



**תדן 7777**  
**Rodeph**  
**Chesed**  
 VOLUNTEER AMBULETTE TRANSPORT INC.

841 Sixty-third Street  
 Brooklyn, NY 11220  
 Hotline: 718.871.7695  
 Fax: 718.567.7601

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December 15, 2003

Hon. Judah Gribitz  
 Special Master  
 Holocaust Victim Assets Litigation  
 PO BOX 8300  
 San Francisco, CA 94128-8300

Dear Mr. Gribitz,

Attached you will find a proposal requesting funds to provide services to needy Nazi victims.

Your consideration to fund these projects will be greatly appreciated by the Holocaust survivors.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Edward Berger  
 President

RECEIVED

DEC 22 2003

LEGAL SERVICES

**PROPOSAL  
FOR THE PROVISION OF  
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES FOR  
DISABLED ELDERLY  
HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS**



Contact Person: Mr. Edward Berger  
Telephone Number: 718-567-7610  
Fax Number: 718-567-7613  
December 10, 2003

# **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

- I. GENERAL INFORMATION
- II. ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION
- III. SUMMARY OF PROGRAM CONTENT AND OBJECTIVES
- IV. PROJECT BUDGET
- V. CERTIFICATION

## I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Name of organization: Rodeph Chesed Volunteer Ambulette Transport, Inc.  
Mailing address: 841 63<sup>rd</sup> Street, Brooklyn, NY 11220  
Telephone: 718-567-7610  
Fax: 718-567-7613  
Title of program: Proposal for the Provision of Transportation Services for Disabled Elderly - Especially Holocaust Survivors  
Contact person: Edward Berger  
Title: President  
Telephone: 718-567-7610  
Fax: 718-567-7613  
Total estimated budget of program: \$569,600  
Amount requested: \$250,000  
Date program will begin: Immediately

## II. ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

### A. DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES

Rodeph Chesed Volunteer Ambulette Transport, Inc. began in January, 2000 following the realization by Edward Berger and a number of other community leaders that there is a serious need to provide affordable, safe, and reliable transportation by ambulette, for wheelchair-bound individuals who financially may have difficulty in obtaining transportation services. During a trip to Israel in December 1999, Mr. Edward Berger researched this service by spending significant time at Ezer Mizion to see firsthand how a successful transportation program in Israel is providing these services.

It is now over forty months since Rodeph Chesed Volunteer Ambulette Transport, Inc. was created and in this short period of time, it has become an important and significant service in the community. It has provided to date over 30,000 trips - and has enabled wheelchair bound holocaust survivors to once again "live". **Over fifty percent (50%) of the people served are Holocaust survivors.**

Mr. Edward Berger, the Founder of Rodeph Chesed Volunteer Ambulette Transport, Inc., committed himself to raise the funds or contribute funds from his own assets, in order to make sure Rodeph Chesed develops into a meaningful and quality service to the wheelchair-bound in the community. The City and State provide Rodeph Chesed a grant to partially cover some of the expenses. In order to pay for the capital expenses to purchase the ambulettes, Mr. Berger was able to convince four Bikur Cholim organizations (Guardians of the Sick organizations) to each contribute one ambulette (Bobov Bikur Cholim, Satmer Bikur Cholim, Rifka Laufer Bikur Cholim and Zichron

Shlome Refuah Fund). In addition, we are grateful to the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, Inc. which awarded Rodeph Chesed Volunteer Ambulette Transport, Inc. in November, 2000, \$150,000 to purchase five additional vans and subsequently awarded \$75,000 a year for day to day expenses.

Nevertheless, Rodeph Chesed is still existing at a deficit and additional funds are necessary especially since the expansion of Rodeph Chesed into nine vans.

At the same time, it became very clear that there is a tremendous need for this service. The nine vans that are presently operating on a daily basis, are busy transporting individuals who reside in the five boroughs. It is impossible to service the people who are calling from the Five Towns on Long Island. The nine vans are operating at capacity - collectively transporting approximately 90 trips per day.

It is quite obvious that there is a tremendous need for this service and that it primarily serves the elderly wheelchair-bound individuals who are Holocaust survivors.

