



Keystone

SPOTLIGHT ON A PHILADELPHIA TORAH MAINSTAY

Coming of Age

When the Philadelphia Community Kollel opened its modest doors back in the Spring of 2000, few could have envisioned the extent of the impact this institution would have on the community at large.

Joining the ranks of the city's array of shuls, schools and communal resources, the Kollel at the time was a new and innovative concept, an oasis for full-time advanced Torah study for its own sake. A beautiful and admirable endeavor indeed; but this was slated as a community Kollel. Where would the community tie in?

Looking back now thirteen years later, the relationship between the community and the Kollel is obvious. The Kollel is commonly referred as the pulsating "heartbeat" of Torah within the community.

To quote a frequent Kollel participant, "Perhaps the most important word in the name Philadelphia Community Kollel is 'community.' Through the Kollel, Torah has become the foundation and the heartbeat of our community."

In addition to the tangible benefits the Kollel has brought to Philadelphia, such as the myriad programs, the learning opportunities, the level of scholarship, and the resources, there are the intangibles brought about by the enriching presence of its committed men, women and families within the community.

"I am inspired by the warmth and passion of the Kollel rabbis and their families," says Evan Aidman, a prominent lawyer in the community. "I am particularly

(continued on page 2)



Motzaei Shabbos, **January 4, 2014**



Guests of Honor
Elliot and Amy Holtz

Young Leadership Award
Avi and Julie Zohar



[see centerfold]



[continued from front cover]

grateful for the way the sons of the rabbis have befriended my eight-year-old son, Aryeh Moshe."

Indeed, the love and commitment to learning and spiritual growth amongst the men, the women and even the young children involved with the Kollel can be directly linked to its unique form of influence. Perhaps one might call it "inspiration by osmosis." "There's nothing quite like the atmosphere of the learning in the Kollel," says Adam Levine. "It's a warm, welcoming, dynamic environment that draws together the most diverse Jews and connects them to the beauty of the Torah in a way that no other system really does."

Today, the Community Kollel model has been replicated across the country and around the world. It is recognized as an anchor institution that is vital for

a community's growth and development. The Philadelphia Community Kollel's 13th Anniversary milestone highlights the foresight of the visionaries who recognized and appreciated this revolution while it was still in its infancy.

The symbolism of the Bar Mitzvah year represents a coming of age. For the Kollel, this occasion is more than just a milestone of its maturity as an institution; it celebrates the manifestation and fulfillment of the Kollel's original mission to raise the standards of Torah life in the wider Philadelphia community. And for the community that has welcomed us, that has believed in us, and that has nurtured us into becoming all that we are today, this Bar Mitzvah celebration is a time to reap some well-deserved *Yiddishe nachas*!

"TO REALLY APPRECIATE WHAT IT TAKES TO PROVIDE THE NUMEROUS TORAH LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES SHIURIM, CHAVRUSAS, AND PRIVATE SESSIONS, ONE NEEDS TO HAVE SPENT TIME IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO THE YUNGELEIT, WHICH I'VE BEEN PRIVILEGED TO DO... BEYOND THIS, THE KOLLEL HUSBANDS AND WIVES HAVE ACCEPTED POSITIONS ON COMMITTEES, BOARDS AND ORGANIZATIONS TO GIVE OF THEMSELVES MORE AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE COMMUNITY."

[Baruch Avis]

Rabbi Yechiel
BIBERFELD



MESSAGE FROM THE ROSH KOLLEL

Welcome to the inaugural edition of *Keystone*, a publication designed to provide a window into the Kollel and its programs.

When describing the great calamity of the destruction of Bais Hamikdash, the *possuk* in *Eicha* says, תשתפכנה אבני קודש – the "sacred stones" were strewn across the thoroughfares. The Midrash tells us that these sacred stones were deliberately spread across the entire world. In due time, these very stones would serve as foundations and cornerstones for the great bastions of Torah built by Klal Yisrael over the course of its various exiles.

