

2017



# Annual Report

REMEMBERUS.ORG

501(c)(3) public charity

## Message from the Chair of the Board

Running a volunteer charity organization that raises Holocaust awareness is infinitely beyond anything I could have imagined just a few years ago. However, here we are today, and with the help of many friends, family, and a great number of volunteers, RememberUs.org concluded a successful and productive fourth year.

There are many Holocaust remembrance organizations, and yet, we are the only one conducting comprehensive work directly on sites of Holocaust massacres in Ukraine. We collaborate with local communities who share their local stories; we speak with survivors, their children, children of Holocaust victims, and children of those who later became the *Righteous Among the Nations*. We host commemoration ceremonies on sites where killings occurred, create local exhibitions, organize school field trips, plant commemoration trees, at these sites, and much more. There is an enormous distinction between education in a distant classroom and learning directly on location. We connect stories to their roots, creating a profoundly stronger impact.

Not only do we educate students and the general public in Ukraine, but we also bring our newly discovered knowledge back to the US, to our own children and to our own community. We organize educational and commemoration events, host inspirational speakers, and run multiple social media series. We are proud of our Internship team consisting of high-school and college-age volunteers who play a tremendous role in many of our US activities.

I would like to thank everybody who supported our efforts and I am looking forward to continuing working together in the years to come!



Thank you!

A handwritten signature in dark ink, which appears to read 'Julia Korsunsky'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail.

Julia Korsunsky,  
Chair of the Board, RememberUs.org

## Our Mission

***To honor and commemorate those who perished in the Shoah and to educate future generations about the devastating and everlasting consequence of genocide.***

## Why we do what we do?

***“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”***

— George Santayana

The Holocaust is arguably the most evil and tragic chapter of modern history and learning its story is vital for all of mankind to ensure that “Never Again” does genocide occur.

At this juncture of history, as the last known survivors of the Holocaust pass away, it is our crucial responsibility to carry their stories and lessons to future generations.



## What makes us different?

RememberUs.org, of course, is not the only organization that teaches about genocide and commemorates victims of the Holocaust. Our work, however, is unique in three ways.

First, we created a comprehensive “last mile” framework and we try to replicate it within every community that we approach. At first, we organize large commemoration events, drawing public attention to local sites of massacres. We plant long-living metasequoia trees directly at the locations of killings, thus creating an ever-living memorial. Next, we create a museum or permanent exhibition at a nearby school. To complete the framework, we work with local volunteers and town and school officials to organize re-occurring educational school trips to the newly created museums and places of atrocities, training local students as tour guides. In every community where the “last mile” framework was implemented, we have created broad and long-lasting effects.

Second, we work closely with Jewish and non-Jewish communities in Ukraine, local volunteers, and school and town officials. We rely on their support and gradually transfer all our initial responsibilities to local schools and volunteers.

Third, we bring newly discovered information from our “last mile” work in Ukraine back to the US, where we use it as a base for our educational.



## The Year at a Glance

RememberUs.org manages projects under two programs: the **EDGE Program** (Educate Generations, conducted in the US and Ukraine), and the **MARS Program** (Maintain, Aid, Restore and Support, conducted in Ukraine).

A few of our notable achievements include:

- **Metasequoias**

The story of survival and rebirth of metasequoias is incredible, paralleling the resilience of Jewish people and the rebirth of the Jewish life all over the world



This year, we planted many trees at locations of killings in Kiev, Fastov, Kremenchuk, Mirgorod, and replaced the broken trees in Lubny.

The mayors of Fastov and Kremenchuk and the Consul General of Poland attended metasequoia-planting ceremonies.

Twelve trees were also planted in Babin Yar, near the monument to the murdered Jewish children.

- **Veteran's Day Event**



For the second year in a row, our youngest volunteers organized a "Holocaust through the eyes of teenagers" presentation and Q&A at a senior center, which dozens of seniors attended.

This presentation was soon followed up by another connected event, where our interns interviewed Pavel Chumak, a Righteous Among the Nations recipient.

- **Inspirational Speaker Series**



We continued our series with two events, in Kiev and in Boston, with Ruta Vanagaite, a Lithuanian public figure, theater critic, writer, and journalist.

Ruta is the author of "Mūsiškiai", a best-selling book about the Holocaust, in which she writes about the murder of nearly all Lithuanian Jews in the Holocaust.



Mick Hirsch, former Director of Religious Education & Development at the Unitarian Universality Society of Wellesley, Mass spoke at our event in Newton, Massachusetts.

Mick shared the story of two American Holocaust heroes, Martha and Waitstill Sharp, who belonged to the Unitarian Society of Wellesley.

- **Yom HaShoah Events**



We marked Yom HaShoah, the Holocaust Remembrance Day, with a viewing and discussion of the documentary: "Defying the Nazis: The Sharps' War."

Two events were conducted: in the Pendleton Atrium at the Wellesley College, and at the Center Makor at the Congregation Kehilath Israel, Brookline.

- **Commemoration Events**

Organizing commemoration events is a big part of our "last mile" framework. We come to killing sites in small Ukrainian cities where Jewish life once flourished, but where no (or very few) Jews live now. We organize commemoration events on the dates of tragedies and bring local powers, media, school children, and teachers to these events.



**Fastov** – A commemoration event organized at the killing site, attended by the mayor, local Jewish community, and school students and teachers.



