

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDIUM

שתה מים מבורך ונוזלים מתוך בארך. יפוצו מעינותיך חוצה ברחבות פלגי מים (משלי ה' טו-טז)

שתה מים מבורך - מבור שנתן לך הקב"ה לחלקך היא תורת משה

יפוצו מעינותיך חוצה - סוף שתקנה תלמידים ותורה הוראות ברבים ויצא לך שם, ברחבות עיר תפוצינה פלגי מימך (רש"י שם)

Shlomo HaMelech encourages each of us to “drink water” – to quench our deep thirst with the waters of Torah. And he assures us, that if we do so, the fountains of our acquired wisdom will “spring forth,” filling the roads and avenues with rivulets of water.

Winter *zman* has begun once again in Yeshiva. We await showers of water, here in Eretz Yisroel. And we each await the daily opportunities to quench our deep thirst with the water of Torah. But as we anticipate, we reflect as well.

We reflect upon the fact that just as each new *zman* brings in “new faces”, so too, each new *zman* carries with it the realization that some of our *chaveirim* have moved on to other places and venues. They have moved on and now their waters are springing forth and are flowing elsewhere.

Some have continued on to other *yeshivos*. And others have joined various communities whether as businessmen, professionals or *Klei Kodesh*. All are making their impact by force of their unique personalities powered by the Torah that they have learned.

In this issue of Connections, you will read about the impact that a number of our alumni have made and are continuing to make in the quickly growing community of Houston, Texas. You will read about two *yungeleit* who recently left the Toras Moshe Kollel in Eretz Yisroel and are now contributing to different communities in the United States. You will read about the Class of '97, who will receive the Ner Michoel Tribute at the upcoming Dinner, and their contributions. Finally, you will read about the recent events marking the 4th *yahrtzeit* of Rabbi Michoel Weiner, *zt”l*, for whom Ner Michoel is named.

Ner Michoel and Connections were founded with the aim of keeping the “Toras Moshe Family” together, even as we spread our wellsprings in communities as far apart as Norfolk and Houston, as Passaic and Yerushalayim.

Wishing you all a wonderful winter and hoping to see you at the Dinner (still praying that it is in *ירושלים הבנויה*, this year).

B’Hatzlacha always,



Dan Sinowitz
Rabbi Daniel Sinowitz



Shmuli Weiner
Rabbi Shmuli Weiner

SPREADING THE LIGHT OF TORAH:

Alumni Join Community Kollelim



When the time comes for a *talmid* to leave Toras Moshe, the Yeshiva’s impact and influence truly comes to the fore. This is uniquely so in the case of young couples who have spent several years in Yerushalayim as part of Toras Moshe’s Kollel, and choose to join a community *kollel* upon their return to the United States.

One such couple, Rabbi and Mrs. Ephraim Weiss, recently joined the Passaic-Clifton Community Kollel, a renowned *makom Torah*, where *avreichim* enhance their learning under the leadership of Rabbi Chaim Krause while preparing for their future roles in Klal Yisroel.

“We saw Passaic as a strong, vibrant Torah community, a good fit,” says Rabbi Weiss, who spent three years in Toras Moshe as a *bochur* plus another three as an *avreich*. “There’s a sizable amount of alumni here, as well as many *kollel* couples from other *yeshivos* who share our values and ambitions; there’s a lot of learning going on here.

“I discussed moving back to the US and joining the Passaic *kollel* at length with

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the Rosh Yeshiva and the Mashgiach,” Reb Ephraim continues, “and they were very encouraging. The Rosh Yeshiva felt very strongly about our being part of a *makom Torah* and being *mashpia* on others, helping people with their learning. He was very positive about the role of a community *kollel* and the tremendous positive impact it can have on the people around it.”

“WE SAW PASSAIC AS A STRONG, VIBRANT TORAH COMMUNITY, A GOOD FIT,”

While couples like the Weisses are helping an already strong, rapidly growing Torah community take their learning and commitment to the next level, others opt for *kollelim* in communities comprised largely of *baalei teshuva* with only a minimal connection to Torah and *mitzvos*. Rabbi and Mrs. Shmuel Dovid Katz joined the Norfolk (Virginia) Community Kollel this past summer.

