



The Heart and the Star



I often get asked about the origin of our logo. Here's the story.

In 2001, just weeks before 911, I went on a roots trip to Eastern Europe to find the birthplaces of my grandparents. As I made my way on the back roads of Lithuania and Belarus, it was like going back in time hundreds of years. No cars, no restaurants, crooked little houses, apple orchards left fallow, old wooden synagogues barely standing, and the ghosts of millions.

Tucked in my pocket was a short list of elderly Holocaust survivors to visit, all in dire need of food, medicine, and some loving kindness. I would knock on the doors of their small wooden huts, but there was never an answer. They were out back, people in their 80's and

90's, on their hands and knees, digging up potatoes before the ground froze. If they didn't, there would be no winter food supply. My presence scared the hell out of them; these were people who never had a great history with strangers knocking on their doors. But then I'd shout out, "Shalom Aleichem" and they'd break out in big smiles and give me hugs of welcome. An immediate connection had been made. A connection that spanned thousands of years. It was profound.

They invited me into their huts, and I listened to their stories of incredible survival, bravery, and unimaginable loss. Silenced for decades, still living in fear, most had never told their story to anyone before. Suddenly this unknown chapter of the "Holocaust in the East" opened before me, begging to be heard...and changed my life forever.

Back in the States, I couldn't get these people out of my mind. How would they survive the brutal winter? All were destitute, elderly and in failing health. All of them needed food and medicine but also heat and shelter. I was certain there were thousands more like them, suffering alone and isolated, with no hope for the future.

I searched for an organization to take this on. But I discovered there was no organization willing to help these poor, unfortunate people who had already suffered so much, and needed critical lifesaving aid immediately.

I was compelled to help.

But what could I do? I could send money, that's what I could do. I could reach out to friends and family for more. I didn't speak Russian or Yiddish but I wanted them to know they had not been forgotten. I wanted them to know that there were people thousands of miles away who cared, even though they were perfect strangers. But how could I communicate?

I emptied my pockets and wrapped some bills in a piece of plain paper, and on that paper, I simply drew a Star of David enclosed in a heart. I hoped they would understand that it meant friendship and love from a world far away.

I sent my first envelope across the miles, then another, then another. Remembering back to the tiny villages I had visited; I wondered whether the survivors would even receive them.

But then a miracle happened. I started to get letters back. Short notes really, written on tiny scraps of notebook paper.

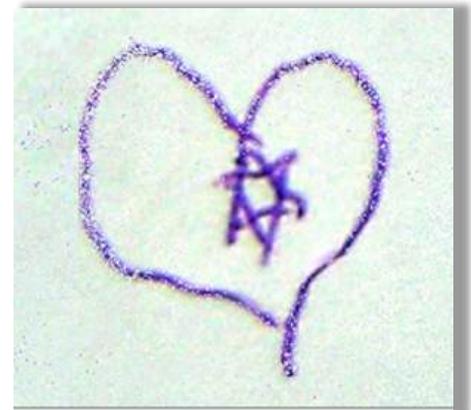


Each had a few lines in Russian or Yiddish and then at the very bottom, each had a hand-drawn heart encircling a star — my signal to them and now their signal back to me, letting me know that all was received, and they were sending thanks and love my way.

And The Survivor Mitzvah Project was born! That's the story.

— Zane Buzby / Founder

Please tell others about this urgent lifesaving effort, so we can continue to help the Last Survivors of the Holocaust.



Donate online at www.survivormitzvah.org or send a check to:

The Survivor Mitzvah Project

2658 Griffith Park Blvd., Ste. #299
Los Angeles, CA 90039

800-905-6160 survivormitzvah@gmail.com

The Survivor Mitzvah Project is a 501c3 non-profit public charity.

Donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

100% of your donation goes directly into the hands of Holocaust survivors in need.

\$150 supports 1 survivor for 1 month. \$1800 supports 1 survivor for 1 year.

Donations in any amount save lives!