



Partially funded by the Chicago Department of Family and Social Services, Senior Division

# THE MITZVAH GRAM

*The Monthly Publication of The Chicago Mitzvah Campaign*  
**1-866-MY-RABBI**

[www.chicagomitzvahcampaign.com](http://www.chicagomitzvahcampaign.com)

## Shofar Blowing Helps Cancer Patient

### CMC Chaplaincy and Senior Services Division

- Hospital visitations
- Weekly "Shabbos packages" delivered to hospital patients
- "Senior Friendship" (home outreach for isolated seniors)
- Monthly Jewish discussion at dozens of retirement and nursing facilities
- Subsidized emergency response systems
- Free kosher guest meals in hospitals
- Free medicar transportation for the elderly and infirm
- Delivering shabbos and holiday meals to patients
- Holiday awareness and celebrations at retirement and nursing homes
- Patient and family support
- Telephone reassurance program
- Promoting traditional Jewish funeral practices
- Mitzvah commute

Every Rosh Hashana the Chicago Mitzvah Campaign arranges for volunteers to blow shofar for Jewish patients at many Chicago area hospitals. During one such visit, Rabbi Aron Wolf once met a bedridden middle-aged man, MW, who was very happy and relieved to see a rabbi.

After hearing the shofar, MW told Rabbi Wolf about his dire health condition. His doctors had diagnosed him with two different types of blood diseases, each of which was considered terminal. In fact, over six months prior they had informed him that he had at most half a year left to live. Rabbi Wolf encouraged MW with words of support and comfort.

The conversation between rabbi and patient turned to matters of the spirit. Regrettably, MW had never received more than minimal exposure to Jewish education and observance. Now in middle-age, with his body failing him, his soul's flame was beginning to sparkle, and he expressed interest in refreshing and renewing his connection to Judaism. Upon Rabbi Wolf's advice he resolved to move forward in the areas of putting on tefillin, prayer, and Torah study.

In view of MW's deteriorating physical condition, Rabbi Wolf inquired after his family situation. Aside from a brother living interstate, MW had a non-Jewish wife and no children. Delicately, Rabbi Wolf broached the subject of funeral arrangements. MW related that he had instructed his wife to have his body cremated. His parents were both buried (in separate locations) in

Waldheim cemetery, and it was his wish that his body's ashes be sprinkled on his father's grave.

Rabbi Wolf spoke earnestly with MW about the importance of a traditional Jewish funeral, its customs and its significance. MW seemed to be taken unawares by all of this new information, and unsure of how to digest it, but he was obviously touched by the rabbi's heartfelt words and demeanor.

After a pause, MW began to speak of his financial hardships; indeed, it was a struggle for him even to afford such basic items as food and household bills. Clearly, the difference in expense between a funeral and a cremation was a significant obstacle to MW. On the spot, the rabbi assured MW that he would take care of all funeral expenses and logistics. After MW promised to think it over, Rabbi Wolf wished him a happy holiday and bade him farewell.

Shortly thereafter Rabbi Wolf received a call from MW's brother, who wanted to hear confirmation of the rabbi's offer. Soon afterwards MW called Rabbi Wolf directly and proposed that everything be put in writing, to which the rabbi agreed.

Upon further investigation it was discovered that there existed an available space neighboring MW's father in the cemetery. [It should be noted that Waldheim cemetery is divided into individual sections that belong to various organizations and congregations, each of which have their own sets of rules



## “You Come Tomorrow, I Dead!”

During a recent “mezuzah campaign”, Rabbi Aron Wolf received a request from a local Sefardic rabbi to check the mezuzot of a ninety-year old congregant. Due to the lateness of the hour, Rabbi Wolf called the elderly gentleman and suggested that he would drop by his house on the following day to dismount his mezuzot to be checked.

In a thick accent and heavy tone, the man slowly and dramatically replied, “You come tomorrow, I dead!”