“Norfolk is not specifically a *kiruv kollel*,” explains Rabbi Katz. “The focus is primarily on the existing community, although my wife and I hope to eventually involve ourselves in actual *kiruv*. During the five years I spent in Toras Moshe as a *bochur*, as well as my four years in its *kollel*, I was very close with both the Mashgiach and Rabbi Samber; they have always guided me on every decision I faced. When we realized it would soon be time for us to return to America, I joined Ner LeElef, a training program for *kiruv* leadership. While we were not set on *kiruv* per se, we knew we wanted to go somewhere out of town and serve in some kind

of *klei kodesh* capacity, and that Ner LeElef would prepare us for that, as well as help us find a suitable position. They were the ones who helped us find Norfolk; we came out here for a Shabbos to allow ourselves and the community a chance to become acquainted. We also met with the Rosh Kollel, Rabbi Baruch Danziger, who is a close acquaintance of Rabbi Samber. We then returned to Yerushalayim and discussed it with the Mashgiach, who was very helpful when we made the decision to accept the position.”

“When you’re still in the Yeshiva’s *beis medrash*,” Reb Ephraim points out, “it’s certainly easier to make decisions and deal with issues that come up, with our *rebbeim* close by. But the *shmuessen* and *vaadim* we heard always emphasized that the day would come that we would have to take all of this with us, wherever we’d go, and somehow maintain it on our

own. Actually, I experienced this even while still in Yeshiva; there were times during *bein hazemanim* or while learning on my own at home, that I would find myself contemplating what the Rosh Yeshiva would have said on this Gemara, or how Rav Shurkin would have understood this line. I would need to answer my conscience honestly – would they be satisfied with this *p’shat* or am I taking the ‘easy way out’? Certainly now, in a smaller setting, I have to retain this “litmus test” if I want to hold on to the standard of Toras Moshe. Having received this training, I feel that I’m able to keep it up on my own. I know what they would want me to say, which direction they would want me to go, and which questions they would want me to ponder in a given situation. I called the Rosh Yeshiva before Rosh Hashana, and I’m secure with the knowledge that my *rebbeim* are always available, just a phone call away. I’m looking forward to the upcoming Dinner, where I hope to meet the Rosh Yeshiva, the Mashgiach, the *rebbeim* and fellow alumni once again.”

“I’ve learned to overcome the time zone difference when I need to speak to the Mashgiach,” Reb Shmuel Dovid Katz says with a smile. “I’m also very close with Rabbi Shmuli Weiner, almost from my first day at Toras Moshe twelve years ago. As a *bochur*, I joined his family for countless Shabbos meals, and attended many of his *shiurim*. I learned *b’chavrusa* with him, and served as the *gabbai* in his *shul* – Zichron Nosson Tzvi, a flourishing American *kehilla* in Ramat Eshkol. He’s been our family’s

“I’VE LEARNED TO OVERCOME THE TIME ZONE DIFFERENCE WHEN I NEED TO SPEAK TO THE MASHGIACH,”

Rav and *posek*, he understands us, and we are really comfortable talking to him. Now that we’ve moved to Norfolk, I speak to him on the phone as well, so we haven’t “lost” our connection. When I recently received the Rosh Hashana edition of Ner Michoel’s alumni CDs, I had it in the car and listened to it from beginning to end. I got tremendous *chizuk* from hearing *shiurim* from the *rebbeim* once again; it was like being back at home.”

The differences in their respective communities notwithstanding, both couples are delighted to be in a place where a *kollel* family’s presence can make a palpable difference, while continuing their personal growth.



RABBI SHMUEL D. KATZ



ALUMNI IN HOUSTON, TEXAS

IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY

Houston, Texas – America’s fourth largest city – has recently been attracting more and more young families seeking an affordable Torah community to live and raise their families. Toras Moshe is very proud of its alumni’s role in making the community more hospitable to Yiddishkeit.