In other sources, the sages identify the *avnei kodesh*, the "sacred stones," as referring to the *talmidei chachamim*, the Torah scholars. At the Philadelphia Community Kollel, both of these ideas come together. A group of accomplished *talmidei chachamim* are setting a keystone, a firm Torah center that upholds and augments the entire community and all its beautiful institutions with the vibrancy and vitality of its learning.

As you peruse these pages, we hope you will be inspired by all the growth opportunities offered by the Kollel and by the diversity of Jews they bring together. If you are not already a part of the Kollel, we invite you to stop in and discover the centrality and relevance of Torah as an integral component in your daily life.

Rabbi Yechiel Biberfeld
ROSH KOLLEL

Schedule of Shiurim

All programs are held at the Kollel unless listed otherwise.

Daily Kollel Boker

Chavrusa Learning

[weekdays only - At Kosloff Torah Academy, 50 East Montgomery]

7:00AM - 7:45AM

Sunday

9:05AM - 9:30AM

9:30AM - 10:30AM

Breakfast - Bagels, Omelets, and Coffee

Men's *Beis Medrash/Gemara* Program

Rabbi Nosenchuk [BEGINNERS]

Rabbi Biberfeld, *Yoreh Deah Chaburah* [ADVANCED]

8:00PM - 9:00PM

8:15PM - 8:45PM

8:15PM - 9:55PM

8:30PM - 9:30PM

10:10PM

High School Boys Learning, Rabbi Avrohom Weiss

Dirshu Daf Yomi B'halacha, Rabbi Uri Greenspan

Chavrusa Learning

Halacha and Medical Bioethics *Chaburah*, Dr. David Weiss

Daf Yomi, Rabbi Sruli Schwartz

Monday

1:45PM - 2:30PM

8:15PM - 8:45PM

8:15PM - 9:55PM

9:05PM - 9:55PM

10:10PM

Sefer Nechemia, with Rabbi Aharon Gold

Dirshu Daf Yomi B'halacha, Rabbi Uri Greenspan

Chavrusa Learning

Amud Yomi Meseches Beitza, Rabbi Avrohom Weiss

Daf Yomi, Rabbi Sruli Schwartz

Tuesday

8:15PM - 8:45PM

8:15PM - 9:55PM

9:00PM - 9:55PM

9:00PM - 9:55PM

9:05PM - 9:55PM

10:10PM

Dirshu Daf Yomi B'halacha, Rabbi Uri Greenspan

Chavrusa Learning

Ivrit Shiur, Ori Eisenberg

Young Professionals Group - Gemara, Rabbi Zeffren

Amud Yomi Meseches Beitza, Rabbi Avrohom Weiss

Daf Yomi, Rabbi Sruli Schwartz

Wednesday

8:15PM - 8:45PM

8:15PM - 9:55PM

9:05PM - 9:55PM

9:05PM - 9:55PM

10:10PM

Dirshu Daf Yomi B'halacha, Rabbi Uri Greenspan

Chavrusa Learning

Laws of Daily Living, Rabbi Yochanan Eskenazi

Amud Yomi Meseches Beitza, Rabbi Avrohom Weiss

Daf Yomi, Rabbi Sruli Schwartz

Thursday

1:45PM - 2:30PM

8:15PM - 9:00PM

8:15PM - 10:00PM

9:00PM - 10:00PM

9:00PM - 10:00PM

9:05PM - 9:55PM

10:15PM

Sefer Nechemia, with Rabbi Aharon Gold

Gemora Yoma, Rabbi Biberfeld

Chavrusa Learning

Kollel Erev Advanced *Chaburah*

Rabbi Frand's *Parsha Shiur* Via TCN Network

Amud Yomi Meseches Beitza, Rabbi Avrohom Weiss

Daf Yomi, Rabbi Sruli Schwartz

Friday

8:20AM - 8:50AM

Parsha Shiur, Rabbi Yosef Prupas

Shabbos

After Kiddush

Before Maariv

Ramban on the Torah, Rabbi Yochanan Eskenazi

Chaburas Chacham Leiv, Boys Group to Study *Hilchos Shabbos*

Motzaei Shabbos Rabbi Reisman Navi Shiur Via TCN Network

November 9 - January 25, 7:30PM | February, 8:00PM | March 1 - March 8, 8:30PM

March 22 - March 29, 9:30PM | April 5 - April 12, 10:00PM

April 19 - April 26, 10:15PM | May, 10:30PM

Masmid Program for Boys

