

THE DENVER COMMUNITY KOLLEL KOLLEL UPDATE



Because Torah Is for Every Jew

Special Benefit Event Edition

January 2009/Teves 5768

'Taking Stock: Turning Crisis Into Opportunity' Kollel 11th Anniversary Benefit Event Wed., Feb. 18, at Mile High Station

In place of its annual dinner, the Kollel will be holding a Benefit Event on Wed., Feb. 18, at Mile High Station, in celebration of its 11th anniversary.

In keeping with the times, the theme of the event will be "Taking Stock: Turning Crisis Into Opportunity." Renowned rabbi and lecturer Rabbi



Rabbi Dovid and Faigy Gertz and family.

Moshe Tuvia Lieff of Congregation Bais Yisroel of Minneapolis, MN, will serve as the special guest speaker.

The evening will also feature a tribute to Rabbi Dovid and Faigy Gertz, and Rabbi Moshe and Yehudis Heyman, Kollel-Aish Families, as well as "A La Mode: A Feast of Fruit and Tarts," a dessert reception prepared by the Kollel women.

"In these times, we, like everyone else, are cutting back," said Kollel Dean Rabbi Aron Yehuda Schwab, explaining why the Kollel has opted for a "less-frills" event this year. "It's more critical than ever that the donations we receive are used to fund our programs. We are confident that our supporters will agree that giving up a steak dinner is a small price to pay for ensuring the Kollel's future."

To make the event affordable to all Kollel participants and supporters,



Rabbi Moshe and Yehudis Heyman and family.

the Kollel is offering lower ticket prices. General seating is \$75 per person, and reserved seating is \$300 per couple, which includes a greeting in the event journal.

"Now, more than ever, people are turning to the Kollel to find meaning and direction through Torah and our

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Stocks Down, But Learning Up at Kollel Programs

Pollsters and so-called lifestyle experts have all been talking about it. Since the start of the economic decline, they say growing numbers of people are "focusing on spirituality," searching for "what's really important in life," and trying to "cut the excess and reconnect."

Don't believe it? Stop by the Kollel *beis medrash* on a weeknight, and you'll see men of all ages studying in pairs, or participating in a *shiur*, all focusing on the meaning of Jewish texts that date back hundreds, even thousands, of years.

"There are more and more



Kollel Scholar Rabbi Avraham Abrams (l.) leading his twice-weekly Beginners' Gemara Class at Aish Denver.

people, learning more and more hours of Torah," says Avraham Grossman, a fifth-generation Denverite and member of Zera Abraham.

Or visit Aish Denver, where the Kollel scholars, in conjunction with the Night Seder Program developed by

Aish's Associate Rabbi, Rabbi Eliyahu Stern, offer classes almost every evening. There, too, growing numbers of people are taking advantage of the opportunity to find meaning and connection through the study of Torah.

"People come to Aish searching

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Stocks Down

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for truth," says Daniel Peckman, Aish member and Secular Studies Principal at Yeshiva Toras Chaim, "and they find it."

According to Kollel Dean Rabbi Aron Yehuda Schwab, interest in the Kollel's programs has never been greater.

"We are meeting the growing need by expanding current programs and offering new ones," he says.

One program that is experiencing a resurgence is the Kollel's Night Seder Program, which runs from 8-10 p.m. weeknights in the *beis medrash*.

Rabbi Daniel Krausz, an Associate Kollel Scholar and Architect with Bennett, Wagner & Grody Architects, says the expanded program has attracted newcomers, "whose significant added presence has energized us all."

"I like to think of our group as a 'Band of Brothers,' who battle the snow and a hectic community calendar to make a regular time for personal growth through Torah study," he adds.

According to Mr. Grossman, the fifth-generation Denverite, another draw of the program is the Monday night "Topics in the Parsha" class given by Kollel Scholar Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher.

Mr. Grossman says community members "eagerly anticipate" the class each week, and that it's "very interactive, with a lively interchange between the *rebbe* and the students."

Over at Aish Denver, the Kollel has also expanded its offerings in the evenings: Kollel Scholar Rabbi Dovid Gertz is a mainstay of the Aish Night



Kollel Scholar Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher (r.) leading his popular "Topics in the Parsha" class at the Kollel, as participants Mr. Ari Krausz (l.) and Mr. Avraham Grossman look on.

Seder Program, where he offers small-group study sessions every evening. Kollel Scholar Rabbi Avraham Abrams leads a Beginners' Gemara class on Mondays and Wednesdays, and Rabbi Fleisher offers his Parsha class on Thursday nights. Kollel Scholar Rabbi Moshe Heyman, who coordinates many of these classes, has also expanded his one-on-one learning program in the evenings and early mornings. This is in addition to the Kollel-led Partners in Torah program on Wednesday nights, the Daf Yomi Plus class on Sunday mornings, and the "Path of the Just" class on Tuesdays evenings.

According to attorney and Aish Member Chuck Michaels, who attends Rabbi Abrams' Gemara class, all you need to join that, or any other, class is a "thirst for knowledge."

"The nice thing about so many classes on so many different topics, at various times, is that there probably is something for just about everyone, no matter their area of interest or their time schedule," he says.

Fellow attorney and Aish Member David A. Solomon, who also attends the Gemara class, says the classes present a unique opportunity for

Samuel, MD, Rochelle Block Sokol and Allan Tenenbaum.

Jay Kamlet and Sandy Feld are chairing the Corporate Sponsorship Committee.

"Supporting the Kollel is an investment with invaluable returns both to personal and spiritual growth, as well as to the solidarity and strength of the Denver Jewish community," says Marc Avner.

growth.

"If one is truly alive, and wishes to be present, then there must be growth and learning, and studying is one way to start that growth," he says.

Daniel Peckman, the Secular Studies Principal who described people as coming to learn "in search of the truth," says one can visibly see that growth happening.

"I became a teacher because I found I was addicted to that instant of understanding that a student gets, that look on his face when he finally grasps the difficult concept you are trying to give him. I call it the 'ahaa moment,'" he explains. "Even if I hadn't [joined the programs because I was] looking for another *chavrusa* for a couple days a week, I would be drawn [here], simply to watch the expressions on the faces of those studying."

And that "ahaa moment," that feeling of meaning and connection – is now being experienced by so many Jews at so many Kollel programs.

"We have definitely seen a bright side to this economic slump," says Rabbi Schwab. "Stocks may be down, but learning is certainly 'up' in our community." ❧

In addition to supporting the Kollel, attending the event is also a way to find inspiration in these uncertain times, says Rabbi Schwab.

"We look forward to personally greeting all our students, friends and supporters at the Benefit Event," he says. "It will surely inspire all of us to turn crisis into opportunity."

To RSVP or place a journal ad, visit www.denverkollel.org ❧

Taking Stock

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shared heritage," adds Kollel Dean Rabbi Shachne Sommers. "We hope everyone will make an extra effort to support the Kollel at levels similar to previous years."

An Event Chair Committee has been formed for the Benefit Event. Its members are Marc Avner, MD, Jonathan Beren, Jody Crane, Terry S.