Binyomin Medetsky, who has been living in Houston for over a decade, originally moved to Houston to become a high school *rebbe* in the Robert M Beren Academy and later joined the TORCH Kollel (Torah Outreach Resource Center of Houston). He is currently involved in real estate investing. “He will do anything,” says fellow alumnus and Houston resident Dovid Zweig, describing Binyomin’s boundless dedication to the *klal*. “He serves on a number of boards and also is extremely supportive of the local *mosdos*. He has taken a leadership role in fundraising and community activism. When TGA, the local girls’ high school, had a significant budget deficit, Binyomin immediately committed himself to raise a quarter of the campaign’s targeted goal himself.

Houston more recently, but has already involved himself in many areas of *harbotzas Torah*. He is a very active member of the *kollel* who delivers various *shiurim* and *chaburas* to members of the community, teaches at TGA, and serves as a rabbinic intern, getting *shimush* from Rabbi Yehoshua Wender at the Young Israel of Houston. He gives a *shiur* for the *baalei batim* every Shabbos morning, and puts out a very popular *dvar Torah* known as the Weekly Torah Minute.

“Toras Moshe taught me a great deal about how to learn and how to teach others,” Rabbi Buchwald says. “They taught me how to answer questions and deal with all sorts of people. The Mashgiach asked me to serve as the *gabbai* in Yeshiva; this included the responsibility for planning, arranging, and overseeing events such as Yomim Noraim, setting up *chavrusas* for younger *bochurim*, as well as the *chaburas*. It was certainly a leadership opportunity that guided and influenced my ability to deal effectively with the highly diverse members of our community.

Amazingly, he put it together in a matter of days!”

R a b b i
N a p h t a l i
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is an alumnus who came to

ting more and more young, mainstream people who have learned in fine *yeshivos*. We also brought Shviti – BMG of Lake-wood’s Sunday *iyun chabura* initiative which spans many cities nationwide – to Houston. This past Hoshana Rabba night we had a very impressive three-hour Shviti *chabura* with twenty-five participants; Rabbi Wender was very excited to see it.”

Another Toras Moshe alumnus is Yaakov Wohlgelehter, who spent several years doing full-time *kiruv* work for TORCH (Torah Outreach Resource Center of Houston). While he has since moved on to the field of home development, Yaakov still gives classes at TORCH and also serves on the Shul’s board.

Members of the Houston community regularly observe young, idealistic people donating their precious time and resources to enrich the spiritual needs of others. They are exposed to *baalei batim* who truly model a Torah life both in and out of the *beis medrash*, opening their homes and welcoming both natives and newcomers with warmth and genuine hospitality, and the impact is immeasurable. As Rabbi Buchwald concludes, “There’s something I’ve heard from the Mashgiach that always resonates with me: In this line of work, you always have to remember that you are working for nobody else but the *Ribbono shel Olam*. Before you give a *shiur* or *drasha*, recite a brief *tefilla* that you should satisfactorily perform the *Ratzon HaBorei*.”

RABBI NAPHTALI BUCHWALD





The Class of '97: Recipients of the Ner Michoel Alumni Tribute

Yeshivas Toras Moshe takes tremendous pride in presenting the Class of '97 with the Ner Michoel Alumni Tribute. Although many years have passed since this outstanding group first arrived in Toras Moshe, their connection to the Yeshiva and to one another has remained strong; their diverse lives and accomplishments all reflect a shared value system and meaningful sense of purpose.

"When we came to Toras Moshe, there were several large groups who were from the same yeshiva," recalls Rabbi Avidon Soroka, a member of the Class of '97, who is now a Rosh Chabura in Lakewood. "The largest group was from Tiferes Torah; there were other groups from Toronto, from Ohr Hachaim in Queens, Miami, and England. Then there were a few individuals who came on their own, or perhaps with one more friend. It didn't take very long for all of us to solidify into one large group; interacting in learning, setting our sights on common life-goals, and getting started on becoming what we are today really brought us all together."

Rabbi Moshe Kaufman, another classmate who is currently a member of the Chicago Community Kollel, *shoel u'meishiv* at the Telshe Yeshiva, and general editor of Rav Moshe Feinstein's recently published manuscripts, agrees. "The Yeshiva has a tremendous *koach*," he says, "a unifying effect that brings all sorts of diverse individuals together. Things like 'which mesivta is he from' went away very fast; we quickly recognized that commitment to learning and growing is what counts."

