

# THE DENVER COMMUNITY KOLLEL KOLLEL UPDATE

Because Torah Is for Every Jew

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## 2nd Annual Donor Appreciation: 'Best Event Ever'

In what is now being called the Kollel's "best event ever," a large crowd of dedicated supporters turned out for the Kollel's 2nd Annual Donor Appreciation Event, held Sept. 23 at the home of Drs. Stuart Senkor and Leslie Stewart in Greenwood Village.

The theme of the event was "Living Inspired," and participants were treated to a beautiful display of holiday tables created by a dedicated group of volunteer women; a moving "Siyum Celebration" tribute, recognizing those who have recently completed a section of Torah or Talmud; and a poignant, up-close look at the Kollel Scholars. [See related articles.]

The program opened with a thank you from Kollel Dean Rabbi Shachne Sommers.

"We have an obligation to show our appreciation to you, our donors, and that's what I'd like to express on behalf of the Kollel tonight," he said. "And all of us together are expressing



(l. to r.) Chaya Sara Aragon, Jesse Aragon, Pennie Aragon, Ken Rosenthal, Hannah Sperber and Laya Rosenthal at the Kollel's Donor Appreciation Event.

our appreciation to G-d for the great gift of Torah that we all share. "

One of the evening's highlights was a moving address by Kollel supporter and participant Jesse Aragon, in which he shared how he has grown personally from his involvement with the Kollel.

"I'm a better husband, a better father, a better son-in-law, and I'm a better friend because of the time that the Kollel rabbis have taken to share their knowledge with me of the Torah."

He then asked all those assembled to "reach a little deeper" and

support the Kollel.

"This is the first time any of you have ever seen me ask for support for any organization," he said. "The reason I'm doing this is because the Kollel is in a very tough financial situation. More so, I thought, 'What would the Denver community look like without the Kollel rabbis?' We need to do all we can to ensure that the Kollel will continue to be a part of the Denver community."

Kollel President Rabbi Zev Beren echoed Mr. Aragon's words. He talked about how we've all had to cut back on luxuries in this economy, but described the Kollel as a "necessity."

"Just like I pay my electric bills, it's a necessity, I feel that... giving money to the Kollel is like paying my spiritual electric bill," he said.

Kollel Dean Rabbi Aron Yehuda Schwab also thanked donors for their support, saying that every dollar donated to the Kollel in this economy "gets double mileage this year." ❧

## Volunteers Create Holiday Tables With Style and Spirituality

In keeping with the event theme of "Living Inspired," a group of dedicated volunteers, led by Elin Robbins-Geman, prepared a beautiful display of holiday tables, meant to inspire others to create similarly beautiful tables in their own homes.

The holiday tables with "style, substance and spirituality" were created by Kathryn Cerise, Andrea Hyatt, Elin Robbins-Geman, Joanne Kleinstein, Ruth Malman, Sharon Marks, Annette Pluss and Laya Rosenthal. The Kollel women prepared a lavish holiday-themed dessert reception.

Kollel Scholar Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher made mention of the tables in his address on the evening's theme.

He cited Maimonides, who teaches that the Torah's command to rejoice in the holidays is not referring to empty, purposeless joy, but "it's a means of connecting to our families and communities, and ultimately, to G-d himself."

He described how we find in many areas of Judaism



Chanuka table created by Elin Robbins-Geman.

the concept of utilizing the physical world in the service of G-d. When we "eat, drink and be merry," on holidays - and create beautiful holiday tables for our families - we can sanctify ourselves and the entire world along with us, he said.

To view a gallery of tables, visit [www.denverkollel.org](http://www.denverkollel.org) ❧

# From Behind the Talmud: Participants Get An Up-Close Look at the Kollel Scholars

How do the Kollel Scholars relax after a long, 9-hour-day in the study hall? Which Kollel Scholar has made the Shabbos cholent ever week since his marriage eight years ago? Which Kollel Scholar's great-grandfather saved numerous lives in the Holocaust?

These and several other enlightening and inspiring questions were at the heart of "From Behind the Talmud," the portion of the Donor Appreciation Event program that gave



(l. to r.) Dr. Michael Milobsky, Dr. Marc Avner and Kollel/Aish Scholar Rabbi Dovid Gertz at the Donor Appreciation Event.

participants an up-close look at the Kollel scholars.

Dr. Michael Milobsky posed the questions to the audience, who were surprised to learn that Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher relaxes by playing guitar and composing songs, and that Rabbi Yehuda Amsel relaxes most on Shabbos, when he can turn off his BlackBerry and spend quality time with his family. They also learned that Rabbi Moshe Heyman makes a very good cholent, and that Rabbi Michel Levitansky's great-grandfather was the head of the Vaad Hatzala, Holocaust Rescue Committee, in Vienna, Austria.

Many participants also enjoyed hearing what led the rabbis to become Kollel Scholars: Rabbi Levi Lebovitz had an eighth-grade rebbi who inspired him simply by example. Rabbi Avraham Abrams knew Torah study was important because as a child, he'd



(l. to r.) Neil Olesky, Kollel Dean Rabbi Shachne Sommers, Art Kutzer, and Kollel/Aish Scholar Rabbi Moshe Heyman at the Donor Appreciation Event.

often wake up early and find his father studying Talmud at the kitchen table. And it came almost naturally for Rabbi Ari Jakubowicz, who grew up in a large family of educators.

Dr. Milobsky ended the program by praising the scholars for not only dedicating themselves to Torah study, but also for inspiring so many community members – himself included – by teaching and serving as role models.

For the complete Scholars Q&A, visit [www.denverkollel.org](http://www.denverkollel.org)  

## Kollel Participants Celebrate the 'Siyum Milestone'

At the Donor Appreciation Event, the Kollel not only paid tribute to those who so generously support it, but also to those who partner with it to achieve the very essence of its mission – the furtherance of Torah study.

It celebrated the "Siyum Milestone," recognizing those who study at the Kollel, or attend a Kollel class, week after week after week, and who have recently achieved the extra-special accomplishment of completing a section of the Torah for Talmud.

Among those highlighted by program emcee Rabbi Michel Levitansky were Dr. Mickey Gordon, who has completed "Derech Hashem," "Way of G-d," after eight years and "Shevili D'Rakia," "The Roads of Heaven," after two years; Marsha Greenstein, Janice Fellner, and Linda Lewis who have finished "Sefer Melachim," "Book of Kings," after one



Siyum celebrant Marc Cooper marking the completion of Mishnayos Bava Basra in his father's memory at the Donor Appreciation Event.

year of study; George Gumbiner, who completed Parshas Bereishis with Rashi in one year; and Marc Cooper, who completed Mishnayos Bava Basra in two years, in his father's memory.

Mr. Cooper shared with the audience his feelings about his accomplishment.

"If you had asked me what a siyum was, a mishna was, or a tractate of

Bava Basra was, two years ago, I would have said 'What's a siyum? What's a mishna? Bava who?'

Mr. Cooper described how after his father's passing two years ago, he was studying with Rabbi Amsel on Thursday nights, and Rabbi Amsel suggested that they study Mishnayos in his father's memory. He described the learning not only as "very therapeutic," but also as a way to "repay my father for bringing me into the world and all the things he did for me all these years."

Mr. Cooper said he felt a lot of satisfaction at completing the work, and encouraged others to do the same.

"It isn't that hard," he said. "It's really one sentence, one page at a time. It not much different than reaching the top of the mountain – it's one step at a time."

For a complete list of Siyum celebrants, visit [www.denverkollel.org](http://www.denverkollel.org)  