



NEWSLETTER
SPECIAL YOM TOV EDITION
FALL 2015



A peek
behind

some of the
Many Windows



of **Achiezer**





MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Rabbi Boruch Ber Bender

Dear Friends,

Sitting at my desk is like seeing life through a kaleidoscope. I meet the leaders and the laymen; the prosperous and the poor; the celebrities and the simple people. The scene constantly shifts, the picture keeps on changing, and no two days are alike. But no matter what's going on, the image is always strikingly beautiful, because it's a picture of our community: a community that lives to give, and does Chesed without boundaries.

As we approach Yom Tov, we present to you some snippets from that kaleidoscope. This newsletter is a blend; a mix of what we experience at Achiezer, each and every day.

Enjoy the view.

Rabbi Boruch Ber Bender
Founder and President



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Rabbi Boruch Ber Bender

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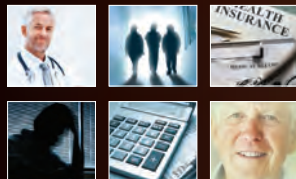
Hinda Sara Loeb

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“The Y. Family”

An Achiezer Mix

A REAL-LIFE ILLUSTRATION OF ACHIEZER’S ‘ONE-STOP’ APPROACH TO CRISIS MANAGEMENT.

The Y. Family, proud members of the community and supporters of local organizations up until recently. Husband now battling **STAGE 2 CANCER**, unable to drive or work. Wife serving as caregiver; **LOST JOB** after too many absences. Home entering **FORECLOSURE**, utilities on **CANCELLATION** notice, exorbitant medical **EXPENSES**. Wife buckling under **STRESS** of situation; home a **MESS**, terrible roach infestation, AC **BROKEN**.

ACTION PLAN

HOUSING

- ✓ Arrange pro bono consultation with foreclosure attorney. (Esther, Achiezer volunteer)
- ✓ New housing arrangements. (Esther)

HEALTH

- ✓ Refer to oncologist for free consult. (Rabbi Bender)

INCOME

- ✓ Prepare financial management plan; implement budget changes. (Adiga, Achiezer volunteer)
- ✓ Job search: Resume preparation, (Adiga, Achiezer volunteer)
- ✓ Job location through Achiezer Job Board. (Elke)
- ✓ Collect on pension/unpaid wages from wife's job. (Esther)
- ✓ Gift card from Gourmet Glatt. (Esther, Achiezer volunteer)
- ✓ Negotiate with PSEG. (Esther)
- ✓ Request coverage of National Grid charges from local organization. (Esther)

INSURANCE

- ✓ Advocate for back costs with insurance, pending results from RCCS. (Esther)
- ✓ Sign up for Medicaid. (Sully)

TRANSPORTATION

- ✓ Find advocate at Social Services to arrange Access A Ride. (Esther)

EMOTIONAL

- ✓ Mental health assessment. (Dr. Lowinger)
- ✓ Counseling as needed. (Dr. Lowinger)

HOUSEKEEPING

- ✓ Advocate for housekeeping funds from local organization. (Achiezer volunteer)
- ✓ Professional exterminator to get rid of roaches. (Esther, Achiezer volunteer)
- ✓ Fix AC. (Esther, Achiezer volunteer)



Attendees included: Rabbi Boruch B. Bender, (Achiezer), Rabbi Hershel Billet, (Young Israel of Woodmere), Jason Bokor, (HAFTR), Legislator Denise Ford, Michael Fragin, (Village of Lawrence Trustee), Rabbi Bruce Ginsburg, (Congregation Sons of Israel), Assemblyman Phil Goldfeder, Larry Gordon, (Five Towns Jewish Times) Rabbi Kenneth Hain, (Congregation Beth Shalom), Fran Hirmes, (Chairman of the Board of Emunah), Rabbi Mordechai Kaminetzky, (Yeshiva of South Shore), Avi Lauer, (Yeshiva University), Jeff Leb, (UJA Vice President of Government Relations and Peninsular Library Board President), Dr. Asher Mansdorf, (Lawrence School Board Member), Rabbi Baruch Rothman, (Yeshiva Darchei Torah), Izzy Wasser, (Trustee Village of Cedarhurst), Mayor Benjamin Weinstock, (Village of Cedarhurst), Trustee Myrna Zissman, (Village of Cedarhurst and Kulanu Board Member)

Carl Heastie, the Speaker of the New York State Assembly, came to the Far Rockaway/ Five Towns area during a recent local tour. The Speaker made several visits around the community including Kulanu and his visit culminated with a community wide meet and greet at the offices of the Achiezer Community Resource Center. In addition to receiving a private tour of the Achiezer offices, Speaker Heastie met with various community leaders, senior Rabbonim and local elected officials. Mr. Heastie enjoyed meeting a true cross section of our community and

particularly appreciated the honest and open dialogue which he shared with many of the attendees. The Speaker made a strong on-the-record commitment to return to the community and personally help support the community and its specific needs. It was Assemblyman Todd Kaminsky who spearheaded and coordinated this visit and along with Assemblyman Phil Goldfeder we thank them for their continued commitment to Achiezer and our community at large.