**Piryatyn** – A commemoration event organized for the first time ever on the day of the Jewish massacre.

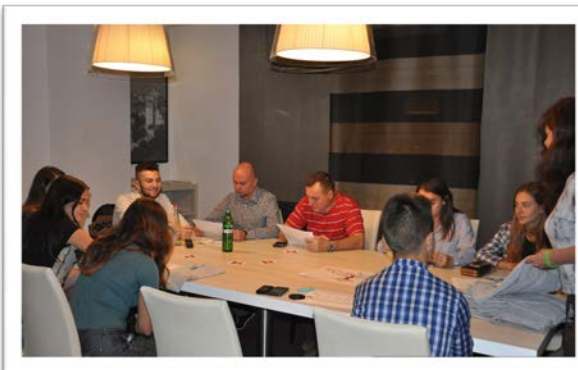
Over 300 people attended, including public officials, local media, dignitaries, and schools. Participants came from Piryatyn and the surrounding area, Krememnhuk, Kyiv, Cherkassy, Mirgorod, Konotop, and Lubny.



- **Forgotten Shtetls trip**

For the second year, RememberUs.org completed “Forgotten Shtetls” trip; this time with volunteers from Boston, students from Lubny and activists from Kharkiv’s Hillel.

Our group traveled through central Ukraine, visiting sites of massacre, old synagogues and cemeteries, churches, local museums, and more. We spoke to local members of communities who were affected by the Holocaust, to understand the horrors that occurred. It is one thing to learn from a textbook - it is an entirely different experience to stand directly, firsthand, on the soil of tragedy, and understand what once was and what could have been.



## • School Field Trips

This year, we continued school field trips to the Drobitsky Yar Holocaust Memorial in Kharkov, the Holocaust memorial in Lubny, and the school museum in Zasullya. We also added a similar program in Kremenchug, which sends students through the newly created Kremenchug Holocaust Memorial Trail, which includes our recently created Holocaust Museum, a memorial at the killing site, and an Alley of Righteous in the Park of Peace.



## Financial Summary

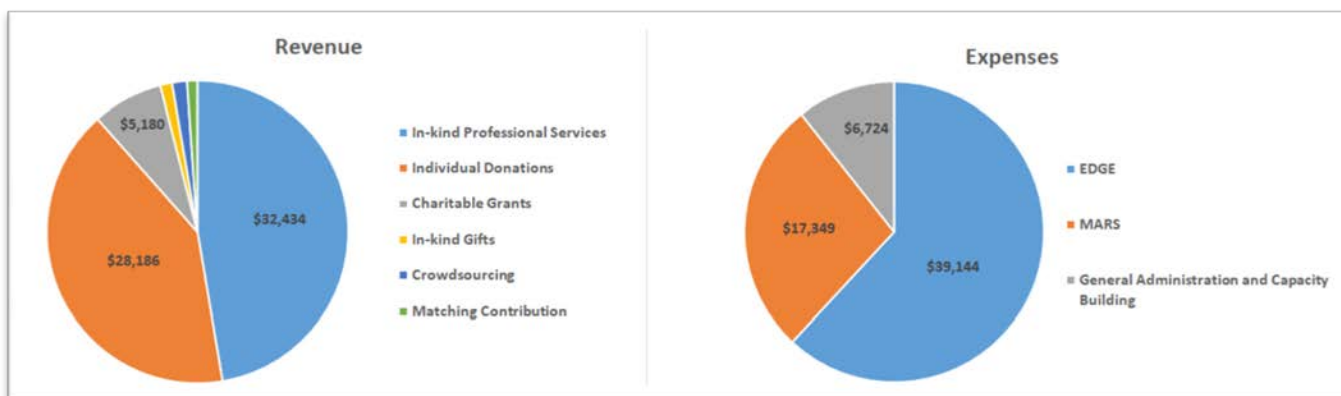
Thanks to the generosity of our donors, particularly from our local Boston-area community, RememberUs.org was able to fulfill all its 2017 commitments. We are lucky to have so many committed and repeating donors, and our pool of volunteers continues to grow. Our average donation also keeps steadily rising, reaching almost \$196 this year (excluding crowdsourcing and our founder's contributions).

We continued to be supported by donations from individuals and several small grants from local businesses and small foundations. Our persistent efforts to secure grants from larger, Holocaust-related donors remained fruitless, but we have high hopes for the future. Additionally, our overall 2017 revenue did not grow compared to our 2016 revenue, but luckily, our expenses remained extremely low, as we continued to operate on a volunteer basis only.



We greatly appreciate every donation, and would like to give special attention to our top 2017 supporters, in alphabetical order:

- Baskin, Emma and Gena
- Brodskiy, Yana and Slava
- Khavinson, Irina
- Konnikov, Anna and Michael
- Korsunsky, Julia and Igor
- Levitt David and Kaplan Cinthia
- Raiz, Sasha and Leonid
- Rifkin, Inessa and Victor
- Rifkin, Lana and Ilya



## Forward-looking

RememberUs.org had a productive year, and we look forward to continuing all of our projects in the US and in Ukraine in 2018. We will maintain our support for our existing partners in Ukraine and will expand our outreach to other regions, replicating our “last mile” framework.

As our volunteer team grows globally and our programs expand on multiple fronts, we are well positioned to continue our momentum and make a real difference.

## We need your support

Ultimately, without financial backing, we will not be able to fuel our mission. We need strong and continuous support from all our donors. No donation is too small, and the best way to donate is by check, mailed to:

RememberUs.org  
P.O. Box 920542  
Needham, MA 02492, USA

We are fortunate to be a part of such a strong and talented community. If you think that you can help and would like to volunteer, please contact us at [info@rememberus.org](mailto:info@rememberus.org).