



24:7

Inside
Achiezer's
URGENT LINE

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Rabbi Boruch Ber Bender

The humble privilege of running Achiezer has me attending many meetings. Some are one-on-one meetings with staff members to assess urgent matters. Others are regularly scheduled meetings, with my board, volunteers, or specific families that we are involved with.

Recently, I was fortunate to attend a unique assembly. Achiezer had organized a get together to introduce a new public servant to our community. That's not what made it unique. We often are privileged to meet new legislators. There were about twenty people in attendance. That wasn't unique either. Give or take, that's about the number seated around the Achiezer conference table at an average gathering.

What struck me as incredible, as I looked around the room, was the diversity that encircled me. The individuals comprising this group hailed from different fiscal, religious, cultural and educational walks of life. Yet their differences were barely acknowledged - or even noticed. The participants of that meeting were united for one cause: to better the lives of those living in our community.

This got me thinking of a simple, yet powerful thought. I am in awe on a daily basis of the *Siyata Dishmaya* that Achiezer experiences. The successes we merit can only be attributed to *Him*, because according to the laws of nature, many of our positive outcomes seem far-fetched.

I would like to propose that the success comes from **this energy** – the energy produced when all involved work towards a common goal.

When we collaborate, we move mountains.

When we communicate, we bridge schisms.

Achiezer's greatest objective is to be in touch and in sync with every cog in the wheels of the Five Towns, Far Rockaway and beyond. The staff, *Rabbonim*, public servants, volunteers and regular everyday people who walk into the Achiezer offices on any given day are committed to making this world a better place.

We intentionally timed this newsletter's arrival to coincide with *Shavuot* as the message of this *yom tov* is woven into the very fabric of Achiezer. We all stood there. At one mountain. For one purpose. *K'ish echad, b'lev echad*. For the needs of One (fellow) man, with One (collaborative) heart.

No sentiment represents Achiezer better than that.

*The success comes from this energy,
produced when all involved work
towards a common goal. When we
collaborate, we move mountains. When
we communicate, we bridge schisms.*

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Rabbi Boruch Ber Bender

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Aliza Wartelsky

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Shulie Wollman

There isn't a day that goes by that I am not filled with pride as I consider all that Achiezer has accomplished. No matter where I find myself, someone has a story to tell me about how Achiezer has helped them. It's like an ongoing game of Jewish Geography. "Oh, do you know so and so? He was helped by Achiezer." I have heard it from my family, neighbors and beyond. There is a formula and signature style that Rabbi Boruch Ber Bender uses to create happiness and calm. It's no wonder people know that when they need a hand to guide them, Achiezer is there. What's more, when they want to act as that guide, Achiezer can hook them up too.

I offer my heartfelt prayer that Achiezer's services will soon no longer be needed, but in the meantime may we continue to have a positive impact on the community.

No matter where I find myself, someone has a story to tell me about how Achiezer has helped them.

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Job Board

They say it's not what you know, but who you know in life that matters. In job procurement, the first step on the path to employment is getting the word out. For most, friends, family and those in the know are their first destinations. But thanks to Achiezer, the formula is now even simpler than that. With hundreds of community members searching, the newly launched Achiezer Job Board will prove to be a panacea for the Five Towns and Far Rockaway.

The connection between job and employment opportunities is facilitated by Mrs. Elke Rubin, Achiezer's Job Board administrator. She has accumulated resumes of skilled workers eager to fill jobs in our community and has also spoken to businesses and offices, vetting employment opportunities.

The way the Job Board works is easy: Those seeking employment can visit the website www.achiezer.org/jobs. Following a quick registration process and resume upload, registrants can see job listings categorized by

"full time," "part time," "industry" and "date posted".

Elke has amassed over sixty resumes. "People feel comfortable looking at the employment posts on the site because they know that we have screened the jobs before posting them. It's the same reason that employers contact Achiezer to share information about available positions. They know we attract eager and able workers," Elke says. "Also, community employers prefer to hire community employees."



Job seekers are also coached along the way by Achiezer's resume writing volunteers. Through Esther Novak's referral, Achiezer has volunteers happy to coach a potential job candidate in writing a better resume or

being interviewed by a prospective boss.

From frustration to anticipation to exhilaration, the destination for finding a targeted customized job is no further than the offices of Achiezer. ■

Medical Recommendations



Dr. Jason Ostreicher and Rabbi Boruch Ber Bender

When Achiezer was founded back in 2009, its main focus was medical recommendations. Still today, Achiezer receives hundreds of calls a week from people who need assistance in choosing the right medical practitioner for their specific case. Mrs. Elke Rubin runs Achiezer's medical referral department. When those frantic calls come through, Elke gets the ball rolling.

Each caller, of course, wants to find the best doctor for their specific need. Through his extensive connections and hours of research, Rabbi Boruch Ber Bender has a virtual rolodex of medical practitioners at his fingertips.

But that's not all.

"Working with Rabbi Bender, we narrow down the list of doctor choices based on individual preferences. One person may need a pediatric cardiologist, but only wants one in the Five Towns area, while another couple is insistent that traveling is not a deterrent for them, but they only want a female doctor for their teenage daughter," Elke says.

Financial considerations are also always at play. Achiezer will first try to find a doctor that is covered by the insurance of the patient in need. If the situation is very specialized and only a particular doctor will fit the bill, Achiezer will advocate for the patient to see if an affordable fee can be negotiated.

More often than not, advocacy is required again even after an appropriate doctor has been pinpointed. "I remember once recommending a fabulous allergist for a caller whose child suffers every day with asthma," relates Elke. "They got an appointment - but for six weeks from the day she called. We called on her behalf and were able to get the appointment moved up to the following week," she smiles. ■

Financial Management Program

Since its inception almost two years ago, over one hundred families have been helped through the Financial Management Program. Whether it's a father of four who has just lost his job, or the *kollel* family unfamiliar with, but interested in learning the skill of creating a budget; the Financial Management Program helps families find solutions to their fiscal woes.

Under the leadership of Mrs. Aliza Wartelsky, the Financial Management Program doesn't only aid those whose debts have surpassed their resources. Newlyweds who want advice on how to start off on the proper financial footing or prospective retirees who want to leave the workforce in a fiscally responsible way are typical callers to Achiezer. Aliza begins the intake by conducting a short phone conversation with the caller to get a better understanding of the applicant's challenges. This helps her assess the best approach for them.