November 2 - January 11, 6:30PM-7:30PM | January 18 - January 25, 6:45PM-7:45PM

February 1 - February 8, 7:00PM - 8:00PM | February 15 - February 22, 7:15PM - 8:15PM

Our newest exciting program





“ASIDE FROM SERVING AS MODELS OF AN UP-RIGHT, TORAH-OBSERVANT LIFESTYLE AND OF RAISING FAMILIES ACCORDINGLY, THE KOLLEL FAMILIES ARE ‘DOWN TO EARTH’ AND PERSONABLE, ALWAYS WILLING TO MAKE THEMSELVES AVAILABLE AND EXTENDING THEMSELVES TO ANYONE SEEKING THEIR GUIDANCE.”
[Yonah Zaslow]

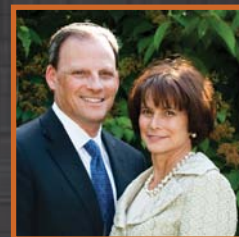
Philadelphia Community Kollel's 13th Anniversary Dinner – Bar Mitzvah Celebration Motzaei Shabbos January 4, 2014 Lower Merion Synagogue

Anticipation is steadily building amongst friends and supporters of the Philadelphia Community Kollel in advance of the Kollel's upcoming “Bar Mitzvah” dinner. “This special celebration is dedicated to honoring community members who share the Kollel's ideal of a genuine commitment to learning and teaching Torah in a way that benefits our entire community,” says Mr. Ted Kosloff, the Kollel's past president, who is chairing the Journal Campaign along with his wife Phyllis and Dr. and Mrs. Mendel and Shira Kupfer.

The warm initial response to the campaign indicates the community's recognition of this milestone celebration as an occasion to reciprocate for all that the Kollel has accomplished on behalf of Philadelphia. The dinner will take place on Motzaei Shabbos, January 4th, 2014 at Lower Merion Synagogue.

The Kollel and its members look forward to celebrating this special evening with the participation of the entire community. Invitations and reservation forms have been recently mailed out. Reservations and ads can be submitted to the Kollel dinner office by calling 610-668-9557, or they can be processed conveniently online at www.phillykollel.org.

Elliot and Amy Holtz GUESTS OF HONOR



Both highly-regarded, successful business professionals, Elliot and Amy Holtz selflessly dedicate their valuable time and talents on behalf of the community at the local, national and global level.

Elliot is highly active in the national school-choice movement, serving as the Pennsylvania Chair of the OU Advocacy Center, aimed at advancing school-choice programming. His efforts to alleviate the Jewish day-school tuition burden have directly impacted many individuals in our community as well as across the country. Amy is the president of JerusalemU, a non-profit whose mission is to foster connection to Israel and Judaism through education and outreach.

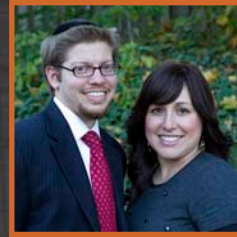
The Holtz's maintain a serious commitment to Torah learning through the Kollel. Elliot has a steady chavrusa and is an E.L.F. committee member, and Amy has consistently furthered her learning through Kollel classes. Both are passionate and selfless public servants who are true community builders. In addition to their work for the Kollel, Elliot and Amy are involved with Aish Philadelphia, Orot, Torah Academy, Jewish National Fund, the National Center for Hebrew Language Charter School Excellence and Development, and other local institutions. The Holtz's 3 teenagers, Adam, Will, and Julia, are a true reflection of their parents' values of generosity and advocacy for the Jewish community.

