

## Connect2 Provides Visitors for Holocaust Survivors

By Boruch Shubert

At age twenty-four, Daniel Brody certainly had enough responsibilities to keep himself busy. A member of the Upper West Side Orthodox Jewish community, he had recently graduated law school and started working as an attorney. But despite the demands of his career, Daniel felt a strong urge to seek out a volunteer opportunity and help someone in need.

Daniel learned about the Connect2 program of the Jewish Community Council of Greater Coney Island (JCCGCI), multipurpose social service agency. The program pairs volunteer visitors with elderly Holocaust survivors who are often alone at home. Daniel soon found that he was doing much more than a good deed; his weekly visits became a truly rewarding experience that enabled him to form a special bond with someone who embodied perseverance and triumph over evil.

"The man I visit in Boro Park, Joseph Skakun, had a fascinating life during the Holocaust," Daniel related. "When he was still a teenager, the Nazis invaded his hometown in Europe and killed all of the Jews living there, including his family. Joseph escaped the massacre and was able to survive the war years by posing as a German. Joseph lived in Israel for many years, ran his own business, and raised a family. It's amazing how he transformed his personal situation and displays such a positive attitude."

During his visits, Daniel converses at length with his senior friend. "Joseph will talk to me about his wife's illness, my work as a lawyer ... he even tells me interesting Torah thoughts. I feel that he has become a valuable part of my life. It means a lot to have a relationship with someone who was able to survive such difficulty."

Connect2 was established in 2001 to address the social isolation faced by Holocaust survivors who are struggling with the afflictions of advanced age. The program has provided over 10,000 friendly visits by volunteers of all ages to more than 600 survivors living in Brooklyn and Manhattan, fostering relationships that benefit both parties. Each volunteer is matched by the program's director,

Elisheva Lock, with a survivor, based on compatible personalities and interests.

Connect2 is funded under a special grant from the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany and has also received support from the Max and Victoria Dreyfus Foundation, the Leader Family Fund, and the Abraham and Esther Hersh Foundation. The program focuses on maintaining a strong ongoing connection with its senior clientele, using a corps of social work interns from recognized universities who visit a select group of clients periodically, assess their physical and emotional well-being, and provide counseling as needed. Connect2 is supervised by a professor of social work to assure that it meets the highest standards of quality.

Connect2's friendly visitors are careful to take notice of their clients' unmet personal needs, subsequently referring them to social workers who can assist with appropriate referrals, intervention and counseling. The program also celebrates survivor's birthdays and arranges festive holiday parties for the volunteers and clients.

As a program of the JCCGCI, Connect2 is able to offer clients an array of supportive services, including home care, transportation to medical and other essential appointments, home-delivered meals, case management, and other services which promote their independence with dignity.

"Under the devoted leadership of Elisheva Lock, Connect2 continues to attract volunteers seeking a personal experience that will leave them immeasurably gratified for years to come," states Rabbi Moshe Wiener, executive director of JCCGCI. "We are thankful to the many individuals whose compassionate efforts have helped us give Holocaust survivors the comfort they deserve in their later years."

"Based on my experience as a volunteer with Connect2," says Daniel Brody, "I would recommend that anyone who can do so should regularly visit a Holocaust survivor."

For more information, call 718-449-5000 ext 2216.

## 'Our Place' Stays Open Despite Blizzard

By Aron Greenstein

"Neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds." This is the motto of the postal service. Well, so far this week the post office was closed. So were banks, buses and trains.

One place that is open is Our Place and its affiliate, Yeshiva Simchas Chaim. The staff walked for miles just for the teens who frequent the center. "The only thing that can make us close is lack of funds," says director Chaim Glancz.

Our Place NY is a teen drop-in-center for the hundreds of at-risk youth in our community, people who struggle with all sorts of issues, ranging from dropping out of school to dealing with addiction. The staff takes very seriously the attitude, "no Jewish kid left behind." They deal with the kids that few others in the *frum* community have the resources to handle.

We just experienced the sixth-largest blizzard in the history of New

York. Cars are stuck on the road and it's almost impossible to get around. Yet the Our Place staff refuses to close, for even one night. Sony Perlman, the program director, says, "Just like Hatzolah can't [close], neither can we." He claims that Our Place saves lives and there is no break from saving lives.