"It's like a *shidduch*. We have eight financial consultants, each with unique strengths. I try to pair each family with the consultant who will make them feel most comfortable. Confidentiality is a top priority, so we ensure that no one is paired with a consultant they might feel uncomfortable with," Aliza says. "The applicant is sometimes taken aback when I ask them personal questions such as where they daven or which schools their children attend, but I know that a financial burden can take a toll on a family. It's important for them to meet a consultant whom they don't know socially, and even more crucial that they are paired with one who understands them."

The guidance each family receives varies according to their needs. Depending on their income, a new budget might be in order. Those seeking simple budgeting advice are led to information that best suits their lifestyle. For others, Achiezer might connect the client with a lawyer who specializes in debt negotiation. Attempts for solutions know no bounds. Even when taking it to the top.

One financial consultant with Achiezer relates a particular case that is close to her heart. "The family we were working with hit a wall when the bread-

This past Chanukah, the Financial Management Program set out to make the holiday a little sweeter, happier, and of course lighter for some of the struggling families in the community. With the help of the board members of Achiezer, as well as La Toys of Cedarhurst, gift cards were distributed to dozens of families with extenuating needs who participate in the program.

winner found himself suddenly unemployed. Once he was able to return to the workforce, he had to accept an entry level position for the same job. The family followed my suggestions. The wife took on more work; they lowered their food, electric and phone bills, and no luxuries passed their spending threshold. Nevertheless, it became clear that the father was not receiving a high enough salary to cover their bills. At that point, Rabbi Boruch Ber Bender got involved."

As Aliza explains, "Rabbi Bender personally called the boss of this young father and explained the situation, pointing out that the salary this man was receiving was not only unfair, but contributing to unnecessary hardship for these six lives. He quoted the precise amount the consultant and family determined would balance their budget. After consideration, the boss decided to give the full raise that Rabbi Bender suggested which was commensurate with this man's experience and drive." The family is a success story and they have graduated the program, but they still stay in touch with their consultant for tune ups along the way.

"That's the real *nachas*," Aliza smiles. "When you can close a file and know you have made a difference." The Financial Management Program has brought peace of mind to countless such people in the community. ■

Mrs. Aliza Wartelsky



To meet the growing demands of the Financial Management Department, a new office has been constructed at Achiezer's Central Avenue location, creating an additional confidential work space for the department's clients and counselors.

Insurance Department

The Achiezer Insurance Department never rests. Since the opening of the Obamacare Marketplace in October 2013, it has serviced over nine hundred fifty families. "Between premiums, copays and deductibles, it is estimated that our program saves clients approximately \$5,000,000 each year when compared with similar plans in the individual and employee markets," states Mr. Sruly Miller, head of the department. Filling out basic applications can be daunting for the layman. Besides assisting with this task, Sruly is in touch with Rabbi Boruch Ber Bender and his staff to assist applicants with their medical needs in the interim, while their applications are pending. Many families have also received assistance with renewing their coverage from 2013 into 2014 and beyond. Sruly and his associates also aid in ascertaining how much of a family or individual's medical expenses a given insurance will cover, as well as ensuring that their current doctors are in network. He works to find specialists in a family's chosen network as well.

The following story illustrates how invaluable the Achiezer Insurance Department is. Recently, a client tried to run an application on his own. He was bright, tech savvy and able to advocate for himself. However, because he did not understand the finer details of the system, he ended up paying over \$2,000 in extra insurance and medical costs. He was confused by the application process



Ari Silverstein and Sruly Miller

as well as by the intricate details of the insurance package he had signed up for, and he could not get a straight answer from customer service. He came to Sruly for assistance. Within forty five minutes, Sruly had straightened out his account and reached out to his State contacts to resolve some more complex details.

Another rewarding anecdote tells of a number of siblings who had health insurance for their young families through a family business. The mother of these siblings was assisting her children with the premiums which exceeded \$15,000 each! Additionally, the business was not doing well and each family was struggling financially. With the help of Sruly and Insurance Associate Mr. Ari Silverstein, Achiezer was able to save the family hundreds of dollars. All in a day's work for Sruly Miller and his team. ■

Specialty Equipment Van



Achiezer recently received the gift of transportation. A van was generously dedicated by a local family in memory of Reb Yitzchak Issac ben Meshulem Feivish. It will provide Achiezer with an expeditious transport method for all the paraphernalia it moves, including hospital beds, wheelchairs, oxygen concentrators, ramps, and much more. "There are countless uses

for the van. Just before Pesach, we used it to bring enough food to stock four hospitals with over two hundred fifty meals," notes Mr. Shalom Jaroslawicz, Project Coordinator. Considering the number of requests for medically related items, this new gift will definitely help drive home Achiezer's mission. ■



On Achiezer's Urgent Line, Elke Rubin listened as a distraught woman described a frustrating scenario: While she was transferring her mother to a hospital bed situated in her home, the bed broke. Due to safety concerns, the patient could not be placed in a regular bed. The doctor informed the family that if the bed was not working, the patient would have to be transported to the safe environment of a hospital for Shabbos. Insurances were not able to get a replacement bed in time. Using the new equipment van, Mr. Eli Weiss and two Achiezer volunteers procured and delivered a brand new bed from Achiezer's warehouse. The cooperation of all involved along with Achiezer resources prevented untold aggravation and discomfort for the family.

Behavioral Health

Dr. Brucha Lowinger, Psy. D.

It's Erev Pesach. The day is short, the to-do list is never ending. Last minute cooking, cleaning and preparing for the Seder are on everyone's mind.

Dr. Brucha Lowinger's cell phone rings. The call is not from her daughter wishing her mother Good Yom Tov. Nor is it from a neighbor calling to borrow a quick ingredient.

It is the Achiezer Urgent Line.

The call is from a stranger.

In need.

Having nowhere to turn when her son suddenly revealed that he will be leaving his mental health care facility and coming home for Yom Tov, a mother has turned to Achiezer in a panic. How should she react? What can she say? How will she keep equilibrium in the house when at this moment nothing feels stable?

