

Around the Community



Rabbi Shonek, YOSS eighth grade Rebbe and in-house baal tokea, went to various classes teaching about different types of shofar used on Rosh Hashana

Achiezer at 13: A Talk with Mordechai Picker Part 12 of a Series

By Avi Shiff

In honor of Achiezer's 13th year, we are conducting a multi-part series highlighting the various facets of this remarkable organization. For Week #12, we spoke to Mordechai Picker, who is Achiezer's Logistics Coordinator and runs Achiezer's specialty medical equipment program.

What is your job at Achiezer?

My main responsibility is to oversee the distribution of Achiezer's medical and specialty equipment. We have a wide range of medical equipment, including wheelchairs, hospital beds, walkers, crutches, oxygen concentrators and more. We also have specialty items like wheelchair ramps, IV poles, and hospital tables, to name a few. There is often need for non-medical equipment in times of crisis such as portable air conditioners, shiva chairs, generators and heaters; or a sound system for a sudden or outdoor levaya – we are able to help out with these items as well. Many of these items were donated by generous

supporters of Achiezer. We store most of our equipment in several strategic locations throughout the community.

How long have you been working for Achiezer?

Over five years.

Who typically reaches out to you for assistance?

Really anyone, from individuals to organizations. There are people whose insurance may not cover the equipment that they need. In other cases, people need equipment for a short period of time until their insurance gives them approval.

Do you see an increase in requests at any specific time of the year?

Yes. *Yom tov* time, especially around the *Yomim Noraim*, we see an increase, because more people want to get out and go to the shul. We therefore get more requests for wheelchairs and things like that.

Walk us through the process of lending out the equipment.

It's fairly straightforward.

When people call us up, we identify what specific equipment they need and what is best for their situation. If they are able to come to us and pick up the equipment, they do so. Otherwise, we arrange for one of our volunteers to deliver the item to the person's home, which is a tremendous help.

Is there a time limit for how long someone can borrow the equipment?

It is generally not long-term, but there are always exceptions. And we'll never take something away from someone who needs it. We just want the equipment to be available to others as needed. If someone has a situation where insurance doesn't cover what they require, we'll do our best to make sure that they are covered for the time needed.

What feedback have you heard from patients and their families?

People tell us that this service is absolutely life-changing. It has allowed people who have been stuck at home for months to get out using our wheelchairs or walkers.



Our hospital beds and oxygen concentrators have allowed people who were in the hospital or rehab to continue their recovery in the comfort of their own homes. To them, this is priceless. They tell us how much it means to them. We give people the ability to be at home and to be mobile. It's a major *zechus*.

How did Covid affect your department?

Interestingly, when Covid was at its height, people weren't really going out much, so there were actually fewer requests for wheelchairs, crutches and hospital beds, but there was a period of time when we got a large number of requests for oxygen concentrators, which, as mentioned, allowed people to convalesce at home, rather than having to be admitted to a hospital. We orchestrated, in

close consultation with doctors, of course, for people to be home. They were so deeply appreciative.

Now, as things get back to normal and people are going out more, we have seen a rise in the normal requests for wheelchairs, hospital beds, and so on.

Any final word?

There are more stories than I can count about the amazing *chesed* of Achiezer. There's truly no limit to the amount of *chesed* that takes place. From equipment and rides to pickups, drop-offs, meals, advocacy, financial assistance and so much more, Achiezer's *chesed* knows no bounds. Achiezer connects the entire community and has become the one resource that everyone turns to. Anyone who has a need can find an answer at Achiezer.