

REMEMBERING LEAH MARKS AND AFFIRMING LIFE



Sculpture of the Hebrew word "Chai" has been installed outside of the Day School.

In December of 2007, 17-year-old Leah Marks, a former N.E. Miles Jewish Day School student, was killed in a car accident. Leah was a passenger in a car driven by a teen under the influence of alcohol. She was not wearing a seat belt.

Barry Marks, Leah's father, has used this tragic event to encourage others to "affirm life." A stainless steel sculpture of the Hebrew word "Chai," which means life, has been installed outside of the Day School.

This gift to the school and the Jewish community campus has been donated by friends and family of Leah, to remind young people and parents to live life to the fullest, maintain a healthy lifestyle and value each and every day.

The sculpture was designed by community member Eve Laxer and produced by well-known sculptor Brad Morton.

To further support the emotional needs of young people, and to ensure students gain positive self-esteem and an understanding of healthy lifestyles, Barry has established the Leah Marks Honor Our Children Fund in the Birmingham Jewish Foundation to benefit Day School students and others.

Programs relating to guidance, self-esteem and safety will be supported by this fund, honoring the memory of Leah for generations to come. In the fall, final landscaping and the dedication of the sculpture will be completed, and will include life-affirming designs by Day School students.

If you are interested in supporting the Honor our Children initiative please contact Susan Greene at the Day School at 879-1068 or sgreene@nemjds.org or Sally Friedman at the Birmingham Jewish Foundation at 879-0416 or sallyf@bjf.org.

[Click for more on the N.E. Miles Jewish Day School.](#)



Photo by Pete Souza.)

President Barack Obama meeting with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas in the Oval Office. Man sitting between them is an interpreter. (Official White House

ABBAS WAITING, HOPING US PRESSURES ISRAEL?

Jackson Diehl, deputy editorial page editor of the *Washington Post*, had a column in Friday's *Post* based on an interview with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas. Diehl interviewed Abbas while he was in Washington last week to meet with President Barack Obama. Diehl referred to the Palestinian leader as "hardline" and suggested that Abbas is counting on the Obama administration to put one-sided pressure on Israel.

Both the *New York Times* and *Jerusalem Post* picked up on Diehl's column and criticized Abbas for his apparent strategy and attitude. Here's an excerpt from what Diehl wrote:

What's interesting about Abbas's hardline position is what it says about the message that Obama's first Middle East steps have sent to Palestinians and Arab governments.

From its first days the Bush administration made it clear that the onus for change in the Middle East was on the Palestinians: Until they put an end to terrorism, established a democratic government and accepted the basic parameters for a settlement, the United States was not going to expect major concessions from Israel.

Obama, in contrast, has repeatedly and publicly stressed the need for a West Bank settlement freeze, with no exceptions. In so doing he has shifted the focus to Israel. He has revived a long-dormant Palestinian fantasy: that the United States will simply force Israel to make critical concessions, whether or not its democratic government agrees, while Arabs passively watch and applaud.

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WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE -- AND SOME HELP FROM ISRAEL



From Israel21c:

Earlier this month, a Seattle water main burst, buckling streets and causing water to flood an area of 10 blocks. Some eight to 10 homes were damaged, and it took workers hours to stop the flood since valves were buried underground.

About a week later, a water main break in Massachusetts caused major delays on Interstate 91 from Springfield to Enfield. Hours later, about 2,500 West Lafayette, Indianapolis residents were under a "boil order" after yet another burst water pipe.

America's water infrastructure is aging, and experts are warning that accidents like these -- that endanger both people's lives and their livelihoods -- are just the start. Now, however, help could be at hand, from Israel.

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