With only a few short hours left to Yom Tov, Dr. Lowinger answers the call. Step by step she guides the caller. As a pro-

fessional with over thirty years of experience and a clinician with vast methodologies of therapy to cull from, Dr. Lowinger is imminently qualified to address these crises. Yet she speaks to the woman, not as a practitioner, but from one mother to another, having sized up the situation in just a few short minutes. The lifeline is cast. Calm will now reign in that house this Yom Tov.

This type of scenario repeats itself too many times to count. Through it all, Dr. Lowinger is there for Achiezer. She is there for the community. She is there for you. **A**



Dr. Brucha Lowinger, Psy. D.

Assemblyman Phil Goldfeder

It is a well-known fact that Achiezer has enjoyed a longstanding and unique relationship with Assemblyman Phil Goldfeder.

The Assemblyman has always looked for funding opportunities for the organization and we thank him once again for securing an additional grant this year towards the Achiezer organization and its services.



Rabbi Boruch Ber Bender, Assemblyman Phil Goldfeder, Mr. Eli Weiss

Assemblyman Todd Kaminsky

Ever since his inauguration, Achiezer has developed a warm relationship with newly elected Assemblyman Todd Kaminsky. Recently, Achiezer's Rabbi Boruch Ber Bender and Mr. Eli Weiss met with Assemblyman Kaminsky where he pledged a special grant to be used towards Achiezer's special programming for struggling families within our community. We are grateful to the Assemblyman for this gracious grant and we appreciate his care and attention to the specific needs of our community.



Mr. Eli Weiss, Assemblyman Todd Kaminsky, Rabbi Boruch Ber Bender

Camp Scholarship Fund

Years ago, attending summer camp was considered a luxury. But with the reality of two income parents, and a majority of their friends packing off to the country, staying home all day is no longer a realistic option for kids. Our community has some resources to help cut the high costs of camp, but many people cannot afford to pay for camp even with partial help.

With the assistance of Mr. Yoeli Steinberg of Gourmet Glatt and Achiezer board member Mr. Alon Goldberger, money has been allocated to help send these youngsters to camp. But we need your help. Achiezer is seeking support from the community. Please consider sponsoring a child to go to camp this summer. This campaign has no overhead costs, so every dollar will go toward a camp scholarship. Last year over forty children were sent to camp. *If you would like to take part in this amazing chesed, please contact awartelsky@achiezer.org.*



Yom Tov with Dignity

A huge outpouring of assistance deserves a huge level of *hakaras hatov*. Tomchei Shabbos, The Davis Memorial Fund, and many local *Rabbonim* worked in tandem with Achiezer to make sure that struggling local families had a dignified Yom Tov. A tremendous thank you is due to Achiezer's Intake Coordinator, Mrs. Esther Novak, who spent a tremendous amount of time, energy and resources on ensuring that this project was seen through to its end. Gourmet Glatt, in conjunction with Achiezer, provided over one hundred gift cards for Pesach. This generosity afforded families to shop for Yom Tov with dignity. Overall, more than \$100,000 was distributed. "By checking out with a gift card that appears no different from a standard credit card, there is no stigma associated with this kind of shopping experience" notes Yoeli Steinberg, General Manager of Gourmet Glatt. "The relief and gratitude expressed by the cards' recipients prove that once again, Achiezer zeroed in on a need and took action to fill it." ■



Inside the **URGENT LINE**



THE TERM "24/7" AND ACHIEZER HAVE BECOME SYNONYMOUS. WHILE BUSINESSES AND ORGANIZATIONS TYPICALLY CLOSE ON SHABBOS, YOM TOV AND CHOL HAMOED, ACHIEZER, AS THEIR PHONE MESSAGE SO ELOQUENTLY PUTS IT, "HERE FOR YOU 24 HOURS A DAY." THIS MEANS THE WORLD TO COMMUNITY MEMBERS, BUT REQUIRES EXTRA DEDICATION AND ORGANIZATION ON THE PART OF THE ACHIEZER STAFF MEMBERS WHO MAN THE URGENT HOTLINE.

UNDER THE DIRECT GUIDANCE OF HARAV DOVID FEINSTEIN, SHLITA SPECIFIC PROTOCOLS ARE IN PLACE DETAILING THE APPROACH TO VARIOUS EMERGENCIES THAT COME UP ON SHABBOS AND YOM TOV. CURRENTLY, ON A DAY TO DAY BASIS, ACHIEZER IS GRATEFUL FOR THE GUIDANCE OF RABBI BINYAMIN FORST, SHLITA AND RABBI EYTAN FEINER, SHLITA WHO AVAIL THEMSELVES TO ANSWER HALACHIC SHAILOS THAT NEED IMMEDIATE ATTENTION.

AN ACHIEZER STAFF MEMBER'S PHONE RINGS. "ACHIEZER URGENT LINE" POPS UP ON THE SCREEN. SO BEGINS THE PROCESS. WHEN THIS OCCURS ON EREV SHABBOS OR YOM TOV, THE RACE AGAINST THE CLOCK IS AT ITS MOST DRAMATIC.

Thursday Evening, 11:55 pm

Mr. S. contacted Achiezer's Urgent Line in desperation. His son was ill and needed emergency surgery due to a lacerated organ. One call to Achiezer's Urgent Line set the wheels in motion. Rabbi Boruch Ber Bender immediately called Dr. B., the head of pediatric surgery in a well-known hospital who specialized in this area and could help. The doctor, who was not on call and had no responsibility to be in the hospital that night, immediately agreed to go back to the hospital and operate. Rabbi Bender called Mr. S. back to tell him that the doctor would be there in twenty minutes. But an embarrassed Mr. S. hesitated as he explained that, due to a misunderstanding, he had already contacted a different doctor in the interim and chose to proceed with him. Knowing that Dr. B. was en route added to Rabbi Bender's unease as he proceeded to dial him to cancel the emergency. Suddenly, an incoming call lit up Rabbi Bender's private cell phone. He heard the sounds of a distraught mother crying that her daughter's pediatrician had recommended immediate emergency surgery but she was having difficulty locating the proper surgeon. Her daughter's situation was unique and would need the best surgeon around. With a smile, Rabbi Bender informed the very surprised mother that the doctor was already on his way to the hospital and would meet her in ten minutes.

