

Veretzky Dinner to Celebrate *Heart to Heart* Chinuch

NACHUM DELMAN

Parents, alumni, friends and supporters of Yeshiva Ohr Shraga and Mesivta Bais Aron Tzvi-Veretzky are marking the dates on their calendars for the Yeshiva's upcoming 32nd Anniversary Dinner scheduled for Sunday, February 12, 2017.

This year's dinner celebrates the unique "heart to heart" rapport that is the essence of the Veretzky *chinuch* model. This year's special anniversary milestone corresponds to the numeric equivalent of the word "lev" and the dinner will showcase this virtue as it applies to all of the various divisions of the *mosad* from preschool through elementary and Mesivta.

Preschool director Mrs. Yitty Tillim notes that the preschool years are when the crucial building blocks are laid, the foundation upon which the child's *chinuch* will be structured. "Beyond just building the child's skills," says Mrs. Tillim, "it's important to instill a love and a passion for learning. If a child loves to learn, he becomes a lifelong learner.

"We do this by making it fun and exciting. Acting out



Veretzky preschoolers at a recent "Zeidy, Father and Son Preschool Brunch."

the scenes they are learning about whether it's *Krias Yam Suf* or *Yetzias Mitzrayim*. This transforms the learning from an abstract process to a real life experience. We invest tremendous effort to create a positive and happy environment. Learning and skill building is done

in small groups so that each child receives ample attention and recognition of their achievements. Recognition is the key to building self-esteem. With proper self-esteem there's no limit to what a child can accomplish."

The ultimate goal is that the children graduate preschool with a love for *Yiddishkeit*, a love for Torah and a love for *Hashem Yisborach*. Indeed, the success of the Veretzky preschool model is indicated in the rapid growth of its newly opened Marine Park branch. Now in its state-of-the-art new building on Hendrickson Street, the Marine Park location will have three full grade levels for this coming year, pre-nursery, nursery and kindergarten.

A new and exciting venue has been reserved for this year's dinner with a unique, innovative program planned for the evening.

The dinner will take place at the Aviator Sports and Events Center. Cocktails will be at 4:30 p.m. followed by dinner promptly at 6:00.

For further information on corporate sponsorships or reservations please contact the Yeshiva Ohr Shraga office at 718.-252-7777 or email dinner@ohrshraga.org.

TEAM Shabbos Coming to Your Neighborhood

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On January 14, 2017, *Parashas Vayechi*, TEAM Shabbos will generate awareness in many Jewish communities on important elder and end-of-life issues. TEAM Shabbos is a national initiative organized by the National Association of Chevra Kadisha (NASCK) to educate Jewish communities on sensitive end-of-life matters.

The initiative is the first of its kind to be presented to the Jewish population. The New York State Bar Association began a similar statewide initiative a few years ago. Each May, the association enlists hundreds of volunteer attorneys to provide education to as many people as possible on the myriad pitfalls and issues that generally arise as people age. The association encourages people to learn about and sign healthcare proxies and power-of-attorney forms as needed.

Experience has shown that people are shocked to learn about the many hidden problems that arise in regard to the elderly. As baby-boomers age, the need for this information has risen, and public awareness is crucial at this time.

NASCK's initiative has organized those topics that directly relate to the Jewish population. More than 300 shuls and communities will participate in this Shabbos program. As every community has different needs and backgrounds, each local Rabbi will focus on those topics that are relevant to their congregants. Younger people too should pay attention to these topics as almost every Jew has been or can reasonably expect to be affected by one or more of the issues which will be presented.

In addition to the speeches on Shabbos, some communities are also planning events during the week or afterward. People will be encouraged to sign Halachic living wills, and they will become aware of other relevant matters.

Below are two examples of some of the issues that TEAM Shabbos will address.

Halachic Living Wills/Healthcare Proxies

A healthcare proxy is a legal document that allows a person to appoint an agent to legally express his wishes and make healthcare decisions if the person cannot speak for himself. The agent becomes empowered

when a qualified physician determines that the individual is unable to make decisions regarding healthcare.

Halachic living wills are a type of healthcare proxy that complies with generally accepted halachic principles. If the halachic will/proxy is properly executed, hospitals and healthcare providers are legally required to abide by it. Several Orthodox organizations, including Agudath Israel of America, RCA, and NASCK, provide halachic living wills at no charge. Generally, these forms require the agent to consult the principal's Rav when making healthcare decisions.

In 2010, unlike many other states, New York State enacted the Family Healthcare Decisions Act (FHCDA). The law establishes the authority of a patient's family member or close friend to make medical treatment decisions if the patient lacks capacity to make such decisions on his own. The law also provides a list of people from which healthcare providers can choose when there is no healthcare proxy in place. A spouse, adult child, parent, brother or sister and close friend top the list (in that order).

Many people wrongly believe that there is no need for a healthcare proxy. However, the law does not grant one child or sibling any greater rights than another adult child or another sibling. A healthcare proxy eliminates any confusion and directs the healthcare provider to look to the person designated by the patient. Moreover, if there is any conflict among children, the halachic living will directs the agent to consult a Rav to assist in making healthcare decisions.

Kibbud Av Va'eim in a Guardianship Proceeding and in Trusts

We are commanded to honor our parents. Due to busy and hectic lives, it has become increasingly challenging to care for and honor an aging parent. This is especially true of the "sandwich generation," people in their 30s or 40s who are responsible for bringing up their own children and for the care of their parents.

Many people simply assume that Medicare and health insurance will cover the services required by their parent. It is surprising to learn that Medicare and most health insurance plans do not provide any meaningful coverage for home-care aides or nursing home care. In fact, Medicare only provides a maximum of 100

days in a nursing facility.

Healthcare costs have skyrocketed and paying privately can wipe out one's hard-earned savings. Many people find themselves scrambling to consult lawyers to provide estate or Medicaid planning to preserve their assets. With proper advance planning, most people are able to properly secure their assets through a Medicaid grantor trust and have the government pay for their care. However, this comes at a price. Generally a person is required to divest most of the control of his or her assets and will appoint their children as trustees.

Halachic issues commonly arise when children act as trustees of their parent's trusts. Similarly, there are times when children are required to bring guardianship proceedings in court for a parent to gain access to the bank accounts and/or to secure Medicaid for their parents. This, too, requires children to consult their local Rabbi when commencing such proceedings.

These topics are among the issues to be addressed by Rabbanim as part of their TEAM Shabbos program.

A closing point...*Kiruv* outreach has been on the rise over the past decades as these efforts continue to bring Jews closer to their roots. It is important that these programs for unaffiliated Jews address the difficult topic of a proper Jewish burial. Many Jews have the luxury that these core values are set in their traditional views.

However, in the unaffiliated world, cremation is common and the belief is held that there is nothing wrong with it. It is crucial that teaching about halachic Jewish burial be part of *kiruv* efforts. If you are a mentor of an unaffiliated Jew, or have Jewish family members of advanced age or near death, discuss with them the relevant topics that TEAM Shabbos addresses. Grab the opportunity to discuss the importance of a halachic Jewish burial.

Participate in TEAM Shabbos. It will bring peace of mind to you and your family.

Michael Korsinsky, Esq., is a founding partner of the law firm of Korsinsky and Klein, LLP, located in New York City. The firm focuses its practice on elder law and real estate and its attorneys are licensed in New York and New Jersey. The firm regularly appears in the various courts in both states and attends Medicaid related hearings in New York State.