

## AROUND THE FIVE TOWNS

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tend to underestimate the effect of the crisis on businesses and individuals," Mr. Arussy said. "As the cease-fire took effect," he continued, "people need to recuperate and get back to work." Recanati's vineyards were designated "military zones," preventing timely harvesting. In addition, the threat of rocket fire has scattered its employees, people who are dependent on the financial viability of the winery for their livelihood. "Helping people to make a living is the highest form of *tzedakah*," he added.

### 'Avigdor's Helping Hand' Inaugural Awareness Event On Labor Day

By Rochelle Maruch Miller

To have known Avigdor Glaser, z'l, was to love him. A devoted family man, he was adored by his wife, Frumi, and their three young children and beloved by his parents and siblings. Blessed with the ability to excel in all of his endeavors, Avigdor was a warm and compassionate young man who touched the lives of all who knew him. After studying in Merkaz HaTorah in Eretz Yisrael, he pursued his undergraduate studies at Queens College, and then went on to Fordham Law School, where he graduated at the top of his class. Brilliant and gifted, yet unassuming and personable, Avigdor was a successful bankruptcy attorney at a prestigious downtown Manhattan firm. Above all else, he was the very essence of a *ben Torah*.

Tragically, Avigdor passed away last September, following a valiant year-long battle with cancer. Shortly after his *petirah*, his grief-stricken family, still numbed by their irreparable loss, met to discuss how they could best perpetuate Avigdor's cherished memory. "At that time, there were three other families who were in situations similar to that of my sister-in-law, Frumi," explained Sruli Glaser, Avigdor's younger brother. "Each of the families had suffered the loss of their husband and father, and was overwhelmed with grief and chaos. Frumi felt that the most fitting legacy to memorialize her beloved husband would be an organization that would offer comfort to grieving families during a time of chaos and intense pain." Thus, "Avigdor's Helping Hand" was founded. "We want to be the first phone call that a family makes when tragedy strikes, *r"l*," Sruli declares. "Avigdor's Helping Hand is a disaster-relief *chesed*. Part of the essential quality of our organization is to be there immediately, during those first moments. We have established a committee to evaluate each applicant with the utmost degree of confidentiality and sensitivity.

"We step in immediately with a cash stipend to provide the spouse and children with financial and emotional support. We usually expect to be involved with each case for about six months. After the first month, we issue a second stipend to cover the next two months, followed by a third stipend that will cover the fourth,

fifth, and sixth months. While we hope that the family can 'stand on their own' after six months, in the event that they cannot, we will coordinate with community organizations that can provide longer-term assistance for these families. For those families who have reestablished themselves financially and wish to use the stipends as a short-term loan, we will recycle the funds and disburse them to other families who are in need."

Sruli emphasizes the importance of purchasing life insurance. "It isn't something that young people usually think of, but it's vital for every member of our community to take advantage of. Every head-of-family has a responsibility and an obligation to provide for his wife and children, regardless of how young he and his family may be. We hear of so many instances where a tragedy strikes without warning, and the family, after suffering a devastating loss, is left without any source of income, leaving them little choice but to turn to family and friends, and often to the community at large."

Unique in its noble mission, Avigdor's Helping Hand serves as a beacon of hope amid a sea of despair, as it provides succor and support to families bereft of their loved ones. A *chesed* organization like no other, Avigdor's Helping Hand provides immediate, short-term relief, both financial and non-financial, to families who have sustained the recent loss of their primary breadwinner. The money is discretionary and may be used to offset any expense, such as food, housing

costs, mortgage payments, child care, utility bills, etc. Non-financial assistance provides for such services as paying for grief and bereavement counselors to provide their services to the families; making volunteers available to help the families in any way possible, including assisting in organizing finances (this includes guiding the surviving spouse in the basic concepts of how to make payments and balance checkbooks); conversing with banks to restructure debt; and assisting with children's homework.

A.H.H. also communicates with the myriad community organizations that need to be involved with the families for their needs on a long-term basis. And by educating the public on the importance of purchasing and maintaining life-insurance policies and other instruments that are vital to serving family members, Avigdor's Helping Hand promotes awareness of the need for long-term planning.

"Losing Avigdor was like losing a brother," says Dov Elias, who serves on A.H.H.'s Board of Directors. "I knew Avigdor since before I can remember, and we remained lifelong true friends. He was a very special person, and Avigdor's Helping Hand is a fitting legacy. It's a really unique opportunity to get involved with something that is so rewarding and keeps his memory alive."

The family and friends of Avigdor Glaser, *a"h*, cordially invite you to attend the Inaugural Awareness Event

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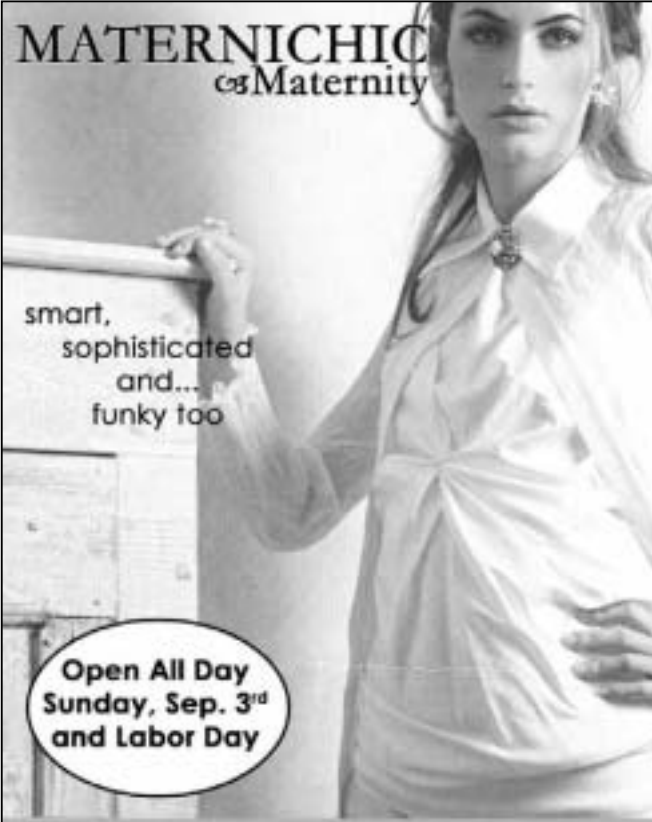
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of Avigdor's Helping Hand. Join our community in supporting this vital project by attending the Labor Day Barbecue on Monday, September 4, at 7:00 p.m. at The White Shul (Knesseth Israel), 728 Empire Blvd. in Far Rockaway.