Motzei Shabbos Chol Hamoed, 10:23 pm

Mrs. W. is a resident of Far Rockaway who went to visit her son in Montreal. While there, she fell and fractured her hip, an injury that required surgery in a foreign country where she had no health insurance or even the knowledge of which practitioner could help her best. Achiezer, utilizing its huge network of doctors, connected them with the right surgeon. Mrs. W's daughter, who lives in Far Rockaway, wanted to fly to Montreal to aid and care for her mother but it soon became apparent that her passport had expired. As soon as Shabbos was over, another call went out to the Achiezer Urgent Line.

A call to Achiezer's connections in the State Department and to Zvi Gluck from the Amudim organization had the daughter in possession of a renewed passport within twelve hours. The story does not end there. Though Achiezer had helped Mrs. W. have her surgery covered, there remained the dilemma of which insurance would pay for her rehabilitation treatment. She would be leaving Canada and needed coverage back in New York. It took some time, but in the end, Achiezer had all the logistics sorted out. The surgery and the rehab were paid for, the daughter was able to be there with her mother at a difficult time, and once again Achiezer made it look easy.



Erev Shabbos, 4:48 pm

Achiezer learned of a single mother of four who was lined up for a complicated surgical procedure. Having little family support, she faced the prospect of spending Shabbos alone in the hospital. Achiezer reached out to Bikur Cholim of Oceanside to make sure that she had visitors over Shabbos. To further compound the challenge, she had special dietary needs and needed food for Shabbos. In coordination with the hospital dietician who outlined an appropriate menu, and Mr. Alex Werberger and Mr. Mayer Gold of the Seasons team, a Shabbos food package was prepared and delivered by Achiezer's *Shabbos goy*.



Erev Shabbos, 4:11 pm

No one wants to be told on *Erev Shabbos* that they must undergo an MRI to evaluate what appears to be a growing malignant mass, but recently a young couple was faced with just such a challenge. The MRI was completed before Shabbos, but the doctor who ordered it had left for the weekend. Sobbing, this young wife called Achiezer confused, concerned and certain that she would not be able to function over Shabbos wondering whether or not her husband faced a life-threatening disease. Achiezer tracked the doctor down in Jacksonville, Florida. After an explanation of the laws of Shabbos, ergo, the lack of phone communication over the weekend, he kindly logged into the online portal and gave the results to this worried husband and wife. *Boruch Hashem*, the mass was not life-threatening and they celebrated Shabbos in peace.

The lone nephew from *Eretz Yisrael* was visiting his elderly uncle one Friday afternoon.

Friday, 12:04 pm

Suddenly, his uncle passed away. As he was the man's only family member and had no idea what to do, the hospital told him to contact Achiezer. Achiezer rushed to the hospital and spoke to the doctors about the importance of performing a frum burial. Due to Achiezer's relationship with the medical examiner's office, the *meis* was brought to the funeral home for Shabbos and was afforded proper *shemira*. From arranging the *tahara*, arranging for a *minyan* and raising funds for the funeral, Achiezer saw to it that this man had a respectful *keveras yisrael*.



Continued on page 23

Dinner Recap



For the staff of Achiezer, this past March's Gala dinner at the Sands of Atlantic Beach felt like a *simcha* - with 1300 of their closest friends. The third annual gala celebrated the success and efforts of all those who are involved with Achiezer in any capacity.

Community members, including countless *Rabbonim* and elected officials, attended to honor Yoeli and Toby Steinberg, Dr. Steven Jack Schneider, Dovi and Yonina Wisnicki, Yanki and Machi Muller and Sruly and Miri Miller. Friends and family came out to acknowledge that the work of these heroes contributes to the smoother running of our environs.

Dinner chairman, Mr. Adam Mirzoeff, started off the evening by thanking all those in attendance and paying tribute to the late Mayor of Cedarhurst, Andrew J. Parise, a true friend to Achiezer; as well as Joseph Sanford Jr., a seventeen year veteran of the Inwood Fire Department, who passed away tragically this year in the line of duty. He also introduced Senator Charles Schumer, who spoke about how he too shares Achiezer's commitment to helping the Jewish people.

But by all accounts, the highlights of the evening were the many surprises and reflections.

Upon accepting his award, Dr. Schneider was surprised by a young visitor. Five years earlier, Benny Kohn, then just 15 days old, was behaving strangely. He was rushed to the hospital where the staff at the emergency room had difficulty diagnosing what was wrong until, as Mrs. Kohn put it, "in walked an angel." Dr. Schneider assessed the situation and performed what would prove to be a lifesaving procedure for Benny. Benny's family, residents of Cedarhurst, had

heard that Achiezer was honoring Dr. Schneider and approached Rabbi Boruch Ber Bender for the opportunity to thank Dr. Schneider in person. In what was a highly emotional moment, little Benny presented Dr. Schneider with a shy smile and a handwritten note of thanks.

Upon taking the podium, Rabbi Bender shared the poignant story of the Markowitz family who tragically lost their young niece, Danielle Besser A"H, in a motor vehicle accident while she was vacationing in Mexico. A series of advocacy and pull led to something that one Mexican politician stated "had never happened before." Achiezer, together with Homeland Security's Dov Horowitz and Lilian Fergie Hernandez's relentless efforts, was instrumental in bringing her body back to her family for a *kevuras yisrael*. This is but one of the countless such stories that Achiezer has produced through their work.

Rabbi Bender's clarion call to the community did not go unnoticed. Attendees soaked up the energy and many followed up on their interest to get on board to contribute to the community's needs in all areas. Additionally, more community members learned about Achiezer's programs, necessitating the newest upgrade of the phone system to help service the increased call volume. Nothing summed up the evening better than the tagline that ran through the event. Truly, **"We Are All Achiezer."** ■



Dovi and Yonina Wisnicki accepting the Young Leadership Award



Sruly Miller accepting the Keser Shem Tov Award



Yanky and Machi Muller accepting the Community Service Award



Dr. Steven Jack Schneider accepting the Physician of the Year Award

Nothing summed up the evening better than the tagline that ran through the event Truly "WE ARE ALL ACHIEZER."



