

COVERAGE BY

DEVORAH KLEIN

Project Inspire Helps Prepare for Shabbos Project With Two Exciting Lectures

Across the world, Jewish communities are gearing up for The Shabbos Project with a variety of activities and programs designed to introduce unaffiliated Jews to the beauty of Shabbos.

In Toronto, Project Inspire presented two lectures to inspire the community to participate in the Project, and prepare them to host Shabbos guests.

The first event was held on Wednesday, October 14, as Rabbi Y.Y. Rubinstein held an evening of inspiration at Bais Yaakov Elementary School.

Mr. Stuart Hytman, founding partner of Project Inspire, introduced the event and described how Project Inspire was established due to the initiative of Harav Noach Weinberg, *zt"l*, who envisioned a grassroots movement, fueled by the *frum* community, carrying out his mission of bringing unaffiliated Jews close to *Yiddishkeit*.

"Rav Noach used to say," said Mr. Hytman, "that he would 'awaken the sleeping giant' in each one of us. We all have that potential, and it is within all of us to make a difference."

Rabbi Leib Irons emphasized the imperative of *kiruv*, and quoted the *Chazal* that explains that if one teaches Torah to the son of an *am ha'aretz*, that person has the ability to annul an evil decree. He related a story of an irreligious elderly lady in her 70s who moved to an apartment building in a *frum* area. Her neighbors befriended her in many small ways, and she ultimately began keeping Shabbos before her *petirah* at the age of 78. This, asserted Rabbi Irons, is proof that it is never too late to be *mekarev* someone.

In his keynote address, Rabbi Rubinstein explained that when someone grows up in a *frum* environment, he may never fully appreciate Shabbos for all its beauty. However, when showing Shabbos to someone who has never experienced it before, he himself will come to appreciate Shabbos in a very new light.

It is universally agreed among *kiruv* professionals that one of the most successful *kiruv* tool is a Shabbos invitation. Our job is to make the Shabbos table pleasant for our visitors, and speak in a language that they understand. Those who have never experienced Shabbos before will be unbelievably impressed when they see the manner in which parents talk to their children and share the week's events, the Shabbos *zemiros* that are sung together, and the general atmosphere of *chesed*, warmth, and friendship.

Rabbi Rubinstein described the tremendous *zechus* involved in bringing others closer to *Yiddishkeit*, and



Salomon Shneiderman

L-R: Rabbi Leib Irons, Rabbi Y.Y. Rubinstein, and Mr. Stuart Hytman at the Project Inspire event last Wednesday.



Salomon Shneiderman

Rabbi Eli Mansour addressing Sunday night's Project Inspire event.

concluded, "The *zechuyos* that can flow to us are immeasurable. The truth of the matter is that they might be giving to us by coming to us for Shabbos, much more than we are giving them."

On Sunday, October 18, Project Inspire held a second event at the Sephardic Kehilah Centre in Thornhill. After an uplifting introduction by Mr. Hytman about the vital importance of reaching out in our generation, Rabbi Messod Azoulay, Assistant Rabbi of the Sephardic Kehilah Centre, led *Tehillim* for the *matzav* in Eretz Yisrael.

The *Rosh Kollel* of the Ohr Yosef Thornhill Kollel, Harav Mordechai Scheiner, then addressed the crowd. Invoking Harav Chaim Shmuelevitz's explanation that the *Mabul* occurred because Noach did not *daven* enough for his generation, Rav Scheiner implored everyone to take *achrayus* for *Klal Yisrael*. Although there are many wonderful people who are currently taking *achrayus* in official capacities in many *kiruv* organizations, Rav Scheiner emphasized that everyone has a responsibility to make a difference.