Getting out, going from place to place, going to shop or to the doctor, to visit a friend, to go out to eat or to go to a family celebration - is something that we take for granted - until we lose our ability to do so. This loss is very devastating, especially for those who were always independent and had their own car to take them wherever they wanted to go and whenever they wanted to go places. For many older senior citizens, when it comes time to "give up the keys", other options are readily available - especially for those who have money - to hire a car service and for those who can't afford it can rely on public transportation especially in New York City.

However, for the wheelchair bound individual, a professional ambulette is necessary to take them around. Once a person needs an ambulette, you cannot ask friends and family to take you someplace unless they have an ambulette. Public transportation is also no longer available. Relying on the government's Access-a-Ride is also not a good option because scheduling in advance is required, the person gets into an ambulette together with others and is driven for hours until they get to their destination, the drivers are just "drivers" and are not really taking into account what the senior citizens are going through.

It is for this reason that Rodeph Chesed was created.

Rodeph Chesed began its activities by placing two small ads in the local newspaper announcing the formation of transportation services for wheelchair bound elderly individuals. Within a few weeks, we provided six hundred (600) elderly disabled individuals with the ability to get appropriate medical treatment and to attend and participate in family celebrations and community events.

Although Rodeph Chesed Volunteer Ambulette Transport, Inc. was organized to provide transportation services, it is more than that. We are providing not only the ability for our clients to get from one place to another, but also to feel important and to feel that they are being taken care of properly from the minute we take them into our ambulette to the time we drop them off. The elderly feel that we consider it a privilege to be able to service them after what they have lived through and accomplished in their life. Our drivers are trained to be sensitive to the needs of the elderly and to treat them with respect rather than just another "transported client". We not only focus on their "transportation needs" but also on improving their quality of life and how they are dealt with. Our drivers are courteous, they not only help the clients get in and out of the ambulette, they also give them encouragement and hope for the future. Our dispatchers are very sensitive to the needs of the elderly and are able to schedule the pickups in an orderly manner. In addition, it is heartwarming for me to know that the staff perform their duties with such dedication and sensitivity. Each person that was picked up was so grateful, so appreciative of the service and many expressed themselves by saying they have not been out of the house for months - they have not attended a wedding or a bar-mitzvah for years - because of their inability to afford the expensive for-profit ambulette services. The majority of the clients were Holocaust survivors and Rodeph Chesed is enabling them to get around again.

The new vans are equipped with - interior includes two wheelchair securement positions. Wheelchairs are secured with a safety-tested wheelchair and occupant belt system, and safety belts and retractors are included on all passenger seating. The raised roof with reinforced roll-cage is installed. Other safety features include commercial-grade rubber flooring, vertical stanchion bar, a lift, and overhead storage compartment for safety equipment. The windows will be tinted. The rear-mounted commercial lift is automatic and provides for maximum safety.

A relative of an individual that was transported by Rodeph Chesed wrote "Being able to participate in the simcha (wedding) brought a breath of sunshine into his life. He has not been out of the house for over three years other than going to doctors".

### **TARGET MARKET - HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS - ELDERLY DISABLED HOMEBOUND INDIVIDUALS**

The target market are the elderly wheelchair-bound individuals - especially holocaust survivors - who need ambulette services.

In the Boro Park, Flatbush and Queens neighborhood, there are approximately 35,000 Holocaust survivors residing in these areas. **Of the over 30,000 trips that Rodeph Chesed is presently providing, approximately 50% of the clients are Holocaust survivors.**

It is critical that we enable Holocaust survivors to live at home as long as possible. It is well documented that elderly Holocaust survivors, as they reach the last stage of life, reminisce more about their past. Feeling more vulnerable because of their increasing frailty and approaching mortality, survivors remind themselves of what they went through. The thought of being institutionalized, brings with it an additional pressure and fear that should be avoided if possible. One aspect of making sure that the elderly enjoy their golden years - especially for the disabled elderly - is transportation services.