Yoeli and Toby Steinberg accepting the Guest of Honor Award



Senator Charles Schumer



Mr. Adam Merzoff, Dinner Chairman



Mr. Shulie Wollman, Chairman of the Board, Achiezer



Mr. Ronald Lowinger, Achiezer Trustee

SHIVA ASAR B'TAMMUZ



On July 15th, the 17th of Tammuz, Achiezer, in conjunction with Congregation Kneseth Israel (the White Shul) held a special *Kinnus Asifa L'iluy Nishmos* Naftali Frankel, Gilad Shaar and Eyal Yifrach, the three young *kedoshim* who were tragically kidnapped and murdered last summer. The event began with opening remarks by Rabbi Eytan Feiner, the Rav of the White Shul. Throughout the evening, various neighborhood *Rabbanim* recited *tehillim*. The packed audience was *zocheh* to hear from HaRav Yaakov Bender, Rosh HaYeshiva of Yeshiva Darchei Torah; Rabbi Steven Weil, Managing Director of the Orthodox Union; and Rabbi Chaim Dovid Zweibel, Executive Vice President of the Agudas Yisroel of America. Rabbi Rami Brachyahu, Rav of Talmon, Israel and family Rav of the Shaar family, spoke eloquently in Hebrew, thanking the community for their support during this trying time.

It was an incredible display of *achdus* seeing the entire community come out on a difficult fast day to learn and grow from the challenges our global community faces. The event was broadcast live and is archived at www.achiezer.org. The Wolfson family sponsored the broadcast as a *zechus* for a *Refuah Sheleima* for Nosson Tzvi ben Sara Rivka Kashtiya. 📖

TISHA B'AV KINNUS

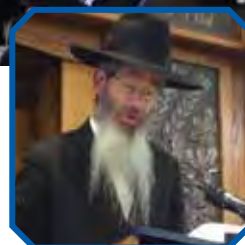
Achiezer, in conjunction, with Yeshiva Darchei Torah once again hosted their annual *Tisha B'av Kinnus* event held at the yeshiva. *Divrei chizuk* from Rabbi Shlomo Avigdor Altusky, Rabbi Zevi Trenk, Rabbi Noach Orlowek, Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser and Rabbi Paysach Krohn were interspersed with the recitation of *Kinnus*. 📖



Rabbi Noach Orlowek



Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser



Rabbi Paysach Krohn



Rabbi Shlomo Avigdor Altusky



Rabbi Zevi Trenk



CPR

On September 28, in conjunction with Hatzalah, Achiezer continued its ongoing drive to help educate the community in various ways. Two CPR training classes were provided at the Achiezer offices. One course was presented to over fifty women who learned the basics of resuscitation and AED (automatic external defibrillator) use, while the second class focused on teaching the same material to Spanish-Speaking caregivers. Additional classes are being planned and they will *Bezras Hashem* take place in the near future. 📖



ElderCare II

Success breeds success. Based on the incredible feedback from their first Eldercare event, Achiezer raised the bar and presented Eldercare II this past December.

While the Achiezer Community Resource Center is situated in the Five Towns and Far Rockaway area, Achiezer chose to hold the event in the central location of Queens, thereby availing the resources to more people. Participants hailed as far away as Monsey, Lakewood and Passaic.

After checking into the event, attendees visited a Vendor Expo, showcasing companies which provide rehabilitation and managed care services; medical devices; home health aides; accessibility and safety products; insurance, legal and financial services; and more. Just by walking around, caregivers gained a huge amount of ideas and information. The vendors were experts in their fields, and they patiently offered a wealth of information about topics that can be scary and confusing to caregivers. After a delicious buffet sponsored by Gourmet Glatt and Simply Sushi, the participants attended the first of two sessions, choosing from myriad topics presented.

Topics ranged from “Estate Planning” to “Caring for the Caregiver”. Many of the concurrent sessions were repeated during the second session, allowing a wide range of choices for participants. “My father was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s a few months ago,” shared one woman who attended Dealing with Dementia: Symptoms, Conflicts and Techniques. “Juggling the big issues, like hiring a home health aide with the personal challenges of how to relate to someone who was once such a part of my life is traumatic. This event was literally a lifeline. It gave me a focus of what to do going forward as well as the knowledge of how to follow that protocol.”

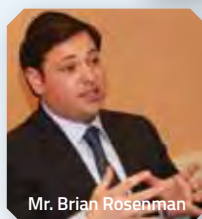
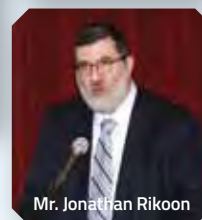
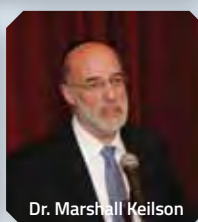
Another group of women had high praise to add. “We are three of five siblings who are navigating the uncomfortable task of how to speak to our father about preparing his will. Asset Protection Planning gave us the facts and makes going forward more doable,” noted one of the sisters.

The sessions were followed by two riveting speakers who delivered keynote addresses: HaRav Yaakov Bender and Rabbi Ephraim Eliyahu Shapiro. Both discussed “The Delicate Balance Between Caregiver and Child” validating the difficulties that come with the role of balancing *Kibud Av Vaem* with being a caregiver. Hundreds of participants attended the speech.

The overall energy of the evening could be summed up in one word: Empowerment. Those attending were relieved that in this challenging stage of life, they were not alone. They now know that Achiezer is on their side. ■



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Community Cares

Our burgeoning community is a diverse cross-section of *Klal Yisroel* in so many ways. Jewish women's capacity to give, to nurture and to heal is their strong suit. Just as supplicants for assistance need help; our righteous women have a drive to give. Achiezer is there to meet both needs.



On a very rainy night (monsoon-like is a better description) hundreds of women poured into the beautiful Cedarhurst home of

Devorah and Uri Dreifus. The weather might have been frightful, but the warmth in the room, coupled with the delicious *Melave Malka*, was palpable as friends connected, ate and learned how they could make the Five Towns and Far Rockaway a better place to live.

The evening opened with Rabbi Boruch Ber Bender explaining what Achiezer is and enumerating the various *chesed* opportunities for which women could volunteer. He was followed by his wife Suri, coordinator of the Meals 'n More division, who described the program and offered ways for those attending to get involved.

Mrs. Esther Novak and Mrs. Aliza Wartelsky followed with their own presentations of the programs they run. The evening was topped off with the hilarious Mrs. Leah Forster, a comedienne who amused the audience. A card enumerating the different volunteer options was distributed and many women filled out the card, checking off the items for which she could volunteer. Cards continued to arrive at the office long after the event proving that there truly is no end to a Jewish women's desire to do *chesed*. ■

Chanukah Volunteer Event

Yehuda HaMacabee's name has the root word "*hod*" gratitude, which made Chanukah an opportune time to host Achiezer's annual Volunteer Evening of Appreciation.