"Most of us experienced a 'turning point,'" Rabbi Soroka recalls, "a broadening of our horizons when we began taking learning more seriously, spending extra hours in the *beis medrash*, and finding more meaning in our *avodas Hashem*. I have a tremendous amount of *hakoras hatov* to the *rebbeim* for implanting in me – a regular high school kid – the desire to be a *talmid chochom*. Beyond that, the unique atmosphere and environment created by the *bochurim* – older guys interacting with their younger counterparts – is very powerful. During my first Chol HaMoed Sukkos – I had been in Yeshiva for about a month – Ruvy Schwartz (today Rabbi Reuven Schwartz) came over to me and said, 'Why go bowling? Let's go visit Rabbi Shurkin instead!' We went to see him in his *sukkah* and were very uplifted. The older *bochurim* really understand the younger ones and are really in a position to influence them. No one's forcing you to join the late-night learning, but all your friends are there; it's the *seviva* that does it!"

Chaim Weiser, another member of the class, currently practices law in New York City. "I would eat lunch for a half hour," he reminisces, "and then run back to the *beis medrash* to utilize the other half of lunch break with a *chavrusa*, learning a topic that was totally unrelated to first and second *seder*. I was learning *hilchos Shabbos* with someone whom I still keep up with today."



Dedicated in memory of Rabbi...





TORAS MOSHE

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תוראס משה

רבי מיכאל וינער זצ"ל

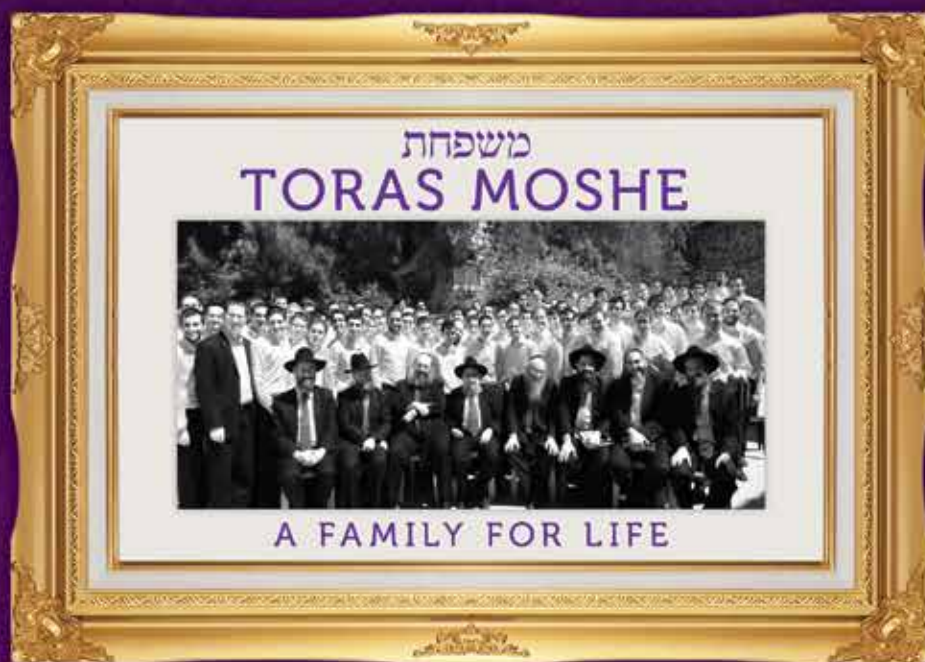
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"Although there were some very good boys in the class even at the outset," Rabbi Kaufman recalls, "we still felt like we were stepping into a new world of learning day and night. I remember how Rabbi Meiselman used to speak about the way 'second seder feels endless' to the new *talmid*. Coming from the comforts of home, *gashmiyus* was now a challenge, but we felt the richness of the *ruchniyus* environment, and got pulled along with the tide. Many of the older *bochurim*, such as Rabbi Shmuel Zilber, Rabbi Naftali Katz and Rabbi Zev Berkowitz, made it a point to help us get acclimated to the special *ruach* of the Yeshiva. You got a feeling that there was a lot of *shteiging* to do. I remember the first Friday night, when a whole *chevra* sat down to learn Chumash-Rashi with Ramban. That was just what you did on *leil Shabbos*, and you didn't stop until you mastered the *parsha*. I would sit in the *beis medrash* with my old friends from YTT – Yanky Weitman and Chaim Weiser – and learn together until late at night like it was the most normal thing to do. We had come a long way since high school, when we simply didn't see things in the same perspective. At the end of the first week, I remember two *bochurim* staying up the entire Thursday night *chazering* the week's *shiurim*. There was an atmosphere that allowed everyone to grow according to their own style and personality."