For the Holocaust survivor this is especially very critical. The Holocaust survivor has specific emotional problems and is very sensitive to being institutionalized. To the extent that we can provide for the Holocaust survivor independent living while at home, we have significantly improved their quality of life and at the same time maintained their independence. Most of us have a clear picture of what it means to enjoy quality of life. This picture includes independence, recreational activities and social interaction. By providing these people with transportation, we are enabling them to be mobile and to be able to get out.

**B. CURRENT YEARLY BUDGET - based on nine vans.**

**Operating costs:**

Salaries - drivers	\$ 225,000
- overtime	18,000
Payroll taxes (@ 10%)	24,300
Insurance - auto and liability	117,000
Gas and other operating costs	<u>54,000</u>

Total operating costs 438,300

**Overhead costs:**

Variable:

Advertising	4,500
Telephone and other utilities	18,000
Other	<u>13,500</u>

Total variable operating expenses 36,000

Fixed:

Salaries	42,000
Payroll taxes (@10%)	4,200
Professional fees	35,000
Rent	12,000
Office supplies and expenses	<u>2,100</u>

Total fixed overhead expenses 95,300

Total overhead costs 131,300

**Total annual costs \$ 569,600**

**Revenues:**

Grant from the NYC Department of Aging	\$110,000
Grant from New York State	50,000
The Conference on Jewish Materials Claims Against Germany, Inc.	<u>75,000</u>
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>235,000</b>

**Total Deficit (additional funds that need to be raised from foundations and contributions) ..... \$334,600**



### **III. SUMMARY OF PROGRAM CONTENT AND OBJECTIVES**

**Rodeph Chesed Volunteer Ambulette Transport, Inc.** was created as a nonprofit corporation *“to operate ambulette transportation for disabled, old and/or poor who cannot afford and/or are unable to travel to their relatives, physician, stores or any other destination without such assistance and to accompany these individuals in said destinations”*.

**Goal -** To enhance the quality of life of the elderly wheelchair-bound individual, especially the Holocaust survivors, by providing them with transportation services.

**Objectives -**

To enable the elderly wheelchair-bound individual to travel to the physician, to go shopping, to maintain a social life, and to participate in family celebrations and community events.

To provide professional and timely ambulette services.

To do so in a courteous and respectful manner.

As Americans live longer, they are more likely to experience health challenges. And, they are more likely to expect that they receive care in the comfort of their own homes. With this, comes many challenges for them, the family and community. How do we make sure that the elderly are taken care of properly? How do children juggle between taking care of their parents and their own children? How do we make sure that the elderly enjoy their independence but yet are not isolated from the world? How do we prevent the institutionalization of the elderly who need some help to get around-especially the Holocaust survivor?

Someone who is homebound knows of the tremendous rigors and hardships of relying on ambulette services as a means of transportation. They are often very uncourteous, late and unaccommodating as well as expensive, causing much pain and unnecessary aggravation. Many people won't attend family gatherings and will postpone important appointments just to avoid these hardships.

As a result, Rodeph Chesed Volunteer Ambulette Transport, Inc. was created to enable the elderly disabled to get to medical appointments, banks, shopping, meal programs and other social activities, attend happy occasions such as weddings, bar-mitzvahs and other family and community events.

**Our goal is to make sure that the elderly disabled are afforded the opportunity to live their golden years without being homebound and isolated by providing them with free mobility-**

**transportation services.** They should be able to get to doctor appointments and get home in a timely manner; they should be treated with respect during the entire process; they should attend and participate in family and community events. They should be able to get together with friends and neighbors and not be stuck in the house. They should be able to enjoy a social life. They should be able, if they want to, go to the synagogue and pray and study with others.