Achiezer's esteemed trustee, Mr. Ronald Lowinger, together with his wife, Achiezer's very own Dr. Brucha Lowinger, hosted over two hundred volunteers in their Lawrence home. A delicious sushi bar and fleishig buffet were prepared to treat the volunteers to a well-deserved evening.



Development Coordinator Mr. Eli Weiss said it best. "Our volunteers are dedicated to helping out the community every night of the year. It was fitting to have one evening dedicated just to them." He added, "What's amazing is that we deal with individuals or specific teams of volunteers on a daily basis. But to see them all come together underscored the diversity of our volunteer pool and stressed, for me, that anyone can contribute to the community."

Rabbi Boruch Ber Bender felt that the evening was about keeping things relaxed and light for the honored guests. After Rabbi Bender's short yet heartfelt speech of gratitude for all that the volunteers do, Mr. Ehud Segev, renowned mentalist, called up some willing volunteers to participate in a show. Attendees left entertained and amazed.

"We know that Achiezer appreciates our work. But to have this event that basically says 'Happy to have you on board' gives us continued *chizuk* to keep helping," commented Mr. Mark Salamon. ■

Fire Safety

In a beautiful display of communal unity, two simultaneous events dealing with fire safety took place in April. One event was held at the Achiezer Far Rockaway office on Beach 9th Street, while the other took place at the Central Avenue location in Lawrence. Hatzalah, Shomrim, Chaverim, the JCCRP, the JCC of the Five Towns and Achiezer all joined together to host. The Fire Department of New York along with the American Red Cross set up an incredible display at the Far Rockaway location. The Woodmere Fire Department along with members of the Lawrence-Cedarhurst Department held the massive audience spellbound with

fire safety techniques, lessons and practical hands-on instruction on how to install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Nearly two hundred smoke detectors were distributed with many more requested. Additional thanks to Assemblyman Todd Kaminsky, Assemblyman Phil Goldfeder, Councilman Bruce Blakeman, Councilman Anthony Santino, Comptroller Scott Stringer and Queens Boro President Melinda Katz for their participation. ■



Sandy Seforim and the RCA



The Rabbinical Council of America

in conjunction with Achiezer is preparing to donate funds to individuals who lost *seforim* during

Superstorm Sandy. “Many shuls and schools received grants to help cover the loss of the holy books lost in the hurricane. But private homeowners who did not have the funds to replace their destroyed books really appreciated the boost,” said Mrs. Milka Keilson, coordinator of Achiezer’s hurricane relief efforts. ■



Meeting for the Minds



When a patient needs emergency mental health assistance, confidentiality, knowledge and speed are essential. To that end, Achiezer has met with key players involved in dealing with a mental health crisis.

Recently, representatives of Achiezer, Hatzalah and select hospitals met at the Achiezer offices to discuss how to streamline responses and improve protocol when dealing with a patient suffering from anxiety, severe depression, nervous break-

down, suicide risk or the like.

“Imagine a call coming into Hatzalah about a father suffering from a psychotic episode causing chaos to his family. For them to simply drop the patient off at a hospital to deal with it might be a short term Band-Aid to the situation. What if, with a quick call to Achiezer, familiar with the background of this case, we can pull the medical history files of this patient, expedite his treatment, while simultane-

ously, through the resource center, give the family any assistance they might need during this trying time?” Rabbi Boruch Ber Bender ponders.

In one meeting, Dr. Vera Feuer, Director of Emergency Psychiatric Services, and Anita Mancini, Director of Business Development, both of LIJ-Zucker Hillside Hospital; Rabbi Elozer Kanner and Mr. Mark Gross, of Hatzalah, met with Rabbi Bender to brainstorm. They discussed what methods of improved communication could be implemented to reduce wait time and speed up collaboration. Direct access to doctors and accessibility to patient’s past medical records were just a few of the solutions decided upon to improve patient treatment. The collaboration of Achiezer, Hatzalah and mental health facilities is not limited to LIJ. Cornell, Four Winds, NYU and many other hospitals partner in this initiative.

This newly formed triad of communicators will undoubtedly expand our community’s ability to respond to mental health crises. Follow-up steps include first responder training, collaborative meetings with EMS agencies – both in and out of the Jewish community – as well as enhanced protocol to help streamline care for recovering patients in New York and beyond. ■

Community Partnerships



When the news broke that Deputy Inspector William P. Wynne was being reassigned to Brooklyn from the 101st Precinct, more than a dozen local community leaders, elected officials and activists gathered for an impromptu but heartfelt farewell reception. The appreciation our community has to Inspector Wynne knows no bounds. A plaque of honor was bestowed to thank him for his public service to ensure the safety of our community. With it came words of reflection and thanks from representatives of nearly every community organization.



Achiezer would like to welcome the incoming Deputy Inspector, Justin Lenz who now serves as the new commanding officer of the 101st precinct, servicing the Far Rockaway and Bayswater areas. Hailing from his original post as Captain in Brooklyn's 76th Precinct, Inspector Lenz has already made his mark to ensure the safety of the community while being sensitive to the religious and cultural

needs of its inhabitants. We look forward to a continued relationship of collaboration with the NYPD under its new leadership.



Rabbi Boruch Ber Bender offered training to the new academy recruits at the Nassau County Police Academy. The presentation, which provided school credits for the studying officers, focused on community affairs of the Five Towns and surrounding areas. It included cultural sensitivity training specifically in the areas of autopsy, *kavod hameis*, Shabbos and the like. In the near future, a similar lecture is being planned for recruits of the NYPD as well.



Achiezer was pleased to host a community meet and greet with Inspector John Berry, newly appointed Commanding Officer of the Nassau County 4th Precinct. Although new to our neighborhood, Inspector Berry is a veteran of the police department whose years of expertise and professionalism will surely enhance the safety of our neighborhood and surrounding communities. ■



Medical Examiner's Office

Achiezer extends its heartfelt appreciation to the Nassau County Police Department and the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner for their extraordinary compassion and sensitivities when dealing with our Orthodox community. This warm relationship has benefitted numerous grieving families in their time of need.