The Kollel welcomes the opportunity to pay tribute to the Holtz's dedication and outstanding achievements on behalf of the community.



Avi and Julie Zohar

YOUNG LEADERSHIP AWARD



The Zohar name is practically a legend in the Lower Merion area. Avi's parents, Mark and Debra Zohar, formerly of Wynnewood and Congregation Beth Hamedrash and currently of Yerushalayim, have spent decades at the forefront of building the local Jewish community, and their impact is keenly felt until this very day.

Influenced by this great legacy, Avi and Julie are committed to perpetuating and building upon it. Beloved by all who know them, the Zohars are eager to lend their hand to communal projects and to assist in any way they can. Avi is an educator at Torah Academy of Greater Philadelphia and is currently finishing his Master's in Education. He is a well-known fixture at local events, fondly greeting guests while capably and calmly serving as *mashgiach* and coordinator.

When not busy with her family or schoolwork, Julie volunteers for the Philadelphia *Mikvah*, Torah Academy PTO, and other local Torah institutions. They are the proud parents of Hila, Eitan, and Aviva. Avi and Julie have been Kollel advocates since moving to Bala Cynwyd, with Avi maintaining a weekly chavrusa and bringing young Eitan to the Motzaei Shabbos *Masmid* Program. Julie has assisted with Kollel functions and is a good friend to many in the Kollel community.

The Kollel is pleased to recognize their efforts with this well-deserved award.

"WHERE ELSE CAN ONE GO TO BE IN AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE SO MANY PEOPLE COME TOGETHER TO LEARN TORAH? THE KOLLEL IS ONE OF THOSE INSTITUTIONS WHERE I ASK MYSELF, 'HOW DID THE COMMUNITY EVER GET ALONG WITHOUT IT?!'"

[Kevin Ross]



New Horizons

THE KOLLEL WELCOMES FOUR NEW FAMILIES TO PHILADELPHIA

At the very center of the Kollel's collective impact on the community are its families. The steady influx of fresh talent and young idealism that the Kollel draws to the community has contributed considerably to the character and the dynamic of Jewish Philadelphia.

During their tenure at the Kollel, while these aspiring *talmidei chachamim* hone their own leadership and pedagogic skills through the Kollel's mentorship programs and communal interaction, the community at large benefits from the spillover of their growth. This mutual benefit can be likened to one who fills his own vessel, while allowing it to overflow and provide for those around him as well. Many of the Kollel wives take on teaching positions or other professional capacities in our schools as well as volunteering and mentoring for the women of the community.

As the Kollel rabbis develop their individual talents, they expand from their direct *chavrusa* roles to wider projects that benefit larger groups. For example, Rabbi Yosef Prupas, the Kollel's Director of Development, runs the recently-launched Executive Learning Forum (www.elfforum.com), which draws together a group of successful entrepreneurs and professionals for a monthly luncheon and discussion on the Torah's perspective on many contemporary issues and ethical dilemmas.

Upon "graduating" from the Kollel, a number of families have chosen to make Philadelphia their permanent home. Some have proceeded to open their own teaching initiatives, such as the First Seder program run by Rabbi Uri Greenspan on the Kollel campus. Others have joined the workforce locally, employing many people within our community. A number of former Kollel members have gone on to head community Kollelim of their own, as well as assuming positions in other Torah institutions, here and across the country.

This year the Kollel has been privileged to welcome four new member families to Philadelphia. In the short time since their arrival, the Grunberger, Schechter, Sussman and Weiss families have integrated beautifully into our community. We look forward to them utilizing the talents they bring with them to enrich our city and make our wonderful community even greater.

Starting the Day off Right

SPOTLIGHT ON THE FIRST SEDER BAIS MEDRASH PROGRAM



We are well aware that the way one starts one's morning ultimately impacts the remainder of the day. It was with this in mind that Rabbi Uri Yehuda Greenspan, a Lower Merion resident and distinguished former member of the Philadelphia Community Kollel, launched First Seder (www.firstseder.org), a self-contained institution located inside the Kollel's Bais Medrash.