"*Brachos* was the big extracurricular *masechta* back in the day," Chaim Weiser offers. "I started learning it 'on the side' for a half hour a day, here and there with various *chavrusos*, most of whom were several years older than me. At the end of my second year, when I knew I was leaving Toras Moshe, I stayed for the summer and the first week and a half of Elul, when my new Yeshiva in America was starting. On my last day, I made a *siyum* on *masechta Brachos*. In Toras Moshe, however, a *siyum* doesn't mean you finished the Gemara; I did it with Tosafos, the Maharsha and Maharam, as well as the Tur and Shulchan Aruch be'iyun on the halachic parts. We were taught to truly acquire whatever we are learning and become a different being from it – for the rest of our lives. I actually had a *chavrusa* with whom I learned for thirteen years; we started in Toras Moshe and just kept on going. Sometimes we met at 6 AM, other times at 10 PM; by last year, when he moved to Woodmere and we had to stop, we reached a total of 750 *blatt*."

"While everyone chose their own path in life," Rabbi Soroka points out, "the fundamentals and building blocks we acquired in Yeshiva, the Torah, *avoda*, and *middos*, are things that we share and remain unchanged. Some of us became doctors or lawyers, some are still learning full-time, and there are even a few who are still in Toras Moshe. I've been in Lakewood for many years, but my formative years at Toras Moshe made me into what I am today. On numerous occasions, I've heard various *roshei chabura* and others in BMG remark that there's something unique and special about Toras Moshe alumni. They come to Lakewood with a clear vision of what they want to be, maintain a healthy *kesher* with their *rebbeim*, and possess a skill set

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33rd

Anniversary Tribute Dinner



Mr. and Mrs.
Mordechai Golombeck
Guests of Honor



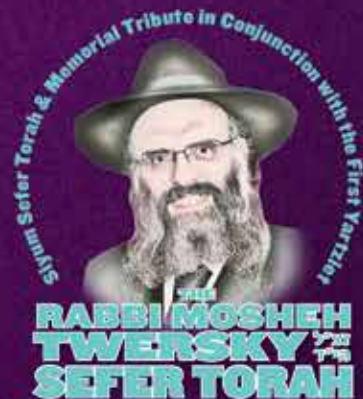
Mr. and Mrs.
Shlomo Zalman (Steven) Weiss
Parents of the Year

THE CLASS of '97
Recipients of the
NER MICHOEL ALUMNI TRIBUTE

NOVEMBER 22, 2015

י' כסלו תשע"ו

ATERES AVROHOM HALL



**WE WILL BE HONORED TO
GREET THE FOLLOWING
MEMBERS OF THE HANHALLAH
AT THE DINNER
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22**

י' כסלו תשע"ו

ROSH HAYESHIVA, RABBI MOSHE MEISELMAN

MASHGIACH, RABBI ELCHONON FISHMAN

RABBI YEHUDA ABRAMOWITZ

RABBI ZEV KLEIN

RABBI AVROHOM SAMBER

RABBI DANIEL SINOWITZ

RABBI SHMUEL WEINER

**WE WILL ALSO BE HONORED BY
THE PRESENCE OF**

REBBETZIN BASHI TWERSKY

**AT THE DINNER AND SIYUM
SEFER TORAH TRIBUTE**

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that truly sets them apart. When I consulted with Rabbi Meiselman before publishing my first *sefer*, he encouraged it very much as a way of developing my learning and taking things 'to the next level'. I consider myself fortunate to have a Rosh Yeshiva whom I can speak to about any life decision, big or small; he's always available, whether in person or on the phone. Not everybody is so fortunate to have such a *rebbe-talmid* relationship; the physical distance has not diminished our feeling of closeness."