Achiezer, along with other organizations, was privileged to attend a meeting orchestrated by Rabbi Elchonon Zohn, of the National Association Chevra Kadisha and the Chief Medical Examiner of New York City. The meeting served as a platform to discuss various collaborative protocols connected to *kavod hameis*. The protocols instituted at that meeting served to spare undue anguish to the family of a Far Rockaway Rav who passed away over a recent Yom Tov.



A FEW MINUTES WITH ACHIEZER'S *Carey (Carmi) Gruenbaum*

A LITTLE BACKGROUND: I GREW UP IN LOS ANGELES, THE YOUNGEST OF THREE KIDS. I WENT TO YAVNEH HEBREW ACADEMY AND YULA FOR HIGH SCHOOL. LATER, I SPENT A COUPLE OF YEARS IN YESHIVA IN ERETZ YISROEL AND THEN IN 1992 I MOVED TO NEW YORK WHERE I ATTENDED SH'OR YOSHUV AND TOURO COLLEGE. I MARRIED MY WIFE KATIE IN 1994 AND GOT INTO THE INSURANCE BUSINESS IN 1995.

WHAT I DO WHEN I'M NOT HELPING ACHIEZER

I own two brokerage firms. OneCap Services, is a client-focused Insurance and Risk Mitigation firm (Property & Casualty) that brings a rare blend of intellectual capability and technical sophistication to a service-driven model that strives for nothing but excellence in every way. We are insurance generalists and have a wide variety of clients. The other brokerage firm, Preferred Services Group (PSG) is a firm specializing in setting up employer/employee benefits. We represent small companies as well as very large companies. We also have a department for individual, life, disability and other benefits.

THAT GRASSROOTS MOMENT

I remember getting a call from Boruch Ber Bender and Dovid Bloom

prior to Achiezer's formation. We had a meeting where they told me about their Achiezer vision to be a "311" that connects people and their various needs to organizations that provide it. Plus they had their own initiatives they hoped to start. I am amazed with how much it's grown since then. Even though I was then on the board of other organizations, getting involved with Achiezer really spoke to me since my niche in *chesed* is to help our neighbors and friends. I got on board right away.

MY CHILDHOOD ACHIEZER MOMENTS

As the son of a social worker, I saw my mom was constantly involved in assisting people. Subconsciously our family values were always steeped in that message. In school, I was definitely not cut out to sit all day. So the

*“what could be
more rewarding
than helping your
neighbors and
sometimes getting
help back
from them?”*

school always had me working on some project to keep me busy, such as visiting nursing homes on Erev Shabbos. I also was involved in Tomchei Shabbos (Rabbi Lawrence Keleman was the driver I went with Thursday nights.) No matter what I had going on in my life, that Thursday night delivery was non-negotiable. Basically, it was in my blood and the school saw my strengths. If there was an event that needed structuring, I was put on the case.

A CASE THAT I WON'T SOON FORGET

A young client found out that she needed brain surgery. Her medical insurance had changed a few months prior and her doctor did not participate in the new insurance company's network. Since I am one of the top brokers who work with that company, I was invited to an exclusive holiday party that they make for their top producers. I brought her file to the party and insisted that I would not sit down to relax until the top executives understood her history

hishtadlus. Even in instances where we can't help them with what they need, we guide them toward a solution.

WHY I KNOW RABBI BENDER'S NUMBER BY HEART

As someone in the business, I know the difference a great doctor can make. Even though I am very connected in the medical field, when my daughter needed stitches, Boruch Ber got a call from me, asking for a recommendation.

THE NEXT GENERATION OF GRUENBAUMS WHO HELP ACHIEZER

During Hurricane Sandy, I had many of my staff members set up shop at the Achiezer offices to help people file FEMA claims. They loved working and helping on such a personal level. My two oldest daughters worked there too. Sara, my oldest, loved the atmosphere so much that she got a job at Achiezer during the summer.

We try to instill these traits in our children. It hit me this past Pesach as we visited a nursing home on erev Yom Tov that my childhood volunteerism has come full circle. Having Achiezer promote that value has only been a benefit to our neighborhood.

MY PART IN ACHIEZER

As a board member, I take my position very seriously. In my capacity working with insurance, I am able to help with medical insurance cases that Achiezer encounters where either a doctor isn't in network, or a procedure isn't covered. I get many calls from people diagnosed in Israel and Canada etc. who need direction with their medical insurance. Through my own personal relationships with the insurance carriers, I use that leverage to represent these people and obtain coverage. Tiffany, my assistant, does a lot of the work too. She is always amazed by the amount of pro-bono hours we put in to help strangers in the community. It is a big *Kiddush Hashem*.

and what we needed to accomplish. The next morning the surgery was approved and it was completed a few days later.

MISTAKEN IDENTITY

People think I am a medical professional; I am not, but from working in the business, I know a decent amount of medical terminology and a lot of information about medications.

SOME INSIDER TIPS FROM SOMEONE IN THE BUSINESS

I think what I bring to the table at Achiezer is that I give the clients information that comforts them and helps them feel they are doing the proper

THOUGHTS ABOUT THE FUTURE

Baruch Hashem, Katie and I are raising our nine kids in Lawrence. Our kids are in the community schools of Yeshiva Darchei Torah, Bnos Bais Yaakov and Tichon Meir Moshe. We *daven* in the community. My business is situated in the community. We get numerous calls daily from Achiezer referring community members. There are so many needs to be filled, what could be more rewarding than helping your neighbors and then getting help back from them? We try to instill these traits in our children. It hit me this past Pesach as we visited a nursing home on *Erev Yom Tov* that my childhood volunteerism has come full circle. Having Achiezer promote that value has only been a benefit to our neighborhood. **A**



Dr. Jeffrey N. Bruce, MD, FACS

Speaks to Achiezer

Achiezer caught up with Dr. Jeffrey Bruce of Neurological Surgery, and director of Bartoli Brain Tumor Research Laboratory at New York Presbyterian. He is also the co-director of the Brain Tumor Center there.

And Here I Thought I Was Going To Be A Family Practitioner

When I was growing up, I always wanted to be a doctor. I wanted to work in family practice. I like to help people. But in medical school, I found that I loved the energy and the highs and lows of neurosurgery. It was a dramatic

difference from the day to day life of a family internist. I know that I can't affect the lives of as many patients in this field, but I feel I can make a greater impact on the ones I treat. It's funny – I didn't come from a family of doctors, but right now, as a father, I get to see my second son entering his first year of

medical school.

