

110 ACHIEZER AT 13: A TALK WITH ELKE RUBIN

March 26, 2021 • 5 TOWNS JEWISH TIMES

Part 3 of a Series

BY AVI SHIFF

In honor of Achiezer's 13th year, we are conducting a multi-part series celebrating the various facets of this remarkable organization. For week #3, we spoke to Elke Rubin, executive coordinator at Achiezer.

AS: Thank you, Elke, for your time amidst your very hectic schedule. For how many years have you worked for Achiezer?

ER: I was privileged to join in 2011, so I've been here for about ten years.

AS: What is your role at Achiezer?

ER: I work as an assistant to our president, Boruch Ber Bender, and I'm in charge of overseeing medical recommendations with him. Many I do on my own, while the more complex diagnoses and illnesses is more of a joint effort.

AS: Tell us about your medical-referral program.

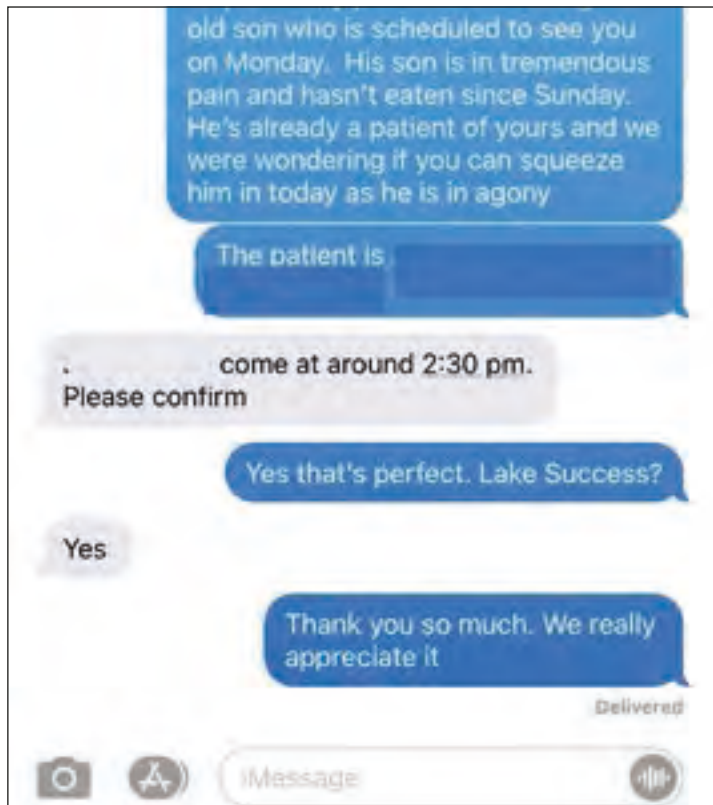
ER: Our medical-referral program is recognized by callers from the Five Towns community and well beyond for its unparalleled expert guidance. With wide-ranging knowledge born of

experience, using our expansive up-to-date database of contacts and direct connections to medical experts, we are uniquely positioned to guide and link patients and their families to the most

appropriate care. Achiezer advocates for patients who have difficulty obtaining appointments, reaching a medical professional, or receiving lifesaving care in a medical facility. We arrange for expedited appointments when necessary and also address hospital recommendations, admissions, and transfers.

AS: What are some real-life examples of such recommendations?

ER: On any given day, we can handle dozens of referrals rang-



ing from a desperately needed oral surgeon, a shattered femur, or someone who requires open heart surgery. Our referrals will entail reaching out to specialists

across Long Island, Manhattan, and sometimes even across the world. Our extensive research

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RSA Rabbinical Seminary of America
1110 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020

Rabbinical Seminary of America in conjunction with the National Torah Initiative is proud to present a new course for Bnei HaYeshiva and Alumni entitled:

"EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW TO GET STARTED IN ADMINISTRATION"

The course will be given by Rabbi Dovid Kramer as well as occasional guest speakers.

Rabbi Kramer has been the Executive Director of Yeshiva of South Shore for 15 years and will share what he has learned and from his decades of experience on the "front lines & back office".

This course is vital for anyone considering opening a Mesad or being involved in any aspect of administration.

SESSION TOPICS WILL INCLUDE

• Financials	• Marketing & Outreach Plan
• Fundraising	• Human Resources
• Legal & Insurance	• Computer Systems
• Real Estate	• Building & Renovation
• Construction	• Communications
• Safety	• Security

DETAILS

When: Course will begin Tuesday April 6th and continue for the next 10 Tuesdays (skipping Shabbat) for a total of 11 sessions.

Time: Each session will begin at 6:55pm and end at 9:15pm with a 10 minute break included.

Where: Sessions will take place in Yeshiva (social distancing will be observed) with a Zoom option available for those who cannot be there in person.

Cost: The price of the entire course is \$745.