CPR Course

Achiezer and Hatzalah hosted their 4th CPR training event on August 9th. Attended by men and women in separate sessions, the two-hour course gives our community the tools to literally save a life, when every second counts.



Summer Camp Campaign

As June wound to a close, calls poured into the Achiezer office from hardworking parents who simply could not afford to send their children to day camp. Stipends from the Davis Memorial Fund, JCCRP, and the Leon Lief Camp Fund had been exhausted, but the available funding didn't come close to the amount necessary; and, left with no recourse, it seemed that dozens of kids would be spending two very long and sad months at home.

Touched by the plight of over 40 families, Achiezer's case manager Esther Novak spearheaded an emergency fund-raising drive. The response was beyond overwhelming. Over \$50,000 poured into the Achiezer office in response to Achiezer's no-frills, no-cost campaign, which consisted of just two emails. By the time camp opened the following week, 42 happy children were able to be a part of it.



At a previous storm preparedness meeting

Storm Preparedness

Preventing storms is not within the realm of our capability; preparing for them certainly is. In collaboration with Assemblyman Phil Goldfeder, Achiezer will be hosting a storm-preparedness meeting incorporating the Office of Emergency Management; key community organizations; and city officials. "We should never need it," Rabbi Bender asserts, "but we have a responsibility to be prepared."

Chesed Shel Emes



Achiezer had the Zechus to play a critical role in honoring United States Naval Academy Midshipman Justin (Yaakov Efraim) Zemser Z"l, a 21-year-old only child who was tragically killed in the Philadelphia Amtrak crash on May 12th, 2015. Justin grew up in the Rockaways; his parents still live here. In the horrific moments following the accident, the Zemsers reached out to the cantor of their synagogue for guidance. The cantor contacted Mr. Joel Kaplan, who got in touch with Achiezer.

Not exactly sure how events would play out, Rabbi Bender immediately dispatched a hearse and Shomer to Philadelphia. Following some urgent calls to the police department and coroner's office, Rabbi Bender was connected to Dr. Guilino, Chief Medical Examiner. Hastily explaining the situation, Rabbi Bender informed Dr. Guilino that the autopsy the medical team was about to perform would constitute the ultimate desecration to the Jewish soul. Thankfully, the call came right on time; the autopsy was halted literally seconds before it began.

Following the funeral conducted in accordance with Halacha, Achiezer and Yeshiva Darchei Torah arranged and hosted an emotional Shloshim Siyum in Justin's memory.

In a similar incident, Dr. Jay Itzkowitz of West Hempstead, an ER physician at Mercy Medical Center, alerted Achiezer about a Jewish patient on the brink of passing. The patient's family had no interest in burying him, and was set to move ahead with a cremation; but after several hours of extensive discussion, including international phone calls to the patient's only child in California, Achiezer was able to arrange for a burial in accordance with Halacha.

Yehi Zichro Boruch Meis Mitzvah Fund Launched

In the aftermath of the tragic Petirah of their son Boruch Tzvi, A'H, Rabbi and Mrs. Shlomo Drebin have



undertaken the launch of the Yehi Zichro Boruch Meis Mitzvah Fund in tandem with Achiezer. This fund will be dedicated exclusively to covering the costs associated with Meis Mitzvah requests – Niftarim who passed away without the funds or familial support necessary for proper Kever Yisrael. The distinctive Yehi Zichro Boruch collection container will be placed in Shiva homes, allowing people who come to participate in Nichum Aveilim to simultaneously perform true Chesed Shel Emes.

Achiezer Appointed to NYC Task Force

In the aftermath of Sandy, houses of worship were woefully under-compensated, and many have still not completely recovered in a financial sense. As we go to print, the New York City Council is in the process of forming the Sandy House of Worship Committee, a special task force created for the purpose of distributing approximately \$100 million of State funds amongst houses of worship that were affected by Sandy. The committee will also be responsible for reformulating existing legislature, to ensure that houses of worship are immediately and automatically made eligible for public recovery funding in the face of natural disasters. Out of hundreds of potential appointees of all faiths, Achiezer's president Rabbi Boruch Ber Bender was chosen as one of nine executive representatives, slated to serve at the helm of the newly-formed committee.

Gathering of Hospital Liaisons

On Wednesday evening September 2nd, the annual gathering of hospital liaisons and representatives took place at the Achiezer offices. Attendees from nearly every hospital in NYC, Long Island, New Jersey, Catskills, Westchester and Rockland County were present.



