

THE DENVER COMMUNITY KOLLEL KOLLEL UPDATE

Because Torah Is for Every Jew

September 2012-Tishrei 5773



Tribute to Rabbi Amsel at Donor Appreciation Event


The Kollel's Annual Appreciation Event is just a few days away, and, with the Amsel family's recent departure to Detroit, a tribute is being planned for the evening.

"The Donor Appreciation Event is the time when those dedicated to the Kollel gather to show their support," says Kollel Dean Aron Yehuda Schwab. "It's an ideal opportunity for us to express our gratitude to Rabbi Amsel for all he has accomplished here during the past fifteen years, and to reflect on the impact he has made, and the legacy he leaves, as he moves on to his new position in Detroit."



l. to r.: Rabbi Gavriel Rudnick, Associate Scholar of the Kollel, Dr. Robert Schiermeyer, and Dr. Ken Katz at last year's Donor Appreciation Event

This year's Donor Appreciation Event will be hosted by Brad & Dana Licht at their home, 6156 East Powers Avenue in Greenwood Village, on Monday, September 24th, at 7 PM. The event will feature *Sip & Sizzle*, a culinary experience artistically designed by the Kollel women.

Reservations and donations for the Donor Appreciation Event can be made on the Kollel's website, www.denverkollel.org. 

The End of an Era:

Rabbi Yehuda & Mrs. Tirtza Amsel, founding members of the Kollel, Relocate to Detroit

"When we welcome the angels into our home on Friday nights with *Shalom Aleichem*, it takes but a few short minutes until we bid them farewell with *Tzeis'chem L'shalom*. If we have the merit, sometimes the *malachim* (angels) can linger longer. Some stay for fifteen years. Rabbi Yehuda and Tirtzah Amsel were the *malachim* who came to toil in the vineyard of G-d here in Denver. However, as all good *malachim*, they quickly became the *malachei ha-shalom*, angels of peace, who bring harmony and happiness to a community."

These were the words spoken by Rabbi Myer Schwab, dean of Beth Jacob High School of Denver, and founder of the Denver Community Kollel, aptly expressing the feelings of many as he publicly bid farewell to Rabbi Yehuda and Mrs. Tirtza Amsel on Shabbos at Congregation Zera Abraham on Denver's West Side.

It was fifteen years ago when Rabbi Aron Yehuda Schwab and Rabbi Shachne Sommers opened the doors of the Denver Community Kollel, forever changing the spiritual landscape of Colorado. The Amsels were among the first group of families that formed the Kollel. Since then, the Amsels had become fixtures throughout Denver, serving as a paradigm for countless Jews throughout – and beyond – Denver.

From day one, Rabbi Amsel's ever-present ear-to-ear smile and friendly demeanor endeared him to all he came into contact with. Over the years, he has forged relationships with countless individuals. His dedication to his students, colleagues, and community is the stuff of legends. "To say he didn't work 9 to 5 is an understatement," says Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher, Director of Community Education. "You would receive emails from him that were sent at the craziest hours of the night. Vacation? I think he'd go away for a few days toward the end of the summer. Everyone else would be off, and he was in the *Beis Medrash*



Rabbi Amsel with fellow Kollel scholars in 2000. l. to r.: Rabbi Yechiel Erlanger, Rabbi Yehuda Amsel, Kollel Dean Rabbi Shachne Sommers

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Kollel and Denver Community Welcome New Family

“I feel privileged to be a part of the Denver Community Kollel and the Denver Jewish Community,” says Rabbi Dovid Schwartzberg. Rabbi Schwartzberg, along with his family, relocated to Denver from Lakewood, New Jersey at the end of August to become the newest member of the Kollel.

The Schwartzbergs are the first of a group of young families who are moving to Denver this fall to join the Kollel. Their arrival marks the start of a new era, as they will inject energy and vibrancy into the Denver Jewish Community.

Rabbi Schwartzberg joins the Kollel’s Beis Medrash for full-day study sessions, and has also begun giving classes to the broader community. Kerry Berman attends the Kollel’s *Learn-to-Learn* program, held twice weekly at Aish Denver, and enjoys Rabbi Schwartzberg’s method of teaching Talmud. “His style is really geared toward enabling us to learn how to read and understand the

Gemara,” he says. “He has a unique, intense approach to Talmud study, and I think it’ll lend itself to learning the material well.”



R' Schwartzberg during a class at Aish Denver.

Rabbi Schwartzberg was born and raised in the Boro Park section of Brooklyn. He studied in the yeshiva of Rabbi Tzvi Kaplan in Jerusalem, and then joined Beth Medrash Govoha in Lakewood, NJ. He and his wife, Batsheva, married in 2008.

The Schwartzbergs participated in the Ner L’elef Jewish Outreach Training Course. They completed the two-year course in 2010.

For the past four summers, Rabbi Schwartzberg directed a camp for high-school age boys in Lakewood, where he also gave a daily Talmud lecture to the campers. Mrs. Schwartzberg, too, has extensive experience with summer camps, having directed a large day camp for a number of years.

Mrs. Schwartzberg has a number of years of experience as a classroom teacher. Since her arrival in Denver, she has assumed the fifth-grade teaching position in Hillel Academy.

The Schwartzbergs are quite impressed with the Denver Jewish Community. “Everyone has been so gracious to us since our arrival,” says Mrs. Schwartzberg. “We have received enough food to last us for a whole month!”

“Rabbi Schwartzberg has brought a great deal of talent and vigor to Denver,” says Kollel Dean Rabbi Shachne Sommers. “The Kollel welcomes and looks forward to great things from the Schwartzbergs.”

Rabbi Yehuda & Mrs. Tirtza Amsel... Relocate to Detroit

preparing for that night’s class.”

“The impact Rabbi Amsel has had on Denver Jewry is inestimable,” says Dr. Terry Samuel. “His classes and personal involvement raised the level of Jewish learning and Torah commitment in Denver. As great as it was for the past fifteen years, it’s only now that we appreciate just how much he meant to the community.”

Rabbi Amsel’s warmth and care allowed him to connect to Jews of all ages and backgrounds, uniting individuals, linking institutions, and bridging communities. He is well-known for his Lunch & Learn classes, Fathers

& Sons program, nightly *shiurim* (lectures), his beautiful, heartfelt prayers as the *shliach tzibbur* (prayer leader), and his inspiring kumzitzes.

Rabbi Amsel expresses the trouble he had in leaving Denver. “Letting



Rabbi Amsel at a Cherry Creek Lunch & Learn

go of this experience is too difficult for me to even consider. Instead, I’ve taken these wonderful years with me to Detroit, and with Hashem’s help, I hope I’ll merit to continue building

on them.” He hasn’t really left Denver, he continues. “I’ve chosen a different state of mind: I’m going on a “business” trip to Detroit, and look forward to as many returns “home” as possible, to be with my “family” in Denver,” says Rabbi Amsel.

They say that no one is irreplaceable. And while there may be some truth to that adage, Denver will be hard-pressed to fill the shoes left empty by the Amsels’ departure. The Kollel, along with the entire Denver Jewish Community, wishes them much success

in Detroit, and looks forward to being reunited with the Amsels with the Final Redemption and the ingathering of the Diaspora to the Land of Israel.