With two unique tracks, First Seder offers a three-hour daily learning experience for men of all ages and backgrounds, from the novice to the veteran Gemara learner. The program features a choice of either classroom/lecture style learning delivered by local rabbis and the Kollel staff, or one-on-one *chavrusa* learning where one gets to experience the absorbing, animated vibrancy of "Bais-Medrash-style" study.



Rabbi Yakir and Lea Schechter

RELOCATING FROM JERUSALEM



R'Yakir Schechter, originally of Teaneck, New Jersey is married to Lea (nee Zuckerman) of Silver Spring, Maryland. The Schechters resided for the past four years in the Ramat Eshkol neighborhood of Yerushalayim, where R'Yakir learned in the Kollel at Yeshivas Aish HaTorah and taught in some of Aish's popular outreach programs. R'Yakir received his *Semicha* ordination from Yeshivas Rabbeinu Yitzchak Elchonon, and holds a Master's degree in Jewish Education from the Azrieli School of Jewish Education. Lea has been working as a speech therapist for close to ten years, and has experience in many areas of speech pathology. They have three daughters.

Rabbi Shmulie & Frayda Grunberger

RELOCATING FROM JERUSALEM



A native of St. Louis, R' Shmulie attended the Telshe Yeshiva in Chicago for High School and post-High School Bais Medrash before traveling to Israel to learn in the Slabodka Yeshiva in Bnei Brak. Shortly before his marriage to Frayda (nee Storch), R' Shmulie joined the Mir Yeshiva where he continued on in the *Kollel*, settling in Yerushalayim for some four years. During this time, Shmulie received his *Semicha* ordination from Harav Moshe Sternbuch and Harav Yosef Yitzchak Lerner.

Frayda was born and raised in Baltimore where she attended Bais Yaakov of Baltimore. She is a graduate of Bnos Chava Seminary in Yerushalayim and holds a BA in Liberal Arts from Ma'alot, Baltimore. She is currently pursuing a degree in Occupational Therapy at Temple University's graduate program. They and their two little boys are excited to join the Philadelphia Community Kollel.

Rabbi Shmuel Dov & Suri Sussman

RELOCATING FROM LAKEWOOD



Growing up in Brooklyn, R' Shmuel Dov attended Yeshiva Sha'ar Hatorah for high school and four years of Bais Medrash. R' Shmuel Dov then continued on to the Brisker Yeshiva in Yerushalayim, followed by Bais Medrash Govoha in Lakewood. Getting an early start at outreach, R' Shmuel Dov spent three summers in Dallas, Texas on Project SEED.

Suri, also a native of Brooklyn, attended Bais Yaakov D'rav Meir High School and went to BJJ in Yerushalayim for her seminary year. Suri taught sixth-grade Social Studies and History at Nefesh Academy. She holds a BA in Psychology from Touro College and is currently pursuing a degree in Occupational Therapy from Temple University. The Sussmans and their son lived in Lakewood for a year and a half before joining the Philadelphia Kollel.

Rabbi Avrohom & Gittie Weiss

RELOCATING FROM JERUSALEM



R' Avrohom Weiss MA, MFT, is a practicing family therapist who successfully counsels individuals, couples, and families. For the past twelve years, the Weiss's have resided in Yerushalayim, where R' Avraham served as an educator as well as a student activities coordinator and mashgiach. Gittie established a popular fly-a-cake service in Israel, known as "One Smart Cookie and More," which featured her trademark exquisite custom-made cakes, cookies, cupcakes, and desserts. The Weiss's have six children.

The diverse crowd that has joined this program since its inception in 2012 includes members from communities as far Elkins Park, Cherry Hill and Northeast Philadelphia. Countless "virtual" members from around the world take part in the program via live video conferencing or by utilizing the many archived classes available around-the-clock through the program's website. This diversity is an indicator of the program's versatility and appeal, and is a testament to the timeless draw of Torah study and its eternal position as the essence of our people.

As word of the success of the program has gotten out to other communities, a number of requests have been made to replicate it within other community Kollelim.





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