If you think that on nights like these Our Place would be empty, you would be very wrong. On Monday night, over 30 young men were there. Not one of them even considered the possibility that Our Place would be closed.

Meanwhile, for the past several months, Our Place has been teetering on the brink of extinction. They lost the government grant that allows them to keep going. They have been reaching out to the community to help cover the deficit, but are coming up short.

As this week shows, Our Place has proven itself time and again. Being there for our kids following the Blizzard of 2010 is even more proof of why Our Place needs — deserves — to stay open.

WE ARE HONORED  
TO WELCOME THE

כ"ק מרן אדמו"ר  
מטאלנא שליט"א

A  
WEEK  
WITH THE TOLNER

טאלנא

REBBE שליט"א  
פרשת בא  
JANUARY 4-11  
28 TEVET - 6 SHVAT



THE LOS ANGELES COMMUNITY  
IS HONORED TO WELCOME THE

TOLNER REBBE שליט"א

ON HIS FIRST VISIT TO OUR KEHILA.

THE REBBE שליט"א IS RENOWNED THROUGHOUT THE WORLD AS AN OUTSTANDING EXPONENT OF TORAH YIDDISHKEIT AND CHASSIDIC THOUGHT. HIS SHIURIM ON TALMUD, PARSHA, AND HASHKafa HAVE AN INTERNATIONAL FOLLOWING OF THOUSANDS OF JEWS WHO AVIDLY AWAIT AND LISTEN TO THEM EACH WEEK. THE REBBE'S PROFOUND AND PRACTICAL ADVICE ON MATTERS OF CHINUCH AND THE JEWISH HOME ARE WIDELY SOUGHT IN ERETZ YISRAEL AND ABROAD.

MOST SIGNIFICANTLY, THE REBBE SPEAKS TO THE HEARTS OF ALL JEWS, FROM ALL BACKGROUNDS AND EDUCATIONAL LEVELS. HE IS TRULY A UNIQUE RESOURCE, AND WE ARE PRIVILEGED TO HOST HIM. THE WIDE ARRAY OF FORUMS IN WHICH THE REBBE WILL SPEAK WILL SURELY LEAVE A RICH AND LASTING IMPACT ON INDIVIDUALS AND ON OUR COMMUNITY.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 4, 28 TEVET

KANNER HALL: 8:00 PM

7269 BEVERLY BLVD.

(COMMUNITY WIDE ADDRESS  
IN ENGLISH - FOR MEN AND WOMEN)

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 5, 29 TEVET

TEICHMAN FAMILY SOCIAL HALL: 8:30 PM

18181 BURBANK BLVD, TARZANA

(ADDRESS IN HEBREW -  
FOR MEN AND WOMEN)

THURSDAY, JANUARY 6, 1 SHVAT

CONG BAI YEHUDA: 8:30 PM

360 N. LA BREA AVE.

(CHUMASH-RASHI SHIUR IN YIDDISH)

FRIDAY, JANUARY 7, 2 SHVAT

KABBOLOS SHABBOS/ DIVREI TORAH

BAI MOSHE YITZCHOK

(RABBI RUBIN'S)

303 S. HIGHLAND AVE.

SHABBOS TISH: 8:45 PM

BAI MOSHE YITZCHOK

303 S. HIGHLAND AVE.

SHABBOS, JANUARY 8, 3 SHVAT

8:45 AM - YOUNG ISRAEL OF HANCOCK PARK

(DROSHO BEFORE MUSAF)

225 S. LA BREA AVE.

4:30 PM - SHALOSH SEUDOS:

KOLLEL YECHIEL YEHUDA

(CHASSIDISHE KOLLEL)

354 N. LA BREA AVE.

MELAVE MALKA: 9:00 PM

MOSHE GANZ HALL - 365 N. LA BREA AVE.

MOTZEI SHABBOS, JANUARY 8TH



FOR INFORMATION/APPOINTMENTS

CALL: 323.403.6529

שיעורים לע"ג ר' יהושע השיל בן חיים ז"ל  
ור' שמואל בן ישכר דוב ז"ל