

# THE DENVER COMMUNITY KOLLEL KOLLEL UPDATE

Because Torah Is for Every Jew



March 2010/Nissan 5770

## Large, Diverse Crowd at Annual Benefit Event

Over 300 people from all walks of life came out in support of the Kollet at its Annual Benefit Event on Wed., March 10, 2010, at Mile High Station. The event marked 12 years of the Kollet scholars and their families learning, teaching and living Torah in Denver.

Dr. Dan Abrams and Sharon Pincus Abrams received the Community Leadership Award, and Art and Cheryl Kutzer received the Ohev Torah Award.

Rabbi Eliyahu Bergstein, Senior Lecturer, Aish HaTorah International, addressed the evening's theme: "The Power of Integrity: Elevating Ourselves, Our Community and Our World."

Rabbi Bergstein presented a wide array of stories - from the Talmud to

the present day - in which Jews excelled in the area of integrity and sensitivity to others. He said the key to integrity is found in the Torah, and in those who study it.

"How do you become like these people [in the stories]?" he asked. "By learning Torah. And by studying it with the wonderful men and women of the Kollet."

The event also featured "Tastes of the World," an international array of light hors d'oeuvres, prepared by the Kollet women; a sushi table sponsored by Sunflower Farmers Market; and a wine tasting sponsored by Royal Wine Corp.

In his acceptance speech, Art Kutzer spoke about the transformative power of Torah learning. He and his wife, Cheryl, have both studied in the Kollet's Partners in Torah program for several years.

"It takes the entire person - by his soul - and transforms him into a greater, wiser and more sanctified human being," he said, "We thank all the Kollet families for their tireless work to give us the gift of learning Torah."

He added that there are many more



Rabbi Aron Yehuda Schwab (r.) presenting the Ohev Torah Award to Art and Cheryl Kutzer.

Jews who should be given the chance to experience it.

"Even those Jews who are not seeking Torah learning will become interested if we, in this room, spread the word. Once they get a taste of the learning with the Kollet, they will come back for more," he said.

In his acceptance speech, Dr. Dan Abrams also spoke about his family's Jewish growth through the Kollet.

"We are grateful that the Kollet has helped our Jewish educational journey continue into our adulthood, by helping us grow through studying texts that pertain to issues so important to our lives," he said. "We encourage others to step forward to publicly support the Kollet."

To view the event videos, visit [www.denverkollet.org](http://www.denverkollet.org) 



Rabbi Shachne Sommers (r.) presenting the Community Leadership Award to Dr. Dan Abrams and Sharon Pincus Abrams.

## 60 Learn About Passover at '60 Minutes or Less' PIT Encounter

Some 60 men and women learned about "Passover in 60 Minutes or Less" at a Partners in Torah Pre-Passover Encounter on March 17 at Aish Denver. At the event, participants studied one-on-one and in small groups with Kollet men and women.

Dick Snyder, a resident of Southeast Denver, considers himself a Pre-Passover Encounter "regular." He says it's the "energy, good humor and exchange of ideas" that keeps him coming back.

"I always look forward to this event as a way to launch me into Passover," he says. "The give-and-take with Rabbi Schwab and others at my table was immensely enjoyable."



(l. to r.) The Kollet's Esti Schwab, Myndie Brown, Irene Rosen and Erica Gardner learn about "Passover in 60 Minutes or Less" at the March 17 PIT Encounter.

For Harry Tuft, Owner of the Denver Folklore Center and

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# 'Excitement for Torah Palpable' at Pre-Pesach Class at DAT

Every day, we fulfill our daily and nightly obligations to remember the Exodus in our prayers. What, then, is unique about the obligation to remember the Exodus on Seder night?

Kollel Outreach Director Rabbi Yehuda Amsel presented this and other challenging questions on the Haggadah to a group of Denver Academy of Torah teens and preteens, at a special pre-Pesach lecture on March 23. Rabbi Amsel was invited to address them as part of the school's pre-holiday "Yom Iyun" program.

According to Rabbi Leib Zalesch, a Judaic Studies Teacher at DAT, the school invited Rabbi Amsel because it wanted to "expand our students' horizons by inviting prominent local Torah personalities to address the students."

"Many of our students are personally familiar with Rabbi Amsel from his many lectures around the community," he says. "With his warmth and personable nature, Rabbi Amsel was the perfect fit for our program."

In addition to addressing the question above by using a wide range of commentaries, Rabbi Amsel quoted the verse "Because of 'this' Hashem took me out of Mitzrayim" (Shemos 13:8), and then led an interactive discussion on what the verse refers to.

"Rabbi Amsel was acutely interested in the questions, comments, and insights of the students, encouraging them to think critically and taking their thoughts and responses



Rabbi Yehuda Amsel presenting challenging questions on the Haggadah to 35 teens at Denver Academy of Torah at a Pre-Pesach lecture on March 23.

seriously," said Rabbi Zalesch. "Perhaps most importantly, his excitement for Torah was palpable and generated a quick response from our students."

For his part, Rabbi Amsel said he fed off the students' enthusiasm.

"Their excitement for learning was very tangible, and it gave me tremendous energy," he says.

According to Rabbi Zalesch, the students were still discussing the class long after it had finished.

"Their response to the shiur was overwhelmingly positive, and many have made a point of asking if we can invite Rabbi Amsel back for our next Yom Iyun," he says. ❧

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## 'Secrets of Seder Plate' Revealed at March 25 Class at Sunflower Market

In an effort to bring the meaning of Pesach to a broader Jewish audience, the Kollel held "Secrets of the Seder Plate: A Shopping List and Spiritual Guide," at Sunflower Farmers Market in Highlands on March 26.

The class, led by Kollel Outreach Director Rabbi Yechiel Erlanger, featured a discussion of the components of the traditional Seder Plate and their meaning for today.

Rabbi Erlanger opened his presentation by explaining that the



reason we have so many hands-on learning tools at the Seder, including

### 60 Learn About

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another past PIT encounter participant, it's both the format and information that draws him to the program.

"I appreciate the hand-out, not only as a guide for the evening, but also as further insight to Passover," he says. "It will reinforce and extend my knowledge

of the Exodus."

Eddie Yenkinson, a member of Temple Emanuel, Aish Denver, Temple Sinai and Adventure Rabbi, says he's already sharing what he learned at the event with others.

"I'm already teaching my grandchildren, in fun ways, the meaning of Pesach and the plagues."

the Seder Plate, is to give participants the opportunity for kinetic learning.

"The more tangible the lesson is, the more it inspires the learner," he explained.

He added that the Seder Plate – and, in fact, the entire Seder – is not just an exercise in recalling an event that happened 3,300 years ago in our shared Jewish history.

"The story of Pesach teaches us lessons for our current existence and for the future," he said. ❧

Erica Gardner, Interior Designer, Gardner Gray Interiors, says she too will use the material at her Seder table. She said she was particularly inspired that so many people came out on a regular Wednesday night to prepare themselves spiritually for Pesach.

"It was so nice to see so many people interested in learning," she says. ❧