Fearing an emergency situation, Rabbi Wolf rushed immediately to the man’s home and found him breathing heavily, shivering, and complaining of not feeling well. Yet instead of going to see a doctor, the man had concluded that his poor health required him to have his mezuzot checked to make sure that they were still kosher!

Promising the man that he would indeed come back to check his mezuzot, Rabbi Wolf drove him to the hospital and stayed with him until he was admitted under medical care.

Thankfully, the elderly gentleman was discharged from the hospital a few days later, none the worse for

wear after being treated for an infection. However, his concern for the kashrut of his mezuzot at home turned out to be substantiated. When Rabbi Wolf returned as promised to check the mezuzot, it was found that five replacement mezuzot were needed.



But the problem was that notwithstanding his worthy sense of concern for the kosher status of his mezuzot, the elderly gentleman was not in a financial position to purchase five replacements. Nevertheless, Rabbi Wolf assured him that with G-d’s help a solution to the dilemma would be found.

Indeed, the Divine assistance was not long in arriving. The very next morning, at the home of another “mezuzah campaign” client, the homeowner pointed to a package on his desk.

“Here”, he told Rabbi Wolf, “these Sefardic mezuzot have been sitting here for a long time and I have no use for them. I would like to donate them to the CMC mezuzah campaign.”

Amazed at the display of Divine Providence unfolding before his eyes, Rabbi Wolf gratefully picked up the package and counted the mezuzot—there were exactly five!

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concerning to whom and at what price they sell their funeral plots.] Thankfully, the rabbi of the particular congregation that owned the plot in question immediately and gladly agreed to facilitate Rabbi Wolf’s request to help provide a kosher Jewish burial for MW near his father’s plot.

On the night before Yom Kippur Rabbi Wolf met MW at his home. There they signed the documents setting forth the rabbi’s responsibility to provide for all of MW’s funeral arrangements and expenses.

Defying his doctors’ expectations and despite frequent urgent trips to the hospital, MW clung to life for several more weeks. During this time Rabbi Wolf kept in close contact with him, providing encouragement, support, and spiritual

counsel. He connected MW with his CMC colleague, Rabbi Raphael Jaworowski. During these weeks Rabbi Jaworowski visited MW regularly in Weiss Memorial, helping him to put on tefillin and pray, and discussing with him words of wisdom from the Torah.

It was obvious that MW looked forward to these visits with great anticipation. Disregarding his physical weakness and discomfort, he would sit up in the hospital bed and stretch out his bruised and aching arm to be wrapped in the tefillin. Although his condition prevented him from talking much at all, he would make a remarkable effort to proudly repeat the words of the Shema, slowly, laboriously, in both Hebrew and English. His wife and nurses often remarked how glad and excited MW

was about these visits, and how this happiness brought about a tangible physical benefit in his physical condition.

Several weeks passed and MW’s soul took leave of his body, leaving life for the living. Rabbi Wolf provided for all of the arrangements in full accord with traditional Jewish practice, and personally conducted MW’s funeral at Waldheim cemetery, in the presence of a minyan. Thus did he fulfill the promise he made to MW weeks earlier in the hospital, on Rosh Hashana, the start of the Jewish new year. And, perhaps more importantly, thus was MW’s soul given the opportunity to benefit from a proper Jewish burial, an appropriate and befittingly Jewish way to be born into its new journey in the world of truth.

# CMC Holiday Projects

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## Rosh Hashana Shofar Blowing

The CMC is preparing for the upcoming holiday season, which is fast approaching. As every year, we are organizing volunteers to visit scores of hospitals, care facilities, retirement homes and private residences, to blow shofar for people who are unable to attend shul on Rosh Hashana.

Please contact the CMC as soon as possible if you know someone who will be homebound, hospitalized, or in a nursing home during Rosh Hashana. It is important to inform the CMC in advance of individual patients' names who are interested in hearing shofar blowing, as the Jewish census lists at hospitals and nursing homes are often incomplete.