If you have any questions please see Rabbi Jeger or call him at 718-268-4700 ext. 114

Rabbi Dovid Kramer received his Semicha, as well as his BA and MA in Jewish Studies from the Rabbinical Seminary of America in Flushing NY between the years of 1977-1980. Concurrently he worked towards a BA in Business Administration from Adelphi University, Garden City, NY, graduating in 1981. After that working as a Computer Programmer, he turned his attention to the non-profit field. For the past 20 years he has served as Executive Director or Director of Development for 4 Mesadim of independent, non-profit organizations (2002-2011) where he was Director of Operations for an annual operating budget of over \$1 million. He has been the CEO of Yeshiva of South Shore - a 2,000 person religious school with 650 students and 150 staff. Rabbi Kramer oversees the entire financial and campus operations.

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(Avot 6:11; Isaiah 43:7)

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and experience will ensure that we track down the most appropriate care wherever that may be.

AS: How do you determine the best course of treatment?

ER: As mentioned, every person's situation is unique. Even among oncologists, some specialize in brain cancer, some specialize in all areas of cancer, some specialize in immunotherapy, while some are exclusively surgical oncologists. We research each professional and have a virtual "rolodex" of doctors who we deal with and recommend.

AS: Can you comment on Achiezer's growth over the last decade?

ER: We've grown by leaps and bounds. It has been incredible. When I joined, we were located in a small office on Beach 9th Street; we had not yet moved to our Central Avenue location. We had a smaller staff that was quickly outmatched which has caused us to nearly double our staff. Now, it's a different operation. There is never a dull moment. Our phones ring off the hook with requests for assistance. In fact, someone just approached me yesterday and said that they're looking for a *shidduch* for their daughter. "Can Achiezer help?" they wanted to know. I said, "*Shidduchim?* What does that have to do with Achiezer?" They said, in all seriousness, "Well, you do everything else, so why not *shidduchim?*"

It's come to a point where people expect us to step in no matter what the crisis or need is. When the communities in Texas recently lost power, people expected Achiezer to get involved. We take that as a

compliment—people count on us.

As needs come up, Achiezer does everything in its power to address them.

AS: How has COVID-19 affected Achiezer's day-to-day operation?

ER: It was indeed difficult for us all when we couldn't open our office due to the lockdown, because we work closely as a team, and when you're not in the same space, it's more difficult to coordinate services. Additionally, we were receiving hundreds of calls a day. But our staff was resilient, continuing to work from home. For those who are mothers, it was challenging, because we needed to hold down the home front while helping people and dealing with the challenges we were presented with. Now that we are back in the office, we can work more efficiently.

We were definitely overloaded with calls during the height of corona. People wanted to know where to be tested, quarantine related questions and even how to properly treat patients at home as hospitals for the first time weren't necessarily the solution.

Of course, we still had people also calling for all types of medical needs, as usual. Should they be going to doctors, and were doctors even willing to see patients?

As a result, physicians were backlogged and we were reaching out to them, trying harder than ever to secure appointments.

AS: Any final comment?

ER: We've continually witnessed the outstanding *chesed* of *Klal Yisrael*. *Mik'ama Yisrael!* Our people look out for each other.

It feels good to have a job where *chesed* is the goal. We *daven* for Hashem to continue to give us the strength to continue helping others in need. ■

REAL ESTATE

By Anessa V. Cohen



SECOND COVID PESACH

Since this is the second Pesach we find ourselves under COVID, does this mean we have become veterans in dealing with *yomim tovim* under fire (I mean COVID)?

And along the lines of "*Mah Nishtanah,*" I think, "How is this Pesach different than other Pesachs" as I reflect on the differences between last year and this year, which are many.

Last year, we were all terrified of getting sick with no treatments or vaccines in sight. We went shopping not only with masks but also with gloves and disinfectant wipes, and more often than not whatever we were looking to buy in the shops ended up being limited to one per customer or not in stock at all, so actual shopping sometimes turned into "potluck!"

This year, we are starting to get vaccinated, thank G-d, and hopefully by Rosh Hashanah time we will be on our way to what used to be normal before COVID, and the sun will shine again!

This year, I am vaccinated and celebrating with at least some of my children and grandchildren. My mom will also be able to celebrate together with us this year after being successfully vaccinated, and I find myself looking forward with excite-

ment to a *yom tov* of laughter and joy and relaxing enjoyment with family after the difficult year we have just dealt with.

Yes, the *minyanim* will still be outside (weather permitting). The weather has warmed up, the sun is shining, people are lining up to get vaccinated and life is becoming good once again.

My 8-year-old grandson, who will be staying with me for Pesach rather than in a hotel this year, called to check what goodies I have prepared for him. (Remember, I am competing with the hotel tea room!)

Of course, I got on the phone prepared for everything!

"Yehuda," I said, "waiting for you on my Pesach shelves are boxes of pancake mix, chocolate syrup, mini marshmallows, large marshmallows, chocolate chips, whipped cream, chocolate sprinkles, all ready for you to create the pancake structure of your dreams on *chol ha'moed!* I also loaded the freezer with ice cream."

Excited, Yehuda answered, "Check!" But then he followed up with, "But what about those chocolate candy bars we discussed? Did you get them, too?"

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