

In and Around... FAR ROCKAWAY & the FIVE TOWNS

ACHIEZER'S 3RD ANNUAL GALA

This past Sunday evening, Achiezer, which tirelessly works to assist our entire community, hosting its third annual gala, attended by more than 1,300 enthusiastic participants. Those present included dozens of *rabbonim* and nearly a dozen elected officials, showcasing the feeling of camaraderie and unity that has become synonymous with

ents of Achiezer's many programs. They were there to both show their appreciation and express their desire to be a part of such a wonderful organization, where one can be both a contributor and a beneficiary at once.

The gala took place at the Sands of Atlantic Beach and the evening began with a delectable buffet din-

Adam Mirzoeff, began the program by welcoming and thanking the many *rabbonim*, community leaders and dignitaries in attendance. Senator Chuck Schumer spoke eloquently about his connection to the Bender family, stemming all the way back to his involvement with Rabbi Yaakov Bender - father of Achiezer's founder and director, Rabbi Boruch Ber Bender - in the inception of Flatbush Hatzolah many years ago. He also spoke about Prime Minister Binyomin Netanyahu's speech to Congress and promised that he will "do anything he can here in America and in Eretz

Thereafter, the chairman of the board, Mr. Shulie Wollman, addressed the crowd. He thanked everyone for showing their support of Achiezer, their belief in Achiezer, and that they are all a part of Achiezer.

Rabbi Boruch Ber Bender's address began with a touching story related by Rav Yisrael Meir Lau, chief rabbi of Tel Aviv. Through the story, Rav Lau, a Holocaust survivor, explained that despite all of the horrors he experienced, the one thing that moves him most and that brings him to tears is "unnatural giving" - an act of *chesed* performed

employee by name for their contributions to the organization, for without their seamless work and compassion, the organization could not function. He also thanked the many people who are ALL Achiezer - the financial advisors who guide a family with an over-drafted account to a paying job, with stability and dignity; the doctor who just arrived home after a 14-hour workday and turns right back around to go to the hospital to attend to an "Achiezer patient."

Rabbi Bender then related a chilling story about Danielle Besser *a"h*, who was tragically killed in a motor vehicle accident while vacationing in Mexico. Achiezer, together with Homeland Security's Dov Horowitz and Lilian Fergie Hernandez's relentless efforts, came through with something that one Mexican official stated was "never seen before." They were instrumental in bringing her body back for a proper and timely *keveras Yisroel*.

Rabbi Bender concluded that the commitment and resolve of the community, the volunteers, the staff, the supporters and the friends of Achiezer are strong, and he gave the attendees a *brachah* to continue on the path of unnatural giving.

The program continued with video presentations and awards presented to each of the five distinguished honorees.

When Dr. Schneider accepted his award, he was surprised by a very young visitor, one who owes his life to Dr. Schneider. When the Kohn family from Cedarhurst heard that Achiezer was honoring Dr. Schneider, they reached out to Rabbi Bender. Five years ago, their fifteen-day-old son wasn't "acting right." Young Benny Kohn was eventually admitted to the hospital, where an "angel" in the form of Dr. Schneider appeared. He performed a brain procedure that proved to be lifesaving, and the Kohns felt that it was only appropriate to present Dr. Schneider with a note, written by Benny himself, thanking him for his vitality. Needless to say, there wasn't a dry eye in the room.

The last speaker of the evening was the guest of honor, Mr. Yoeli Steinberg. He noted that this week's *parsha*, *Vayakhel*, con-



PHOTOS: TZEMACH GLENN AND MOSHE GERSHBAUM

Yisroel to keep *am Yisrael chai*."

Mr. Mirzoeff also gave honor and tribute to the late mayor of Cedarhurst, Mr. Andrew Parise, who served the community with devotion and commitment, as well as Joseph Sanford Jr., a young fireman who recently died in the line of duty. He also thanked the local police and fire department representatives in attendance.

The assemblage then recited a *perek* of *Tehillim*, led by Achiezer trustee Mr. Ronald Lowinger.

not because it is convenient for the giver, but because he wants to give to another person, to do for him, and to ease his pain. Rabbi Bender then explained that "this is why we are all here tonight. Every person here wants to give in some way."

He continued: "The calls are difficult, the volume is high, and the needs are pressing." With candor, he went on to explain that it is Achiezer's responsibility to keep up with the calls, responding to each and every one. He thanked each

Achiezer.