Yanky Weitman works in the healthcare industry. "When the time came for me to leave full-time learning," he says with a smile, "I realized how *bnei Torah* transitioning from the *beis medrash* to the workplace need proper training and guidance – from a Yiddishkeit standpoint – in how to successfully navigate this change. The Rosh Yeshiva always discussed going to work and being in the big world out there while remaining a *ben Torah* and setting aside fixed times to learn. Take along what the Yeshiva gave you, he would tell us. We certainly received the *chinuch*, the tools and skills to deal with the working world."

"We were a very close-knit group," Yanky adds, "and we continue to remain close, although we've gone in many different directions. As friends, we've joined in each others' *simchos* and shared advice and experiences over the years, and the *kesher* is still there. There are some friends that I see all the time, and then there's the invitation I just got for a classmate's son's Bar Mitzvah in England!"

"I think the reason we are all still very connected," Rabbi Kaufman concludes, "is the tremendous *hakoras hatov* we feel to the Yeshiva for the strong foundations set by the Rosh Yeshiva, the *Mashgiach*, and *rebbeim*. When you observe alumni who have become *baalei batim*, you notice how they retain the values of integrity, honesty, and *mentshlichkeit*; those who became *rebbeim* and *kollel* members attribute their success to Toras Moshe. Personally, I draw a great deal of inspiration just from the fact that I'm a *talmid*, and I represent the Yeshiva wherever I go. We, the *talmidim* in Chicago, were very proud to hear that when the Rosh Yeshiva came here for visit, he inquired about us all over the city: 'How's my *talmid* Moshe Kaufman?' and so on. We're the products of the Yeshiva in which he invested so much *kochos*, and he really cares about us all."

A family within the greater Mishpachas Toras Moshe, the Class of '97 remains united through shared roots and goals, continuing to look to its alma mater for guidance and inspiration.



American Friends of Yeshivas Toras Moshe
1412 East 7th Street
Brooklyn, NY 11230

RABBI SHMULI WEINER VISITS LAKEWOOD

Lakewood's alumni contingent was treated to a special visit from Rabbi Shmuli Weiner during Elul *zman*. Rabbi Weiner was in the US for the *yahrzeit* of his esteemed father, Rabbi Michoel Weiner zt"l, for whom Ner Michoel is named; he joined with Toras Moshe alumni in Lakewood at two memorable events, a *shalosh seudos* as well as a *melave malka*.

The *shalosh seudos* took place at the home of Rabbi Simcha Lang, where for about seven years now, there is a weekly open invitation for *shalosh seudos* to anyone who wishes to join. Rabbi Weiner's presence made everyone feel very much at home as they reconnected by sharing *divrei Torah* and catching up on Yeshiva-related matters.

In the spirit of Chodesh Elul, Rabbi Weiner delivered meaningful *divrei chizuk* to the attendees. He mentioned how his father's many strengths were rooted in his dedication to *limud ha'mussar*. He was very conscientious about attending *mussar sedarim* and *shmuessen*, even in his later years. Every one of us can follow his sterling example, by choosing one *mussar sefer* that really 'speaks' to us – whether in English or Hebrew – and study it in a regular fashion, allowing it to effect positive changes in our lives.

That Motzei Shabbos, alumni once again joined Rabbi Weiner at his mother's home in the Westgate neighborhood of Lakewood for an inspiring *melave malka*. The atmosphere was friendly and relaxed, but the conversation was very *Torahdig*. Rabbi Naftali Katz and other Lakewood alumni discussed different types of *sh'eilos* that came up recently; Rabbi Weiner then clarified how and why he *paskened* the way he did. The conversation also covered rulings by the Rosh Yeshiva and other *gedolim*, with Rabbi Weiner elaborating on each one in his popular, down-to-earth style.



"Spending time with alumni is always very enjoyable," Rabbi Weiner commented. "The events of that Shabbos in particular, were especially important to me and my family. I hope the alumni will continue to actively participate in the various events we organize throughout the year."