

Kehillat Israel - Shenandoah- Cemetery Spruce Up



Before: Our 3 dedicated volunteers had their work cut out for them



Sam Walter scraping the paint off the cemetery shed



After: Dr. Wassner with Bill & Sam Walter after a hard days work



Sam Walter repainting the cemetery shed

“What comes to mind when you hear the word, ‘work?’ Before I volunteered at the Kehillat Israel Cemetery in Shenandoah, I often thought of a boring task when I heard the word, ‘work.’ My initial impression when my dad and I first arrived at the cemetery was a little bit of shock and disappointment. I expected there to be more people, but there was only one other person, Dr. Wassner. Where were all the other teens? How were we going to be able to accomplish this task?

I was overwhelmed by the amount of work that we had to do for just three of us. However, once I started talking with Dr. Wassner and my dad, my impression quickly changed. I was glad at how quickly my dad and I became friends with Dr. Wassner, talking about our families to each other. Then, we got to work. First, we had to scrape the old paint off of the shed before we could start painting. Once we were done with one side, Dr. Wassner started to paint while we scraped the other sides. We listened to music, laughed, and had fun. I couldn’t believe how much I was enjoying myself while doing hard work. Eventually, we finished and I felt proud and accomplished. I also felt good about myself and learned a few things about life. I encourage other teens that when you get the chance to volunteer do it. As a Jewish teen this particular opportunity gave me joy and a sense of pride in honoring my heritage. I can imagine family members of those who lie in that cemetery, hoping they are smiling at the sight of shed being repainted. I imagine they would be happy because it shows someone still cares.” Sam Walter

Did you know that the Jewish Community Foundation of Central PA manages Jewish cemeteries?

“One of the first responsibilities of any Jewish community is the designation and maintenance of a Jewish cemetery for its members. Throughout Central Pennsylvania there are multiple Jewish Cemeteries in smaller towns which no longer have a local Jewish community able to care for them. Some of these sites are still active with occasional burials of older community members, but at other sites, the founding community is entirely gone. Whenever feasible, the Jewish Community Foundation of Central Pennsylvania, through its cemetery committee, has assumed the responsibility for the upkeep and maintenance of these sites. Cemetery management involves regular inspection visits by community members who ensure that the grounds are well kept and inform the committee of any necessary maintenance requirements.

A recent visit to the Kehillat Israel Cemetery in Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania identified the fact that the cemetery shed required painting. Three members of the community volunteered to repaint the structure and on a recent August day Steve Wassner, Bill and Sam Walter spent several hours scraping and painting the structure. Paint supplies and essential advice was provided by our Executive Director and painting specialist, Paulette Keifer and a special shoutout to Yitzi First—who volunteered and would have been there to help had we not changed the date on him.” Dr. Steven Wassner



Dr. Steven Wassner painting the cemetery shed

Kehillat Israel Cemetery in Shenandoah, PA is managed by our Jewish Community Foundation.

For more information on cemetery management or other Foundation services contact:

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