Achiezer Moments I Saw In My Childhood:

My parents taught me the value of hard work and education. My mother was always volunteering – she was quite a leader in our community's organizations. She gave so much of herself, and when the time came that she needed the services the community had to offer, they were there for her too. Seeing that had a profound effect on me. I don't know many people in the health care profession who aren't driven to give back to the community.

Each Day Is Anything But Typical

I really can't describe a "Day in the Life" of a neurosurgeon. It changes from day to day, sometimes from hour to hour, depending on emergencies

and such. I start early – six or six thirty – and meet my residents, the students in my program. Then I do some teaching. I might have one or two surgeries scheduled during the day, depending on their complexity. In between surgeries I often consult with patients, sometimes emergent or scheduled consults. As my day winds down, I meet my colleagues at the research lab and go over a medical article I might be submitting to a journal, or discuss funding for future research.

Not Your Basic Neurosurgery:

I have been practicing neurosurgery for over thirty two years. Obviously neurosurgery is a specialty in medicine, but I practice in the subspecialties of tumors found in the skull based, in the pituitary

gland and very rare tumors in the pineal gland. I have extensive experience with minimally invasive techniques and stereotactic surgery. What's so great is that surgery today is so refined and technologically advanced that the patient isn't injured as much from the surgery itself, leading to quicker recoveries.

Those Pre-Achiezer Days

I can't remember how long I know Rabbi Bender, but it definitely was before Achiezer existed. I am always amazed at how he is so connected with different experts in the medical field, yet so down to earth with the laymen who reach out to him for help. He won't stop until he finds the best doctor for a particular patient's needs. What's great is how he helps guide them in the complexity of the health care system. That alone is a huge feat.

What Makes The Achiezer Referral System Unique

I get referrals from other organizations – some are secular, some religious. I take all referrals very seriously and try to help out the best way possible. I am continually amazed when I see how Rabbi Bender doesn't stop once he has connected a doctor with a patient. He is literally there every step of the way. Pre-op, post-op and beyond – following through until that patient is in remission. Achiezer is very hands-on, I daresay, zealous, in getting the patient whatever he or she needs. They stop at nothing.

I Can't Think Of Just One

There are so many Achiezer stories that I have been

involved in. I think that the process of working with the organization is what I remember most. Each time Achiezer has a situation, the patient and his family feel like they are the only family that Achiezer is helping at that moment. It is so individualized. They call me several times a year, not only for surgeries, sometimes we are called in for a consult or a

am lucky if I can get to it four or five times a week. Staying mentally sharp, focused and disciplined allows surgeons to have the mental fortitude to manage difficult situations.

Words Of Wisdom

Unfortunately, there really is no way to prevent getting a brain tumor. Of course, being in good health through exercise and good diet is a

surgery, but for the aftercare as well. I see over five hundred patients a year – two hundred of them are surgeries. As a teacher I am always on the cutting edge of what's out there. You want a doctor who has that access.

Futuristic Medicine:

Technology is advancing so rapidly. In the next ten years, surgical and diagnostic tools

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second opinion.

Why I Follow My (Own) Doctor's Orders

Neurosurgery is sometimes fraught with tension. Of course, I am not alone in the operating room. There are usually two nurses, a technician, one or two anesthesiologists, a neurosurgery resident and anywhere up to five or six students observing too. Sometimes decisions need to be made in the split second. While brain tumor surgeries, on average run between four to six hours, some surgeries can take up to sixteen hours straight. It is important to be in shape to keep up my stamina. I try to exercise everyday although I

great way to maintain overall wellbeing. But there is nothing anyone did to cause a brain tumor, so that's a sort of relief to the patient who might feel their lifestyle caused a brain tumor. The most important thing for someone going through the process is hands-down a good family support system.

It's Not Like It's Brain Surgery

If a person finds themselves in need of a neurosurgeon, it is crucial to find not only the best doctor, but the best team for all aspects of treatment. Brain surgery is such a sophisticated field. You want someone who has a lot of experience, not just to do the

will become so much more accurate and so much less invasive. I think we will see huge growth in immunotherapy. Imagine a doctor being able to make a vaccine out of someone's tumor and re-injecting it into that same patient to cure them of their cancer! What's also on the horizon is technology to detect brain tumors through a simple blood test. When that happens, brain tumor screening can become a normal yearly test, which would help doctors catch the tumors in their more treatable early stages. The safety of surgery has only improved. It's a very bright future on the horizon for these patients. ■


COVER STORY: *INSIDE THE URGENT LINE*

Thursday, 2:10 pm

When time is of the essence, Achiezer sets things in motion at record speed.

A woman in the community passed away just a short time ago. Her final wish was to be buried in *Eretz Yisrael*, but the fact that it was *Erev Shabbos* did not help the situation. Because he was friendly with much of the Achiezer staff, her son-in-law called the hotline to let Achiezer know that the *meis* would not be flown before Shabbos because there was no room on the flight.

Achiezer, however, doesn't accept the word "no". Rabbi Boruch Ber Bender called the funeral director who said he hadn't been able to get a spot on the last flight to Israel for the family's loved one. Over the next hour and a half many calls were made. Achiezer called EL-AL's director of security to override this decision. He instructed them to call the director of flight services. Unfortunately, this director was out of the country at the time. However, a quick call to Mr. Moshe Wolfson yielded results, as he helped Achiezer reach the Israeli Ambassador who led Achiezer to another senior staff member in EL-AL.

In the meantime, Mr. Shalom Jaroslawicz procured the cell number of the international CEO of the airline. He calmly explained the situation and the urgency of the deadline to enable this family to board the flight. The CEO was touched, and through Achiezer's collaboration and perseverance, a fellow Jew was brought to a timely *kevruas yisroel*. 

Achiezer.org

Stay up to date with all things Achiezer and get access to all the information you need in the community through our comprehensive up to date website.

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- **News and events**
- **Media**
- **Community directory**
- **Subscribe to our email list**
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- **Follow us on Twitter**
- **And much more...**



Upcoming Events

Stay tuned for details about these upcoming Achiezer events.

CPR Training

for English and Spanish Speaking Caregivers

ElderCare 3

Tisha B'Av Community Event

Financial Management/ Employment Conference

Community Cares Neshei Event



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