

ANCILLARY MATERIALS File

A. ABOUT YOU

i. Your name:

Michelle Siegel

ii. Your contact information:

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iii. Your bio:

Michelle Siegel is a member of the Temple Sinai (Oakland, California) Caring Community and rosha of their Chevra Kadisha. She's a student at the Gamliel Institute (<http://www.jewish-funerals.org/>) where she's studying about Jewish funerals, burials, and mourning with the goal of providing service to her community in these areas. Cemetery planning for one's final destination on earth is extremely important and is something our community needs education about.

Michelle believes that planning ahead for burial is a great kindness to one's family and oneself. Why leave people confused and scrambling or in a vulnerable position to make plans at the last minute? She's written questions for cemetery directors to answer so she can create a document compiling Bay Area cemetery customs and rules. These answers will address key cemetery practices. This will make it easy to see what's allowed and not

allowed, and help in the decision-making process about where one would want to be buried or have a loved one buried, even in an at-need situation. Michelle will email this document to Bay Area rabbis and executive directors of organizations and synagogues, the Funeral Consumer Alliance, and members of Chevra Kadishas. That way, they can provide accurate information to members of their community about cemetery planning.

B. A photo:



C. Project Partially Completed **July 31, 2016**

Last Updated: Will be updated when questions to all cemetery directors included in the project are received back.

D. Your “Big Idea” writeup:

Each Jewish cemetery in the Bay Area has its own customs and rules. I will compile questions to ask the cemetery directors and will request answers about cemetery practices. I will compile and compare answers to my questions and the customs and rules, in a document for use by rabbis, executive directors, and Chevra Kadisha members. These leaders will be able to provide advice to people seeking cemetery preplanning and at need assistance.

- E. Your “Elevator Speech” for this project (1-2 minute answer to “what is that?” or “what are you doing?” to explain what your project is and “hook” someone’s interest):

We live in a death denying culture. But, planning ahead for burial is a great kindness to your family and yourself. Why leave people confused, vulnerable, and scrambling to make plans at the last minute or uninformed for at-need planning? I’m writing a document compiling and comparing Bay Area cemetery customs and rules that will answer key questions about cemetery practices. This will make it easy to see what’s allowed and not allowed. I’m going to email this document with the answers I gather from 18 cemeteries to Bay Area rabbis and executive directors of organizations and synagogues, and members of Chevra Kadishas. That way, they can provide accurate information to members of their community about cemetery planning. Now’s not the time to hide one’s head in the sand and avoid thinking about planning for burial. It’s time to make information available about cemeteries so people in our community can plan and make important, careful decisions about burial. Let’s demystify cemetery practices!

F. An Abstract:

My project on Bay Area Jewish cemetery customs and rules gathers answers from 18 cemeteries by querying their respective cemetery directors with 64 questions under the following topics: About the Cemetery; Burial Timing; Burial Eligibility; Non-Jewish Burial; Aron; Grave Site and Hesped; Liner; Lowering and Filling; Monuments and Markers; Unveiling and Visiting; and Pricing. This information will be compiled into a document that will be emailed to Bay Area rabbis and executive directors of organizations and synagogues, members of Chevra Kadishas, and the Funeral Consumers Alliance. That way, they can provide accurate advice to members of their community about cemetery planning. The project information is intended for leaders of our community, and through these leaders, for members of our community—so they can have more information about what cemeteries do and don't allow, and be better informed to help make decisions.

G. A marketing blurb: 1-2 sentences telling why the reader wants to know about this **right NOW!**

If you are like most people, you are not thoroughly informed about Bay Area cemeteries' customs and rules, and having information about cemetery practices will help you help others make better decisions about their final resting place or the resting place of their loved ones.

H. A formal title for the project:

Bay Area Cemetery Bylaws, Rules, and Customs

I. A 'sexy' or 'interesting' title for the same project:

Don't Panic! Plan a Plot!

J. The type of project:

Educational/Research

K. The target audience:

Bay Area rabbis and executive directors of organizations and synagogues, members of Chevra Kadishas, and the Funeral Consumers Alliance. That way, they can provide accurate advice to members of their community about cemetery planning. The ultimate audience is members of our community who need to make cemetery plans so they can know what cemeteries do and don't allow.

L. Your ABCD write up

1. Creation of a document compiling and comparing different rules/bylaws at Jewish cemeteries in Bay Area.

Audience: Starting with the Sinai Memorial website and Jay Lewis, Managing Funeral Director at Sinai Memorial, I will research and make a list of Jewish cemeteries and who the contact people are at those cemeteries. I will make a list of questions to ask. I will contact them via phone and email to ask questions about what they do and don't allow, and to request copies of their bylaws and rules.

Behavior: I will read through all the bylaws and rules and make categories of what is and isn't allowed. . I may also include information about cemetery costs for the purchaser of a plot and burial services. I may include an appendix that has all of the bylaws and rules from the different cemeteries who respond to my request for information.

Condition: The creation of this document will be a tool for rabbis, executive directors, and leaders of Chevra Kadishas to use with those seeking cemetery planning help in advance of a death as well as when death is imminent. I will count how many cemetery contact people I request assistance from and how many responses I get.

Degree (or criterion): This report needs to compare bylaws and rules for at least 6 cemeteries in the Bay Area. It needs to show the answers to the questions I ask of the cemetery directors in a clear way for the end-user.

2. Use of a document compiling and comparing different rules/bylaws at Jewish cemeteries in Bay Area.

Audience: End users will be members of Bay Area Chevra Kadishas, rabbis, and/or executive directors of organizations/synagogues—people who offer advice to others. I will make a list of organizations/contacts to email this document.

Behavior: The end user of the document will be able to understand what is allowed/not allowed at various Jewish cemeteries based on cemetery rules and by-laws. This document will be a tool to help them answer questions about cemeteries

and help others make a decision about which cemetery might be best to choose.

Condition: The document will be a tool for rabbis, executive directors, and leaders of Chevra Kadishas to use with those seeking cemetery planning help in advance of a death as well as when death is imminent. I will count how many people I send the document to.

Degree (or criterion): The document will be a reference tool to help leaders --rabbis, executive directors, and members of Chevra Kadishas -- in advising others in choosing a cemetery and in understanding what local Jewish cemeteries do and don't allow.

M. Your Project Plan

I spent a great deal of time coming up with the questions for the cemetery directors and organizing the questions into subjects that made sense. I put these questions into a nicely formatted document to submit to the cemetery directors.

At the same time as working on the questions, early in the project, I researched and developed a list of all the cemeteries I would contact. The Sinai Memorial Chapel website, <http://www.sinaichapel.org/> was incredibly helpful. I made a document listing all the cemeteries and cemetery directors so I would be organized about who I was going to contact.

At this same time, I used the publication, "2016 Resource: A Guide to Jewish Life in the Bay Area," published by J.: The Jewish News Weekly of Northern California, (www.JewishResourceGuide.com) to find organizations and lists of congregations that I plan to send all the answers from all of the cemetery directors, in one document. I spent time looking up the contact people's names, phone numbers, and email addresses and reading about each Rabbi, organization, and congregation at each of their websites. I made a nicely formatted document listing all the organizations and congregations and their respective contacts, so I'd have all the information in order to reach out to them with my compiled cemetery answers.

I am now needing to take time off from work in order to have the time to focus on sending the questions I've compiled in an

organized document to all of the cemetery directors. At this time (July 31, 2016) I've only been able to reach out to three cemetery directors and have received answers from two of those.