Most private health insurers and Medicare do not provide a transportation allowance. Therefore, unless it is absolutely necessary, wheelchair-bound people especially the elderly, do not get out of the house at all. Access-a-ride, which is sponsored by the New York State Department of Transportation, is very unreliable. One needs to make an appointment four days in advance, they transport many people together and the elderly are forced to sit in the van for hours, and does not provide courteous service with the necessary sensitivity. They are most of the time late and create unnecessary anxiety for the elderly disabled. (See attachment ) Letter from Mr. Israel Friedman, Executive Vice President of the Religious Zionists of America, who was stuck one late afternoon at Rusk Hospital following treatments that his wife needed, expecting to be picked up by Access-a-ride. The Access-a-ride ambulette never came. He tried to get another ambulette but was unsuccessful. His wife sat in tears and disappointment until suddenly the Rodeph Chessed driver appeared with an ambulette and offered to transfer her home. In the letter to Rodeph Chessed he writes *"in spite of my offering him any price required, he explained to me the goals and methods of your operation, which were indeed a kiddush Hashem (sanctification of G-d) and a genuine example of the great mitzvah of good chesed (righteous deed)"*.

**Rodeph Chessed Volunteer Ambulette Transport, Inc.** was created by Mr. Edward Berger as a project of the Rodeph Chessed Foundation which was founded in 1990. Over the years, this foundation funded individuals and organizations which provide Jewish education, food for the needy and those requiring medical procedures and medicine not covered by medical insurances. Now, the Foundation is providing the seed money to establish this very much needed ambulette service.

### **How The Program Works**

From time to time, Rodeph Chessed advertises in the media. However, individuals find out about the service through the word of mouth and referrals from the various Bikur Cholim's (Guardian of the Sick organizations) throughout the City of New York.

An individual will call Rodeph Chessed. A dispatcher will determine the condition of the patient to make sure that indeed the patient is wheel-chair bound. This person will then be put into the database. The dispatcher will then schedule the client to be picked up. If the patient lives on the ground floor, the driver will go to the patient's home and in a courteous, sensitive and respectful manner will bring them to the ambulette and utilizing the motorized lift, the driver will place the client into the van, secure the chair so that it does not move around. At every step of the process, the driver has been instructed and trained to be courteous and sensitive.

In the event that the wheelchair-bound individual lives on the second or the third floor, the Rodeph Chessed will arrange for a volunteer or a Hatzolah member to meet the driver at the

home of the wheelchair-bound individual and together we will carry the client downstairs to the street level and then the driver will continue to put the client into the ambulette.

The drivers are trained to be very courteous and sensitive to the needs of the clients. In fact, one client has scheduled a trip to the wedding of his grandchild. On the way to the wedding, the client got nauseous and threw-up his food. The driver did not get upset and immediately proceeded to take the client back home, while the family changed the clients clothes, the driver, without getting upset, cleaned the van so that it should smell good and then proceeded to take the client to the wedding.

There is an African-American individual employed by the Hospital for Joint Diseases who came over to one of our drivers and asked for an envelope because he wants to contribute to Rodeph Chesed. He said there are a lot of ambulettes that pull up and deliver patients to the Hospital. However, none of them treat their passengers like the drivers of Rodeph Chesed and he wanted to make a contribution.

### **OTHER FUNDING SOURCES**

- New York City Council/New York City Department for the Aging
- New York State Department of Health
- Bikur Cholims - Bobov, Satmar, Rifka Laufer and Zichron Shlome Refuah Fund
- Conference on Jewish Materials Claims Against Germany, Inc.
- Community fund-raising

**IV. PROJECT BUDGET** - Estimated future annual costs of operations based on **nine** vans.

We are requesting funds from the Claims Conference to help pay for the day to day operating expenses of Rodeph Chesed. **If you look at the budget carefully, you will notice that there are no expenses charged to Rodeph Chesed for rent and other administrative expenses.** In fact, there is no line in the budget for the Chief Executive Officer. The reason for this is because the Chief Executive Officer is Mr. Edward Berger, the President of Rodeph Chesed. He not only contributes, but he also is personally involved - as a volunteer - on a day-to-day basis overseeing the dispatcher and the drivers. In essence, he functions as the Chief Executive Officer. The reason why he does this is because he feels that Rodeph Chesed is providing such an essential and needed service, especially to the Holocaust survivors (Edward Berger's father is a Holocaust survivor) that he considers it important enough to actually make sure that Rodeph Chesed runs professionally on a day-to-day basis.

