

# THE DENVER COMMUNITY KOLLEL KOLLEL UPDATE

Because Torah Is for Every Jew



Special Benefit Event Edition

February 2009/Adar 5768

## 'Crisis to Opportunity' at Unique Benefit Event

Nearly 300 people came out in support of the Denver Community Kollel at a unique event that put meaning before frills and that helped "turn crisis into opportunity." The Kollel's Benefit Event on February 18 marked 11 years of Torah study and teaching with a night of inspiration and direction in these uncertain times.

Rather than the traditional sit-down dinner, the event featured a dessert reception prepared by the Kollel women, and a stirring address by guest lecturer Rabbi Moshe Tuvia Lief of Congregation Bais Yisroel of Minneapolis, on "Taking Stock: Turning Crisis Into Opportunity." [See sidebar.]

As Kollel Deans Rabbi Aron Yehuda Schwab and Rabbi Shachne Sommers explained in an open letter before the event, much thought went into the decision to hold a "less-frills" event in place of an annual celebration.

"The success of this radically different event is to your credit," said Rabbi Schwab, in his welcome address at the Benefit Event. "We had your overwhelming support to do things differently, more in sync with the reality of the lean years."

The Benefit Event also featured a tribute to Kollel-Aish Families Rabbi Dovid and Faigy Gertz and Rabbi Moshe and Yehudis Heyman.



Kollel Dean Rabbi Aron Yehuda Schwab (r.) presents Rabbi Dovid and Faigy Gertz with their award.

The Gertz and Heymans came to Denver two years ago in a partnership between the Kollel and Aish Denver. In addition to learning at the Kollel in West Denver during the day, Rabbi Gertz and Rabbi Heyman, together with their wives, were charged with teaching classes, studying one-on-one, and hosting families for Shabbos in their Southeast Denver home.

In his address, Kollel Dean Rabbi Shachne Sommers praised the families for their "pioneerism, dedication and idealism."



Kollel Dean Rabbi Shachne Sommers (r.) presents Rabbi Moshe and Yehudis Heyman with their award.

Rabbi Yaakov Meyer, Rabbi of Aish Denver, also commended the families for "not only caring about their own personal growth, but serving as role models, as teachers, both the husbands and wives."

In his acceptance speech, Rabbi Gertz, who now teaches part-time for the Kollel and is an administrator for Aish Denver, recalled how, when he had met with Rabbi Meyer in advance of his move to Denver, he asked him numerous questions.

"Rabbi Meyer stopped me and said, 'Reb Dovid, I don't know all the answers to all the questions, but there's one thing I can guarantee you – that if you come, you will have the most incredible, the most uplifting

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### 'The Real Stimulus Package'



In a riveting address at the Benefit Event, Rabbi Moshe Tuvia Lief emphasized that livelihood comes from Hashem, and that the real "stimulus package" for this economy is for every Jew to learn and grow in Torah, thereby spreading the true "joy, wealth, and satisfaction" that only Torah can bring.

Quoting the Prophet Isaiah, he explained that this world "is not our place. We have higher core values. We are transplanted from a different world, and we are here for 120 years to serve Hashem, a beacon of light to the world and our people."

He illustrated the Jewish people's "other-worldliness" with a story he heard firsthand from a member of his shul who is now part of the IDF's Golani Brigade, in the Yahalom counter-terrorist subdivision.

Several weeks ago Rabbi Lief was one of many rabbis throughout the United States who made an appeal in his shul to purchase tzitzis for tens of thousands of not-yet-religious Israeli soldiers. Recently, many such soldiers went into Gaza wearing these tzitzis.

This included five fearless soldiers from Yahalom, who tracked down a terrorist building, disguised themselves as members of Hamas, and fired automatic weapons through to roof to kill the terrorists. Suddenly, three IDF

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# Kollel Launches New 'Torah@Home' Initiative

The Kollel unveiled a new large-scale initiative to bring the Torah's timeless wisdom to contemporary Jews throughout Denver at its Benefit Event. Under "Torah@Home," the Kollel will set up home groups throughout the city, with participants studying the topic of their choice, at their own pace, with their friends, in the comfort of their own homes.

"Studies have shown that the best way to inspire Jews to learn about their heritage is by making Jewish study less formal and more accessible," said Jay Kamlet, master of ceremonies at the Benefit Event, explaining the reasoning behind Torah@Home.



With its new 'Torah @ Home' initiative, the Kollel will bring Torah into the comfort of people's homes.

"In today's uncertain times, when so many people are searching for direction and meaning, this program is more necessary – and relevant – than ever," he added. "It will allow Jews of all backgrounds to discover what the

Kollel – and Jewish life – has to offer."

To generate funding for this project, the Kollel is participating in a nationwide drawing by the Chofetz Chaim Heritage Foundation to support the furtherance of Torah study in the United States. The grand prize is \$100,000 cash, the second prize is a Gevri watch valued at \$10,000, and the third prize is a trip for 2 to Israel.

Kollel supporters can also partner in this initiative by contacting the Kollel with names of friends or associates whom they think would benefit from this kind of group.

To find out more about the raffle, visit [www.denverkollel.org](http://www.denverkollel.org) 

## 'The Real Stimulus Package'

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helicopters appeared, flew to the rooftop and started raking it with automatic fire. At first, the Israeli soldiers had no way to communicate with the Israeli Air Force. But then they opened their tunics, took out their tzitzis and started waving them. When the pilots realized the soldiers were Jews, they flew off.

"Jews throughout North America purchased tzitzis for thousands of Israel soldiers," said Rabbi Lief. "In the right time and in the right place, those tzitzis saved lives."

He went on to explain that this all began thousands of years ago when the Jews sojourned in the Desert, and they received manna from heaven.

He explained that the reason we say the blessing "hamotzei lechem min ha'aretz" on bread, rather than "min ha'adama," which would be



Some of the nearly 300 people who attended the Benefit Event to celebrate the Kollel's 11th anniversary.

more correct, is to remind us that we should remember that "the same G-d who brings manna from heaven, brings manna from earth."

He then referred to the writing of Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman (1874-1941), who, 80 years ago described the reason behind the Great Depression as a "break in trust." People did not trust in Hashem, and as a result, they lost trust in one another. Rabbi Lief said he believes the same is true in today's economy, and that we Jews have an opportunity to help repair that trust.

He quoted Rabbi Chatzkal Abramsky's (1886-1976) unique interpretation of the verse, "Torah scholars bring peace to the world."

He explained that many people do not feel satisfied with what they have, and this causes much conflict. But Torah scholars, who learn Torah and experience the greatest satisfaction that exists, are permeated with joy and can spread this to others, bringing true peace to the world.

The real "stimulus package" in this economy, concluded Rabbi Lief, is for every Jew to learn Torah, which brings "the real *geshmak*" and then "stimulates" true joy and wealth not just in the person himself, but also spreads to all those around him. 

## From 'Crisis to Opportunity'

*Continued from front*



(l. to r.) Melanie Avner, Event Committee Chair Member Rochelle Block Sokol and Sandy Schiff at the Benefit Event on Feb. 18, at Mile High Station.

experience of your life, working for the Kollel and Aish.'

"Rabbi Meyer, Rabbi Schwab," said Rabbi Gertz, "I can tell you it has been the most incredible experience, and thank you for all you have done."

In his speech, Rabbi Heyman likewise thanked the Kollel deans and Rabbi Meyer, as well as the people of the Southeast community.

"My wife and I are amazed – over and over again – at the number of people in the Southeast community that have such a strong desire to learn and grow as Torah Jews. We have gained so much from the lessons you teach us of what it means to always be growing as Jews," he said. 