

Third Annual TEAM Shabbos to Increase Awareness Surrounding End-of-Life Decisions

By JLNJ Staff

On Shabbos Parshat Vayechi, December 30, 2017, hundreds of shuls in communities nationwide will join the third annual TEAM (Traditional End-of-life Awareness Movement) Shabbos, a project of the National Association of Chevra Kadisha (NASCK). Following last year's resounding success under the leadership of Rabbi Elchonon Zohn, this initiative will continue to help raise awareness throughout our community about the Torah's perspective on end-of-life matters.

Beginning the preceding week and throughout the Shabbos, shuls around the country will be participating in the Team Shabbos movement in various ways. Rabbis will dedicate their sermons, lectures and shul programs to generate the discussion. Many shuls will be utilizing their weekly program and shul material (i.e., newsletters, e-blasts) to focus on relevant topics, while some will collaborate with NASCK to coordinate a special event in their community to boost awareness. Some of the topics that will be addressed include the Torah's view of the inherent value and sanctity of life, the importance of being prepared to make proper medical decisions, choosing and helping others to choose traditional Jewish burial practices, and writing wills in accordance with Halacha.

Because end-of-life discussions are not easy to talk about, many of these very important obligations and far-reaching matters are infrequently addressed on a communal or individual level.

"Due to a lack of awareness about the inherent sanctity of every moment of life," says Rabbi Elchonon Zohn, "many people make end-of-life medical decisions that are contrary to Torah values. The goal of TEAM Shabbos is to open the discussion about 'Respecting Life—Here and Hereafter' in a unified national movement to facilitate the necessary awareness about these issues."

Last year's TEAM Shabbos movement was a national success with overwhelming positive feedback. "Many of the rabbanim who presented drashos or shiurim on end-of-life were surprised at the positive and accepting attitude that their communities responded with," Rabbi Zohn explained. "The 'it's about time' sentiment was an oft-repeated phrase this Shabbos."

"The tzibbur welcomed the opportunity to learn about the importance of end-of-life directives and halachic wills, as well as hear an overview of the Halachos of end-of-life situations and issues related to a beis hakvaros," explained Rabbi Dovid Heber, rav of K'hal Ahavas Yisroel Tzemach Tzedek in Baltimore, Maryland. "Thanks to the efforts of NASCK, these sensitive topics were addressed 'I'maaseh uv'rov am' in our shul, together with many other kehillos in our community and nationwide."

Many Torah-observant people do not

fully understand the modern-day practical applications of end-of-life concepts such as pikuach nefesh and met mitzvah. These important concepts require individuals to make proper medical decisions and assist less-observant friends, relatives, acquaintances and co-workers in choosing traditional Jewish burial practices.

In fact, a rabbi from Maryland noted, "Given the level of knowledge of the people in my shul, I was very surprised how

unfamiliar they were with the many important hashkafos and halachos that pertain to end-of-life. I'm so grateful to TEAM Shabbos and NASCK for giving me the push and the opportunity to speak about it."

"We will continue to keep the discussion open and to generate awareness surrounding the importance of the inherent sanctity of life and choosing traditional afterlife choices," says Rabbi Zohn. "We encourage communities to join NASCK's

many ongoing programs dedicated to support, inform, educate and inspire all those seeking information about traditional Jewish burial, including programs promoting halachic living wills and EMES (Emergency Medical Education and Sign-up) cards."

To have your community join or for more information about the National Association of Chevra Kadisha (NASCK) and TEAM Shabbos, please visit www.nasck.org or call 718-847-6280.

HELLO
AUTUMN
2017

*Always dress
like it's the
best day of
your life!*

Sizes 2-22

Natali

Teens & Ladies Wear of Monsey

ATRIUM PLAZA 401 WEST ROUTE 59 MONSEY, NEW YORK 845.356.0999
SUNDAY-THURSDAY: 11:00-7:00 FRIDAY 11:00-2:30

How do we educate and prepare our students
in a rapidly changing marketplace?

10.22.17
yu.edu/worldoftomorrow

