



## Chicago Freedom Grove celebrates our immigrant past, present and future

### ONE HUNDRED YEARS

after its beginning in a humble storefront at Maxwell and Morgan streets, HIAS Chicago continues to help immigrants resettle, connect with the community and advance toward United States citizenship.

"All of us have been touched by our immigrant roots. It defines who we are," said Suzanne Franklin, Executive Director of HIAS Chicago.

Marking a century of service is an important milestone that calls for a meaningful celebration.

"We really wanted to do something symbolic," Franklin said. "Immigrants plant roots in our communities, helping them grow and flourish."

HIAS Chicago is partnering with the Village of Lincolnwood, which also is celebrating its Centennial, to create the HIAS Chicago Freedom Grove at Channel Runne Park, along the North Shore Channel between Touhy and Devon avenues. One hundred trees will be planted during a dedication ceremony on June 21, 2012. The Freedom Grove will honor, remember and celebrate family members and friends who have been touched by HIAS's services.

The dedication of the Freedom Grove will spotlight HIAS Chicago's newly launched three-year campaign to raise \$2 million for the HIAS Chicago Endowment

Foundation. Income from the endowment will help support essential services for the next 100 years and beyond. All commitments are considered gifts to the Jewish Federation's Centennial Campaign. Group and individual plaques listing donors' names will make the HIAS Chicago Freedom Grove a legacy for generations to come.

"When I came to this country as a refugee, HIAS was there for me and my family," said Igor Boguslavsky, HIAS Chicago's 100th Anniversary co-chair. "When our children and grandchildren go to the Freedom Grove, our ancestry will be remembered."

Through the years, HIAS Chicago has assisted immigrants and refugees from around the world. Migration from Eastern Europe swelled the Jewish population here during the first quarter of the 1900s; HIAS was there to help. HIAS next played a crucial role bringing Jews from Europe before World War II and then resettling survivors after the war. HIAS also was there when Cuban, Iranian and Hungarian Jews escaped oppression. More recently, HIAS has been there to help resettle Bosnian Muslims and Cambodian and Tibetan Buddhists who escaped ethnic cleansing.

Responding to pleas from world Jewry in the 1980s and 1990s, the gates of Russia and other Eastern European countries opened. Since then,

HIAS Chicago, in partnership with the Jewish Federation and its agencies, has resettled more than 36,000 Jewish refugees who found their way to freedom in our community. Today, HIAS still is hard at work as it reunites 400 to 600 Jewish families from these countries each year through family-based immigration, and helps thousands of people realize their dreams of becoming U.S. citizens.

"I view this not only as a celebration of the first 100 years but, from the Jewish perspective, it is a celebration of our heritage," said Harvey Barnett, HIAS 100th Anniversary Endowment Campaign co-chair and a past JUF Chairman of the Board. Barnett's grandparents emigrated from Eastern Europe, and he has been involved with the Soviet Jewry movement since the early 1980s.

"For me, this is an especially heartwarming experience. I see so many of the first-generation Soviet émigrés doing well and who are active in the community. It's the exclamation mark for what we do."

*For more information about HIAS Chicago's 100th Anniversary Endowment Campaign, contact Suzanne Franklin at (312) 673-3231, [suzannefranklin@jcf.org](mailto:suzannefranklin@jcf.org); or Deborah Samuels at the Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago, (312) 357-4813, [deborahsamuels@juf.org](mailto:deborahsamuels@juf.org).*