

In and Around... FAR ROCKAWAY & the FIVE TOWNS

AVIGDOR'S HELPING HAND NINTH ANNUAL LABOR DAY BARBEQUE

By Liba Lieberman

I had come to attend the ninth annual Labor Day barbeque for Avigdor's Helping Hand, held each year at the Moradi residence on Muriel Avenue in Lawrence. The Moradi family lives near Rock Hall Road, and coming in from Broadway, I thought to make a right turn onto their street and find an easy parking spot further away from the event. Immediately after the turn, however, I saw that there were cars double-parked as far as the eye could see. Couples were walking from Broadway, explaining that they couldn't find any other parking spots. Realizing that everyone is going to the barbeque, I couldn't help but be deeply touched by the

and many friends, all of whom were devastated by his untimely *petirah*. In response to the tragedy, Avigdor's family and friends immediately conceptualized a charity to memorialize his life while filling a unique need in the community, a need that became very clear when someone young and vibrant left behind a family trying to cope. This original group, devoted to Avigdor and wanting to perpetuate his memory, became the nucleus of what has become a remarkable *chesed* project specializing in assisting families after the loss of a parent.

Avigdor's Helping Hand's committee consists of twenty-five volunteers. The or-

to families that are reeling after the loss of a spouse, children without parents, and orphans whose *simcha* while walking to the *chupah* would otherwise be marred by financial limitations. Perhaps the appreciation of those who have been blessed to receive such help is best expressed by those families themselves.

The following letter was sent as one family was making its way to their child's *chupah*: "I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and the whole Vaad of AHH. You cannot fathom the joy I'm experiencing right now after I received the 'okay' from the board to get a very nice amount to help me



(L-R) Aaron Cyperstein, liaison for the Queens Borough President's Office, and Dov Elias.



(L-R) David Moradi and Eli Glaser.



Mr. Dov Elias, emcee.

implication of such a crowd on a holiday weekend.

Avigdor's Helping Hand is a unique *chesed* initiative whose "helping hand" reaches into the lives of families shattered by tragedy, helping to bring normalcy back to their lives. It is an all-volunteer organization that sends families checks for the first six months after the loss of a parent who was the primary breadwinner, and also makes weddings for *yesomim*. The funds are grants, not loans.

From what I could see, still in my car and not having arrived at the actual event, people were coming in droves to support this organization, which obviously, in one way or another, had touched their lives or the lives of people they knew and cared about. By the time I actually parked and found my way to the Moradi home, I was overwhelmed by the sheer number of attendees, at least one thousand, who had come on Labor Day weekend to support the *chesed* organization whose helping hand now reaches across the United States.

Avigdor's Helping Hand is the legacy of Avigdor Glaser z"l, a well-known attorney in Queens who passed away at the young age of thirty in *Elul* of 2005, leaving behind a wife and three children, parents, siblings

organization, an IRS registered 501C3 charity, addresses the needs of Jewish families throughout the country.

"Every dollar collected goes directly to widows, widowers, and orphans," Mr. Eli Glaser, one of the founders, points out, "since we operate with no expenses. To date, Avigdor's Helping Hand has distributed \$3.7 million dollars and has made five hundred and fifty *chasunos*."

The barbeque was catered by Michael Schick. The gracious hospitality of the Moradi family, who hosted the barbeque, was matched by the feelings of *hakoras hatov* that permeated the crowd of guests, many of whom had been touched by the care and generosity they experienced as recipients of this *tzedakah*. Mr. Glaser notes how each case is determined for eligibility.

"Each case that comes in is assigned to a committee member to be vetted and is later reviewed and voted upon by the entire committee of twenty-five members," Mr. Glaser said. "Every application has to come with a letter from two *rabbonim* vouching for the validity of the case, and then we contact those *rabbonim* for verification."

The image of a hand reaching out is a compelling reminder that Avigdor's Helping Hand is extended on a very personal basis

cover the wedding expense. All that is left for me to say is thank you *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* that there are still such *Yidden* around who worry and make it their concern to help other *Yidden* be happy on their day of marrying off their orphans."

Poignant and heartbreaking, the words of gratitude expressed in this letter touch the soul.

"Words cannot express the heartfelt gratitude that we feel towards you for all the good that you have bestowed on us and our children throughout our time of grief and hardship. The pen does not have enough ink and the language is too poor to put these feelings into words. You brought joy to us when there was sorrow and smiles when there was sadness. That incredible feat is something so exceptional that no one but *Hashem* can repay!"

Avigdor's Helping Hand also offers a Matching Wedding Program, a wonderful way to help sponsor a *yasom's* wedding simultaneously on the night of the wedding of one's own child. The sponsor can have the *zechus* of the *yasom* davening under the *chupah* for the donor and his family.

For further information, contact Avigdor's Helping Hand at 718.568.9720 or email at contact-ahh@avigdorshelpinghand.org.

Community Briefs

SHUVU RECEPTION

Benjamin and Rina Hoch will host a breakfast reception to benefit the children of Shuvu on Sunday, 19 *Elul*/September 14, at 9:30 a.m. The event will be held at the Hoch home, located at 121 Lawrence Avenue in Lawrence.

The guest speaker will be Rabbi Eli Mansour, *rov* of Congregation Bet Yaakob in Brooklyn.

HACHNOSAS SEFER TORAH L'ILLUI NISHMAS AARON SHOLOM TEPFER Z"l

The friends of Aaron Sholom Tepfer z"l will be dedicating a *Sefer Torah* in his memory to the junior high school *bais medrash* at Yeshiva Darchei Torah on Sunday, 19 *Elul*/September 14. The *kesivas ha'osiyos* will take place at the Tepfer home, from noon to 3 p.m., and a procession to the junior high building will begin at 3:40 p.m., starting from the Heyson Building. To join, contact Rabbi Avraham Bender at 347.254.0155 or Mr. Ariel Berko at 917.232.2266.

LAWRENCE CHAPTER OF SATMAR BIKUR CHOLIM TO HOST EVENING OF TEFILLAH AND SONG

Esther and Reuven Guttman of the Lawrence Chapter of Satmar Bikur Cholim invites the community to an evening of *tefillah* and song the first night of *Selichos*, *Motzoei Shabbos*, September 20, at 9:30 p.m., at the home of Suzi and Dov Klein, located at 235 Broadway in Lawrence.

PRIORITY-1 CHARITY BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

Priority-1's Charity Basketball Tournament will take place on Sunday, 26 *Elul*/September 21, at Pacplex Recreation Center, located at 1500 Paerdegat Avenue North in Canarsie, Brooklyn.

For more information, text 818.984.9969 or email info@priority-1.org.