Following the *Rosh Kollel's* address, Rabbi Eli Mansour presented, "How to Inspire Yourself and Inspire Oth-

ers." Quoting the Alshich on *Parashas Noach*, Rabbi Mansour built up the theme that to be a true "*tamim*" one must fulfill the dictum of "*Toras Hashem temimah meshivas nafesh*," meaning that a *tamim* is someone who is *meishiv nafesh*, who returns *neshamos* to *Klal Yisrael* through *teshuvah*. Shabbos is the best opportunity to do that.

Rabbi Mansour explained that in order to survive the onslaught of *Yishmael* and *Esav*, we have to diminish their days of rest on Friday and Sunday by extending our Shabbos and making our Shabbos more special. Hosting guests on Shabbos is a sure way to uplift our Shabbos and to bring *neshamos* back to Hashem.

He concluded with a story about how he hosted a Russian lady for the Pesach *Seder* and spent several hours relating fascinating insights into the *Haggadah*. Following the *Seder*, the guest remarked how impressed she was by the experience. She didn't mention anything about the amazing

Torah that she heard; rather she was so impressed with how the children were helping throughout the *Seder*. We don't realize how lucky we are to be *mechanech* our children *b'derech hayashar*. That alone is eye-opening for non-*frum* Jews.

Rabbi Irons closed the evening and emphasized how hundreds of people in Toronto have already invited guests for *Shabbos Parashas Lech Lecha*, and it's not too late to still invite for this Shabbos and for future *Shabbosos*.

Toronto Torah Umesorah Teachers' Center Special Event

On Sunday, October 25, the Toronto Torah Umesorah Teachers' Center will host a special event. Rabbi Dr. Aharon Fried will present, "Methodology for Teaching Multi-Level Students in a Classroom." A session for *mechanchos* will be held at 1:00 p.m., and a session for *mechanchim* at 3:00 p.m. Lectures will be held at the Toronto Teachers' Center, 3130 Bathurst Street, Suite 212.

For more information, please contact 647-352-7900, or tct@torah-umesorah.org.

Evening Reception To Benefit Toronto Teachers' Center

On Monday, November 2, the Toronto Teachers' Center will hold an evening reception to benefit the children of the Toronto community. This reception will be held at the home of Mrs. Rivkie Reichman, 36 Shelborne Avenue, beginning at 7:30 p.m. The guest speaker will be Mrs. Rochel Zimmerman, Director of the National Conference of Yeshiva Principals of Torah Umesorah, who will discuss, "Love and Limits – Striking the Balance."

For more information, please contact Mrs. Chaya Messinger at 647-352-7900.

Kollel Ohr Yosef Chinuch Series

Kollel Ohr Yosef will be hosting a *chinuch* series led by Rabbi Jacoby, a *talmid* of Harav Shlomo Wolbe, *zt"l*. This four-part series will begin on Wednesday, October 21, at the home of Mrs. Malka Applebaum.

To register and for more details, please email margalit.brown@gmail.com.

SEND US YOUR NEWS!

Share the latest developments in your community with Hamodia's family of global readers. We welcome news and photos from all parts of the Jewish world. Please fax to (206) 339-4536 or email to c2c@hamodia.com by Sunday afternoon.

COVERAGE BY
DEVORAH KLEIN

Shabbos Project Toronto

The Shabbos Project in Toronto was an incredible success. The project reached across many boundaries, as many shuls across the community participated in various ways.

On Thursday evening, approximately 2,400 women gathered at the Scarborough Convention Centre for a massive Challah Bake, sponsored by JInspire, with the participation of *frum* and unaffiliated woman together. The program was ably directed by Mrs. Adrienne Gold, with special challah demonstrations and explanation of the special symbolism delivered by Rebbetzin Gail Michalowicz and Mrs. Estee Kafra, noted cookbook author.

The theme of the evening was "Generation to Generation," and a video was shown depicting a Holocaust survivor who made challah, followed by her children and grandchildren baking challah.

Many people across the community had already invited guests for Shabbos, however many more invitations were arranged during the Challah Bake. Furthermore, participants were encouraged to continue to develop their connections to Judaism by participating in an upcoming JInspire/Jewish Women's Renaissance Program Trip to Israel.