For the past several years Hatzolah members and Bikur Cholim's have gotten together throughout the year and tackled the incredibly difficult and pressing matters that every one of these individuals have to deal with on a daily and weekly basis. Medical care, referrals, hospital transfers, advocacy, abuse, families in crisis and tragedy.

This annual gathering allows these members to collectively share ideas, protocols, exchanges and various techniques in dealing with what is typically a grueling and tedious job that never ends. Almost always these liaisons operate on a 24 hour basis with no respite time.

The liaisons would like to give particular thanks to Gourmet Glatt of Cedarhurst who were the sole sponsors of this event and continue to sponsor endless Chesed initiatives throughout the year.



St. Johns Hospital Meet and Greet

Achiezer hosted a meet and greet with the new CEO of St. Johns Hospital, who was brought into the hospital along with an entirely new team in an effort to boost the facility's management and effectiveness. Representatives from Hatzalah, Madraigos, West Lawrence Civic Association, community Rabbanim and Assemblyman Phil Goldfeder were in attendance, to discuss our community's needs and expectations. Ultimately, the objective is to try to turn our only local hospital into a viable hospital for the community.



Guidestar Gold for Achiezer

Achiezer is proud to have achieved Guidestar Gold status, a unique accomplishment for organizations in our area. Guidestar, one of the largest monitors of nonprofit organizations in the country, awards bronze, silver, and gold rankings to nonprofits in accordance with each organization's financial habits. Under the directorship of Alan Botwinick, Achiezer's financial board demonstrated stellar financial practices and transparency, meriting Guidestar's highest ranking with acclaim.

Achiezer Goes Global

Paysach Freedman and Barry Friedman were so inspired by Achiezer that they set out to create their own one-stop, all-resources-in-one organization for the English-speaking community in Israel. Chaim v'Chessed is the result.



Achiezer Services



MEDICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

If you need help finding the right doctor, the right treatment or the right facility, Achiezer is here to assist you. We have extensive knowledge, countless contacts and direct connections to guide you so that you receive the most appropriate care. For expert medical recommendations, CALL ACHIEZER.



HOSPITAL SUPPORT

Achiezer is a lifeline for hospital patients and their families, down to the last detail, including patient advocacy, insurance authorizations, emergency transfers and fully equipped respite rooms. If a loved one is in the hospital, CALL ACHIEZER.



MENTAL HEALTH

Achiezer's caring mental health professionals conduct comprehensive assessments, provide clear recommendations, and even counseling when necessary. If you're looking for expert, confidential mental health guidance, CALL ACHIEZER.



INSURANCE ENROLLMENT

Achiezer is here to walk you through the complex health insurance enrollment process. We will explain your coverage options, help you decide which plan is right for you and submit the applications for you. If you're feeling lost in the world of health insurance, CALL ACHIEZER.



FINANCIAL BUDGETING

Achiezer's volunteer budget counselors and certified accountants are here to help families in gaining control over their finances. We work with families and develop sound strategies and solutions to bring them closer to financial independence. If you're having trouble with your finances, don't be ashamed, CALL ACHIEZER.

ADDITIONAL SERVICES OF ACHIEZER INCLUDE:

- ◆ 24 HOUR URGENT HOTLINE
- ◆ CRISIS INTERVENTION
- ◆ SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT CENTER
- ◆ MEALS 'N MORE
- ◆ BEREAVEMENT COUNSELING
- ◆ ELDERCARE PROGRAMS



Kos Tanchumin

Achiezer extends its most heartfelt condolences to the Keilson family:

MR. LLOYD KEILSON
MR. AVI KEILSON
MR. TZVI KEILSON
R' DOVI KEILSON
DR. YAIR KEILSON
MRS. RACHEL FLEISCHMANN

On the passing of the inimitable

MRS. HARRIET KEILSON

Harriet a'h and Lloyd yb'l'c stood behind Achiezer from the very beginning, and helped build us step by step into what we are today. Harriet's remarkable flair and zest for life ran through her every endeavor, and everything she touched turned to gold. Achiezer's accomplishments are a tribute to her.



Achiezer speaks with **Dr. Devorah Dienstag**

Pediatrician, community activist, parent, grandmother... Dr. Dienstag reflects on the many ways Achiezer impacts on the community, as viewed from her many roles.

When did you first learn about Achiezer?

My experience with Achiezer actually began 'before Achiezer'. Rabbi Bender approached many of the doctors in the neighborhood, saying, "If I would start a medical/community program, what would the community need?" This was pretty unusual; most people start organizations based on their own ideas or experience, and then try to fit the community in around that vision. Rabbi Bender began by asking what the community was missing, and then went on to create an organization that would fill in the gap.

What did you think the community needed?