The evening was laced with a feeling of *achdus* and purpose. The gala's tagline, "We are ALL Achiezer," was truly felt. So many of the attendees have been recipi-

ner catered by Chap-a-Nosh and a sushi bar by Simply Sushi. By 8:15 p.m., the program had already commenced, with an overflow crowd in attendance.

The master of ceremonies, Mr.

BRINGING KIRUV BACK HOME

A Talk with Rabbi Meir Goldberg, Co-Director of Meor Rutgers Jewish Xperience

By Liba Lieberman

Although Rabbi Meir Goldberg has become a leading figure in college kiruv, most notably at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, he continues to turn to his

hometown of Far Rockaway, where he was born and attended Yeshiva Darchei Torah, as an example of warm Jewish family life to show his students.



Students dancing with Rabbi Goldberg at his son's bar mitzvah.

Within his program of Meor Rutgers Hashem's commandment to erect the *Mishkan*. Yoeli likened Achiezer to a place where *Mishkans* are constantly being erected, where families are made whole, and where Hashem rests. He explained that he accepted the award merely as a representative of the community. He thanked those in attendance for "being Achiezer."

As the program came to an end,

and *frum* professional speakers to university students on campus and hosts two memorable *Shabbatonim*, one of which is always held in Far Rockaway. The Far Rockaway *Shabbaton* took place recently on

health counseling, and more. The film spoke for itself.

Achiezer's 3rd Annual Gala drew to a close with a beautiful dessert buffet. As the crowd lingered for just a bit more, the conversations centered on the program, Achiezer, and its great accomplishments in but a few years.

The feeling was warmth. It was appreciation for the past and inspi-



ration for the future. It was a feeling of Achiezer. Videos and presentations can be watched by.....Donations to help continue Achiezer's important work can be written out to Achiezer or can be given on the Achiezer website www.achiezer.org/donate.

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Shabbos, Parshas Tetzaveh-Zachor, once again creating a warm environment for secular college students to experience the joys of *Yiddishkeit* and *frum* life.



Rabbi Goldberg with a student.

Why does Rabbi Goldberg bring his students back to his home turf?

"It's a great community," he explains. "Far Rockaway has the best hosts and the most welcoming environment. The families are good,

healthy people the students can learn from." And Rabbi Goldberg understands just how valuable that resource is. On campus, he and Rabbi Lewis give *shiurim* and create opportunities for students to meet *frum* professionals. He has an eye for what creates meaningful experiences to these students, and he is aware that he can find those experiences among the families he knows well from home.

dents was a group of young men trying to join a certain fraternity on campus. Going on the *Shabbaton* interfered with attending a fraternity event, but with Rabbi Goldberg's interceding, the fraternity allowed the students to forego their obligations. The students came to the *Shabbaton*, but they were worried that it might hurt their chances of being accepted into the fraternity. As it turns out, they were very grateful that they



Rabbi Goldberg in Poland with his students.

"This year's *Shabbaton* was beautiful," he said. "Students noticed the *yishuv hadaas* among the families they were with, the peaceful quality of the homes they visited."

Among this year's group of stu-

came. Other students with Jewish mothers and Catholic fathers understood for the first time in their lives why *Yiddishkeit* is so important.

The *Shabbatonim* brings together the efforts of host families, who open

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<p>Regular Hours</p> <p>Sunday-Thursday 1:30PM - 2:30PM 6:30PM - 10:00PM</p> <p>Erev Shabbos / Erev Yom Tov <i>Summer:</i> 5 hours before candle lighting until one hour before candle lighting <i>Winter:</i> 3 hours before candle lighting until one hour before candle lighting</p> <p>Motzai Shabbos / Motzai Yom Tov <i>Summer:</i> 1 hour after Maariv until 2 hours after Maariv <i>Winter:</i> 1 hour after Maariv until 3 hours after Maariv</p>	<p>Emergency Hours <i>(for urgent situations that cannot wait)</i></p> <p>Sunday-Thursday 8:30AM - 11:00PM</p> <p>Erev Shabbos / Erev Yom Tov 8:30AM until 10 min before candle lighting</p> <p>Motzai Shabbos / Motzai Yom Tov Half an hour after Maariv until 11:30PM</p>
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MAREH DROP-OFF LOCATIONS

Lawrence - Shaaray Tefila - 25 Central ave. in the rear parking lot attached to one of the red sheds
Far Rockaway - Mikvah - 1121-A Sage St at the end of the parking lot opposite the women's entrance
Woodmere - Aish Kodesh - 894 Woodmere Place [BETWEEN CLUB DRIVE AND WOODMERE BLVD.] in the back of the parking lot

For more information or for sponsorship opportunities, please call us or email us at info@halachahotline.org