However, for most, the highlight of the evening was the incredible energy and *achdus* that permeated the event, including singing, music provided by Blast Entertainment, dancing and *davening*, and of course preparing for Shabbos together with thousands of other Jewish women.

As one participant wrote afterward, "I got a lot of feedback from my students, parents and grandparents of how much they gained and walked away inspired. Families who never have a Shabbat dinner celebrated this week because they couldn't eat the challah without 'doing Shabbat.'"

Another wrote, "Thanks so much for the incredible event on Thursday night. It was unbelievable how every last detail was very obviously planned to ensure that every single participant will gain the most possible from the evening."

The evening was made possible with the help of countless volunteers, all spearheaded by Mrs. Ilana Chlewitz. Of special mention is CHAR (Canadian Hebrew Academy of Richmond Hill) and Tiferes Bais Yaakov, under the direction of Rabbi Feigenbaum, who sent student volunteers to help set up for the Challah Bake.

Project Inspire distributed over 1,300 "Shabbos" kits, in preparation for Shabbos, which included challah, grape juice, a *Kiddush* cup, candles, candlesticks, a Guide to Shabbos ... and more.



The Ziditchov-Be'er Sheva Rebbe speaking at Yeshivas Mishkan HaTorah Toronto.



Bags of flour ready for the Toronto Challah Bake.

Sanchia Rabin



Dena Bensalmon

Beautiful tables arranged for the Toronto Challah Bake.

For Shabbos, the city was buzzing with activity. It is hard to get a full report of the many events, *Shabbos seudos*, and guests that were hosted. However, Mrs. Dena Bensalmon, one of the main organizers of the Shabbos Project Toronto, reported that at least 800 families hosted non-*frum* community members for the *entire* Shabbos.

A Judaica store, The Israeli Source, printed 25,000 specially transliterated *bentchers*, and distributed them at no cost to all shuls, schools, organizations, and individuals who requested them for their Shabbos guests.

On Shabbos, about 46 shuls participated on some level, with many hosting *Shabbatons*, special speakers, and *Havdalah* programs or concerts. For example, Shaarei Shomayim hosted singer Shlomo Katz for the entire Shabbos, and Beth Avraham Yoseph of Thornhill hosted two Friday night dinners for NCSY and JLIC, and a community-wide *seudah shelishis* and a musical *Havdalah* for over 800 people.

In Thornhill Woods, an entire congregation with 500 members committed to keeping Shabbos together, including spending both *seudos* together and attending all day programming for the entire family.

Rabbi Leib Irons, of Project Inspire and NCSY, reported, "Many non-*frum* people told me that they did not go to their regular shul where they usually drive to, or eat out at friends, because they wanted to keep a full Shabbos. One person, who had not kept a full Shabbos in many years, did so because someone sent them a Shabbos. Another girl walked for three hours to attend a Shabbos meal, because she did not want to violate Shabbos."

What is the long-term impact of this project? "We definitely hope that for next year's Shabbos Project the vast majority of the 188,000 Jews in Toronto will either host or be hosted for Shabbos," insists Rabbi Irons.

"The Shabbos Project shows us that the non-*frum* world is open to *kiruv*. We now need the *frum* community across the board to extend Shabbos invitations. Every single *mitzvah* is so precious to Hashem and the *kiddush Hashem* from just one Shabbos is enormous. The long-term effect is incredible; someone who was set up for Shabbos already contacted his host to start learning with him. No doubt the Shabbos Project is giving a tremendous *nachas ruach* to Hashem."

To contact the organizers of the Shabbos Project in Toronto, please email Mrs. Dena Bensalmon at toronto@theshabbosproject.com.

Bloom Family Shabbaton In Aish Thornhill Community Shul

This Shabbos, *Shabbos Parashas*