Also, additional shofar-blowing volunteers are still needed to blow shofar in various locations for ill, elderly and isolated members of the community. Please call the CMC if you would like to volunteer to participate in this wonderful mitzvah.

## New CMC Project For Sukkot

This year the CMC is launching a new project for Sukkot Sponsored by the Jacobson, Stein and Aaron families, in memory of Irwin Jacobson (Yitzchok Eliezer ben Avrohom Mordechai)

Finding a nearby sukkah can be a challenge when a medical condition requires one to travel for appointments, therapy or treatments. To meet this challenge, the CMC now has a number of pop-up sukkahs available for short-term loans. These sukkahs may be placed in the trunk of a vehicle and then quickly and easily popped open and set up for use. It's the perfect solution for anyone who needs to be on the road during the Sukkot festival.

For more information about borrowing a pop-up sukkah in order to meet medical needs, please contact the CMC.

See the back page of this newsletter for a list of publicly available sukkot that are nearby many hospitals in areas that are close to local Jewish communities.



## Lulav and Etrog

During the joyous festival of Sukkot, volunteers and their children will again be making their special visits, bringing their infectious holiday spirit to an even wider area.

The Sukkot volunteers share their holiday cheer and provide the elderly and infirm with the opportunity to shake the lulav and etrog.

The excitement and palpably positive impact that these visits generate for the Jewish infirm and elderly is tremendous, and often long-lasting. As many volunteers as the CMC has for this wonderful project, more are always needed; we have a list of over one hundred facilities and private homes that are excitedly anticipating holiday visitors!

For more information about receiving or volunteering for a meaningful and joyous Sukkot visit, please call the CMC.

## We wish a speedy recovery and good health to:

- |                      |                                |                                   |                            |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| • Shoshana bas Sara  | • Gittel bas Kreindel          | • Yitzchok ben Sara               | • Aviva bas Rivka          |
| • Refoel ben Yehudis | • Yehudit bas Sara             | • Mordechai ben Rachel            | • Devasha Golda bas Chanah |
| • Rivka bas Leba     | • Yehuda Dovid ben Rochel Sima | • Baruch Berl ben Liba Leah       | • Chana bas Yulia          |
| • Leah bas Chana     | • Chava Ronya bas Chadvera     | • Yisrael Mazal ben Raizel Miriam | • Dovid ben Eden           |
| • Rivka bas Sara     | • Refoel Yakov ben Gitel       | • David ban Sarah                 | • Sheina bas Madeline      |
| • Faiga bas Tzila    |                                |                                   | • Tzivvia Leeba bas Hoshe  |



## SUKKAH ACCOMMODATIONS

The following is a list of Sukkot adjacent to local hospitals. Hospital staff and visitors are welcome.

Hospital	Sukkah at	Address
Evanston Hospital	Weller-Levy Residence	831 Ingleside Place, Evanston
Glenbrook Hospital	Chabad of Northbrook	2095 Landwehr, Northbrook
Illinois Masonic	Cong. Anshe Sholom	540 W. Melrose, Chicago
Lutheran General	Buckman Residence R' Binyomin Scheiman	2166 N. Home, Park Ridge 9263 Hamlin, Des Plaines
Northwestern Memorial	Chabad of Gold Coast	1236 N. Dearborn, Chicago
Rush University/UIC	Shemtov Residence Hillel at UIC	1415 S. Halstead, Chicago 924 S. Morgan, Chicago
Skokie Hospital	Sukkah on Premises	847-677-9600 ask for Chaplain's Office
S. Francis	Grumet Residence	1009 Mulford, Evanston
University of Chicago	Main Quadrangle Chabad of Hyde Park	University of Chicago 5700 S. Woodlawn, Chicago



נר מצוה ותורה אור  
CHICAGO MITZVAH CAMPAIGN

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*This newsletter is dedicated in honor of Mordechai ben Rachel for a full and speedy recovery.*