There were two things I felt very strongly about. First, I saw a need for an organization that could not only give people medical guidance, but could actually help them gain access to the specialists that were recommended. It's very nice to tell a patient that they should see such-and-such doctor; but if the doctor's next available appointment is in two weeks, and your kid has a broken arm today, how does that help? Secondly, I saw a need in the

mental health field, which was woefully underserved. Many people had nowhere to go, no idea what to do, and even if I could give them a recommendation, they had no money to pay for it.

Have you seen Achiezer fill those needs?

Absolutely! Not only do I constantly see Achiezer work with my patients; I see them do it in the most *b'kavodik* way possible. Recently, I had a patient with a complicated abrasion on the face, but the plastic surgeon that I prefer had been in the OR all day, and there was no way that he'd be able to take this patient. Achiezer connected the patient to a top specialist – a physician who, funnily enough, used to work together with my now-unavailable plastic surgeon, but had left the practice and 'fallen off the face of the earth' as far as I knew, until Rabbi Bender located him at a New Jersey hospital. Another time, I had a patient that urgently needed to see a particular pediatric cardiologist, but the doctor was on vacation and had no interest in seeing anybody at that point. He wouldn't even answer my call. I reached out

to Rabbi Bender, who said he'd work on it. 'Okay,' I said, 'but *really, really* work on it!' Somehow, Rabbi Bender got a hold of the doctor's cell phone number, and badgered him to the point that the doctor said, 'Rabbi, what will it take to get you off my phone?!' 'Just see this patient,' Rabbi Bender replied; and the doctor promptly did.

What about the mental health angle?

Well, there are many wonderful organizations that deal with these issues. But there are still so many people who have no clue who to go to, or are not even sure what the problem is. Achiezer in general, and Dr. Bruchie Lowinger in particular, is a tremendous resource when it comes to providing free mental health assessments, and guiding the patient through preparing a plan of action for the future.

Have you worked with Achiezer in any other capacity?

I work with several community organizations, and Achiezer's work goes hand in hand with my roles there. All of our community organizations do great work, and Achiezer never tries to

take over anyone else's job. Rather, they work to fill in whatever is missing. So for example, when the camp fund that I manage ran out of stipends this year, Achiezer stepped up to the plate and fundraised to fill the gap for dozens of kids.

Insurance is another example; the regulations are so complicated that even doctors don't know what's going on. When people call the office with complex insurance questions, sometimes I don't know what to tell them. Luckily, Sruly Miller at Achiezer's insurance department does. Whenever I've personally asked for help, Achiezer is always right there. Not only because of who I am; because they're there for anybody in the community: doctor, friend, stranger... anybody.

Any message that you'd like to share?

I'd just like to say that it's an amazing Zechus to be a pediatrician for our children. To see them growing, gaining, and eventually starting their own families... It's a tremendous Zechus, and one that I enjoy immensely.



Why We ASK FOR MONEY

Let's be frank. Achiezer was created to provide all types of support, with the exception of financial aid. We pride ourselves on offering solutions that don't cost the community a penny – such as advocating for insurance coverage rather than financing medical expenses, and teaching financial management skills rather than paying for overdue bills.

Why, then, might you occasionally receive a direct solicitation for funds from us?

Certainly not to cover overhead or daily costs; those are financed solely through our annual dinner.

Certainly not for our volunteers; they don't take a penny for their incredible Chesed.



So why? ***Because sometimes people need money.***

Plain and simple. And when Sukkos, Pesach, or the summer comes around, and we personally know of families who are doing their very best but *simply can't afford to make Yom Tov or send their children to day camp*, we know that the only way to help is to pay for it. Our three seasonal fundraisers generate funds exclusively for those needs, without a penny of overhead involved; *all we do is pass your donation directly to the recipient*.

Our seasonal fundraising drives have been wildly successful, generating tens of thousands of dollars as result of single emails. They're successful *because our community wants their neighbors to have a decent Yom Tov, and a happy summer*. They're also successful because we never run them except to fill urgent, immediate needs; and that's the bottom line.



Save *The* Date

Achiezer's 4th Annual Tribute Dinner

MARCH 6TH, 2016
THE SANDS AT ATLANTIC BEACH

The landmark evening when our community
joins together in force, to support the
organization that unites us all.

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MAXIMIZE YOUR MORNING. OR EVENING, OR AFTERNOON.

Achiezer is looking for volunteers to help deliver Meals 'n More packages on Friday afternoons to local hospitals, as well as volunteers for assorted local rides. This is an easy, pleasant Chessed opportunity that means the world to hospital patients and their families. For information or to volunteer, contact Eli Weiss at eweiss@achiezer.org, text the word "Achiezer" to 313131 or call 516-791-4444.



NOT YET ON OUR E-MAIL LIST?

Don't be left out of the loop.

Achiezer emails come few and far between (maybe five or six in a year), but they always contain important updates and information. Join our list at www.achiezer.org.