

Garden of Remembrance Marks 20th Year of Service with Plans to Expand

The **Garden of Remembrance** celebrates its **20 years of service** to the Jewish community by expanding its service by building a **memorial chapel** on the premises. In the planning and fundraising stages for nearly 20 years, the memorial park has plans to break ground on the 150-seat chapel and memorial center in the spring of 2021. The new memorial chapel will be located across from the beautiful **gazebo** that has hosted memorial services, musical programs, and family gatherings for over a decade at the memorial park.

Twenty years ago, the Greater Washington Jewish community was experiencing a shortage of burial options for its nearly 300,000 Jewish residents. The historic synagogue and



community Jewish cemeteries, some of which date back to the mid-1800s, were nearly full. Several were in disrepair, not fully funded, and in neighborhoods that were inconvenient for loved ones to visit.

By the late 1990s, it became clear that the Washington Jewish community needed a new cemetery to serve the community for the next 100 years. After studying the successful Jewish cemeteries in other American cities and exploring the availability of appropriate land in the Greater Washington area, the leadership of Washington Hebrew Congregation spearheaded the creation of a Jewish, nonprofit, community cemetery, the Garden of Remembrance (Gan Zikaron) Memorial Park.

The goal was to establish a memorial park that would address the religious needs and practices of the entire Jewish community—Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist, Renewal, and unaffiliated Jews. Twenty-seven Partner Congregations

representing the full spectrum of religious observance and affiliation each have sections for their members, and more than half of the 152-acre memorial park is available for the unaffiliated in Community Gardens.

Another service to the Jewish Community, in accordance with Jewish tradition, the Garden of Remembrance accepts and buries worn prayerbooks, Torah scrolls, and other sacred texts containing the Hebrew name for God in its “genizah” of six burial sites.

“I feel blessed to have been given the opportunity to build upon the strong foundation and most meaningful mission of Gan Zikaron,” shares **Glenn Easton** who previously served as executive director of both B’nai Israel and Adas Israel congregations. In January 2020, Glenn, a 35-year Jewish communal professional and synagogue administrator with extensive cemetery and bereavement experience, was hired as the new executive director to manage, expand, and sustain the memorial park. “It is inspiring to work with a board of directors and a 27 congregation advisory committee that are always looking for ways to expand our service to the community and sustain that service for generations to come,” he concludes.

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