

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

## ACHIEZER HOLDS SECOND ANNUAL TRIBUTE DINNER

By Liba Lieberman

Personal involvement is a key ingredient to Achiezer's enormous success as a one-stop *chesed* agency for the communities of Far Rockaway and the Five Towns. It also characterized the thousand-plus crowd who attended Achiezer's Second Annual Tribute Dinner, which was comprised of many who work for, volunteer for, or have been helped by Achiezer. Held at The Sands of Atlantic Beach, the dinner was a glowing moment of support and *hakoras hatov*, lit by the reassurance that Achiezer is there if anyone in the community needs help.

Rav Yaakov Bender, *rosh hayeshiva* of Yeshiva Darchei Torah and father of Rabbi Boruch Ber Bender, Achiezer's president, pointed out that Achiezer was named after Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzensky *zt"l*, author of the *sefer* *Achiezer*.

"I think Rav Chaim Ozer would be very proud to have such an organization as Achiezer named for him," Rav Bender said.

Opening remarks were delivered by Dr. Moshe Schlusberg, master of ceremonies, who remembered being approached in November 2009 with the idea of a one-stop *chesed* organization. "I said, 'Run with it,' to Rabbi Bender, and he scored a touchdown."

Achiezer fields over one hundred calls a day, calls that reflect every kind of crisis that can happen in everyday life among normal families. Physical health crises, mental health referrals, financial assistance, meals delivered to families staying in hospitals, and financial guidance are just some of the many services that Achiezer employs to meet the needs of the community it serves. Dinner greetings were expressed by Mr. Shulie Wollman, Achiezer's chairman of the board, and Mr. Ronald Lowinger and Mr. Michael Krengel led attendees in reciting *Tehillim*.

The keynote address, delivered by Rabbi Boruch Ber Bender, focused on reflecting on the past, appreciating the present, and looking toward the future. He told a true story of how one small "*shidduch*" on the part of the Achiezer staff turned around someone's life.

"Mrs. Esther Novak, one of our honorees, made a *shidduch* with someone in a nursing home who badly needed companionship," related Rabbi Bender. "She was very depressed. The *shidduch* was extremely successful and the woman receiving the visits became a totally new and happy person. One day, when the companion was leaving the home, she bumped into a doctor whom she knew. He asked her why she was there. When she explained what she was doing, he looked amazed, because he

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1. Rabbi Boruch Ber Bender and Rabbi Eytan Feiner. | 2. Rav Binyamin Kaminetzky, Rabbi Elya Ber Wachtfogel, Rabbi Boruch Ber Bender, Rabbi Meshulem Gorelick and Rabbi Yaakov Bender. | 3. Mr. Ronald Lowinger. | 4. Rabbi Boruch Ber Bender and Naftali Tepfer. | 5. Rabbi Mordechai Stern and Rabbi Yaakov Bender. | 6. Rabbi Elozor Kanner, Zvi Bokow and Justin Hirmes. | 7. Andy Lauber, Rabbi Boruch Ber Bender and Charlie Harary. | 8. Jay Gelman, Rabbi Shalom Axelrod, Shlomo Zuller and Rabbi Ariel Rackovsky. | 9. Eli Weiss, Rabbi Hershel Billet, Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos and Rabbi Boruch Ber Bender. | 10. Shalom Jaroslawicz, Shulie Wollman, Dr. Marcel Scheinman, Rabbi Boruch Ber Bender and Eli Weiss. | 11. Shulie Wollman, Rabbi Dovid Greenblatt, Elisha Brecher, Lloyd Keilson and Rabbi Brouch Ber Bender. | 12. Shulie Wollman, Rabbi Shay Shachter, Rabbi Yaakov Bender, Rabbi Zev Bald, Rabbi Naftali Jaeger and Rabbi Boruch Ber Bender. | 13. Shalom Jaroslawicz, Eli Weiss, Shulie Wollman, Rabbi Boruch Ber Bender and Yoni Novak. | 14. Rabbi Boruch Ber Bender and Rabbi Moshe Weinberger. | 15. Fred Schulman, Rabbi Elchonon Zohn, Rabbi Yitzchak Davis, Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky, Aron Solomon, Michael Krengel and Rabbi Richard Bieler. | 16. Menachem Kagan, Rabbi Zvi Ralbag, Daniel Jacobson, Dr. Marcel Scheinman, Moti Schiffer and Heshy Stern. | 17. Yosef Goldberg, Nechemia Salzman, Rabbi Boruch Ber Bender and Moti Hellman.



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“What does a 24-hour hotline mean?” asked Rabbi Bender. He then went on to list his staff members, some of them mothers of young children, all of whom keep their phones close, just in case. He noted that even a call coming in at 2 a.m. will always be answered. “And there is one staff member who oversees the hotline, whose phone is never shut off. That person is Shalom Jaroslawicz.”

Before closing, Rabbi Bender also mentioned Achiezer's Financial Management Program, which offers shopping gift cards to families who fall short of meeting their monthly expenses. "The cards offer dignity and a wholesome solution," he explained. "This *chesed* movement will continue under the auspices of our community until *Moshiach* comes."

For his part, Dr. Scheinman saw the equation very simply. “I never feel

The final award of the evening was presented to Rabbi Zev and Leah Bald, recipients of the Kesser Shem Tov Award. The video presentation featured Rabbi Bald's uncle, Rav Naftali Jaeger, *rosh hayeshiva* of Yeshiva Sh'or Yeshuv. "Zev and Leah taught their children to care for another *Yid*," Rav Jaeger shared. "The family has a *sheim tov*. Zev himself supports Torah causes and has worked to make Yeshiva Darchei Torah the *makom Torah* it is."

After each honoree was presented with a beautiful plaque, the evening's program came to a close with a compelling feature presentation titled, "Achiezer: Our Community's One Call for Help." The video throbbed with moments of crisis, each one calling out to Achiezer and finding help. Although a mouth-watering dessert buffet followed the program, it was the heartwarming moments of *mesirus nefesh* with which everyone came away.

A rhetorical question on video from Rabbi Moshe Brown, *rov* of Agudath Yisroel of West Lawrence, truly spoke for everyone attending: “How did we exist without *Achiezer*?”

## MADRAIGOS ANNUAL BREAKFAST

## SHUVU BREAKFAST RECEPTION

ANNUAL BREAKFAST FOR BOSTONER  
BAIS MEDRASH OF LAWRENCE

CONGREGATION SHAARAY TEFILA  
ANNUAL CHAI DINNER

The 104<sup>th</sup> Annual *Chai* Dinner of Congregation Shaaray Tefila will take place on Thursday evening, 28 *Sivan*/June 26, at the Lawrence Country Club. The guests of honor are Dr. Michael and Rose Bernstein and Dr. Steven and Hedy Rubel.



4. Pesach Osina, Eli Weiss, Assemblyman Phil Goldfeder, Shalom Jaroslawicz, Rabbi Baruch Rothman and Rabbi Boruch Ber Bender.

A Community Appreciation Award was given to the Community Assistance Fund, which came into existence after Hurricane Sandy, partnering the Davis Memorial Fund with Achiezer to create monies to help families restore their lives and homes. Rabbi Dovid Greenblatt, founder and director of the Davis Memorial Fund, noted in the video presentation that although the

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