Readers who would like to help Avigdor's Helping Hand in any capacity, as well as anyone wishing to make reservations or obtain additional information, should call 347-424-4926 or visit [www.avigdorshelpinghand.org](http://www.avigdorshelpinghand.org). *Tizku l'mitzvos!*

### Fighting For A Cause, The Jewish Way

Faced with the unfortunate situation in Israel, the senior staff at Camp IBA had an idea: Invite all of the Jewish sleepaway camps in upstate New York and Pennsylvania to send representatives to join them at Camp IBA for a day of unity and support for Israel. Calls were made

and an initial meeting was set up, with input from all the camps. The theme of the entire program was one of *achdus*, and all agreed to come together on Tuesday, August 1.

One may ask, "What difference could a group of sleepaway campers make, staying 6,000 miles away from Israel?" The 500 campers of IBA, Mesorah, Morasha, Moshava, Neshet, and Ramah heard from a series of speakers that it is important to fight a battle at the front lines, but it is equally important for people to stay behind to support our troops through *tefillas*. Each camp selected representatives to participate in the special program, actively showing support for our brethren in Israel who were fighting a battle on two fronts.

After the opening address from Joel Jerozolim, head counselor at IBA, the program began with *Hatikva*, the *Star Spangled Banner*, and prayers for the State of Israel, the IDF, and the missing and captured soldiers. A special prayer composed by the Chief Rabbinate of Israel was recited simul-

taneously with an estimated one million Jews from around the world. Afterwards, the camps heard a *d'var Torah* from Rabbi Judah Mischel of Camp HASC. Rabbi Mischel said, "If you stub your big toe, your entire body feels the pain—the same is true for the Jewish people. If our soldiers are hurting in Lebanon, we feel it here." The theme presented throughout the day was how the campers can make a difference in the situation through prayer and action.

The campers were treated to a video presentation, prepared by Camp Moshava, on the situation in Israel. After giving some background on Hezbollah and Israel's history with Lebanon, the video gave a day-by-day recap of the current events.

Using the video as a springboard to truly understand the severity of the situation, everyone was divided into smaller groups moderated by various educational advisors. In the smaller sessions, the campers had an opportunity to discuss how they felt about the current situation as well as write let-

ters to affected members of the IDF and families who were displaced from areas in Northern Israel. Many of the participants were from Israel, spending the summer in the U.S.; this day offered them an opportunity to feel closer to their loved ones at home.

The campers were treated to lunch, provided by IBA, after which they went back to the gym for the closing program. After recitation of *pirkei Tehillim*, 500 strong, everyone sat down for an intense period of "slow *shirah*" led by Rabbi Mordechai Kaplan of IBA. Between each song, the campers heard personal stories from different staff members, among them famed Jewish basketball star Tamir Goodman.

Closing out the program, the campers were privileged to hear from Rabbi Meir Goldwicht of Camp Mesorah about the role that *tefillah* plays—particularly the *tefillah* of children—in changing the world. With that, he really crystallized the purpose of the gathering, and led everyone in roof-shaking proclamations of the verses "*Shema Yisrael...*" and "*Baruch Sheim K'vod Malchulso l'olam va'ed.*"

The weather was very hot and it was difficult to tell if people were wiping their faces from sweat or tears—or both. However, at the end of the day, people felt that they had made a difference, and, based on what we heard, they most certainly did.

### Memorial Fund For Madraigos In The Five Towns

A family with a long history of accomplishments in the Five Towns has established a memorial fund to benefit Madraigos. Madraigos, based in Lawrence, NY is an organization that provides services for teenagers within the Orthodox Jewish Community. Madraigos works on prevention and intervention by offering free after-school programs, along with helping teenagers with social issues, teaching responsibility, *chesed* and spiritual enrichment.

The fund was established by Paul Freedman of Cedarhurst in the memory of his father, with the support of his brother David (CA), sister Rachel (Israel), and his mother Rose (Atlantic Beach), the widow of Rabbi Freedman, z"l. It is fitting that a fund in the rabbi's memory will benefit Madraigos. Rabbi Freedman built *mikvaos* in remote areas such as Alaska, SW Texas, and Greenland. The rabbi, who retired from the U.S. Air Force, as a Lt. Col. traveled to places where few Jews lived. In the 1950s and '60s he set up foundations for Jewish life, education, and culture that remain until today. At his *levayah*, his son Paul stated profoundly, "If my father were alive today, he would not have to travel to the frozen tundra of Alaska to see the wasteland or outposts. There are outposts right here in the Five Towns, with young people lost and wandering, as if they are at the ends of the earth."

Donations to the Madraigos Fund may be forwarded to the Madraigos office, P.O. Box 217, Cedarhurst NY 11516, or call the office at 516-371-3250. To reach Paul Freedman, please call 516-668-6424.

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