	Estimated Future Operations - Nine Vans
Operating costs:	
Salaries - drivers	\$ 225,000
- overtime	18,000
Payroll taxes (@ 10%)	24,300
Insurance - auto and liability	117,000
Gas and other operating costs	<u>54,000</u>
<b>Total operating costs</b>	<u><b>438,300</b></u>
Overhead costs:	
Variable:	
Advertising	4,500
Telephone and other utilities	18,000
Other	<u>13,500</u>
<b>Total variable operating expenses</b>	<u><b>36,000</b></u>
Fixed:	
Salaries	42,000
Payroll taxes (@10%)	4,200
Professional fees	35,000
Rent	12,000
Office supplies and expenses	<u>2,100</u>
<b>Total fixed overhead expenses</b>	<u><b>95,300</b></u>
<b>Total overhead costs</b>	<u><b>131,300</b></u>

**Total annual costs** **\$ 569,600**

**Revenues:**

Grant from the NYC Department of Aging	\$110,000
Grant from New York State	50,000
The Conference on Jewish Materials Claims Against Germany, Inc.	<u>75,000</u>
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>235,000</b>

<b>Total Deficit (funds that need to be raised from foundations and contributions) .....</b>	<b><u>\$334,600</u></b>
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# SCHEDULE OF SERVICED TRIPS

For the Period from January 28,2000 (Inception) Through April 30, 2003

	<u>Amount of Trips</u>
2000	
January	223
February	276
March	377
April	327
May	345
June	401
July	468
August	492
September	499
October	355
November	680
December	609
2001	704
January	762
February	805
March	672
April	842
May	846
June	803
July	874
August	702
September	737
October	1,021
November	1,059
December	1,159
2002	987
January	927
February	895
March	1,142
April	1,113
May	981
June	948
July	624
August	1,082
September	1,008
October	1,089
November	1,055
December	930
2003	1,067
January	747
February	
March	
April	
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>30,633</u></b>

\* A trip is defined as one way transportation from point to destination.

## EXCERPTS OF LETTERS FROM SATISFIED CLIENTS:

“Thank you, all of you, for all of your work to keep Rodeph Chesed Ambulette Service running. It is a tremendous blessing to have this service available. Thank you all again. Be well - and best wishes for a *freilichen Purim*”.

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“On February 16<sup>th</sup> your voluntary ambulette transport picked up and brought back Mrs. A. Karp from a doctor’s appointment. She was very impressed with the service which was given in terms of courtesy, punctuality, efficiency and helpfulness”.

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“I would like to express my deepest appreciation for your wonderful work. You picked up my mother with the utmost efficiency and respect possible. May you continue your most wonderful and appreciated work”.

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“We were fortunate to be helped by your volunteers on a trip to Park Avenue and 92<sup>nd</sup> Street in Manhattan last week - we could not find any other way to get there although the most complicated arrangements were made in order to get the appointment with Dr. Ira Friedman. If our contribution to your work could be the equivalent of our feelings of gratitude, you could acquire a dozen more ambulettes to keep up you holy work - and we won’t even begin to talk about the quality and personality of your volunteers themselves”.

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“Thank you for your courteous and excellent trip on Wednesday evening. This was the first time in over a year that I was able to get out of my building because of seven steps from the elevator to street level”.

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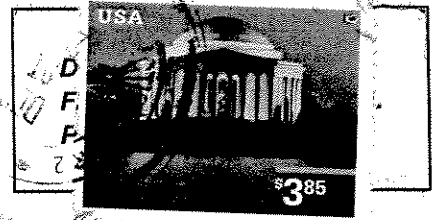
“Enclosed please find my check for a portion of the *yizkor* appeal on Passover. I do appreciate all the help you have given me in getting me to and from my doctor and hospital appointments. Thank you very much for all of your help to me”.

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Some contributions from individuals who were grateful for the trips were received. Although this amount is not very significant in the overall picture, however, it does show that people are grateful for the service.

**DPE**

**1811**



[www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com)

**Rodeph Chesed**  
**Volunteer Ambulette Transport, Inc.**  
841 63rd Street  
Brooklyn, New York 11220

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To: Hon. Judah Gribitz  
Special Master  
Holocaust Victim Assets Litigation  
PO BOX 8300  
San Francisco, CA 94128-8300

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