there in the moment of need and support to help."

I attended the funeral and was moved by all that took place to be there at that moment. Helping with a Jewish burial is a mitzvah—a profound act of kindness and communal responsibility, and a task that cannot be repaid by the deceased. The good deeds went further. After the funeral, private donors contributed toward securing a gravestone for Aaron.

As Holocaust survivors age, HSSF helps provide them care, especially homecare. We also have seen an increased need to assist with funeral expenses as 52% of the survivors we care for are on Medicaid. In 2024, we assisted five survivors with funeral needs.

Your support of HSSF helps with many services and acts of respect such as this burial. As a result, survivors are provided care and dignity, with their myriads of needs taken care of in their final years.

With much gratitude,
Cherie Aviv, Chair, HSSF