

Lema'an Achai to Visit Essex Communities

By JLNJ Staff

The Livingston and West Orange communities will host the executive director of Lema'an Achai, Rabbi Avrohom Leventhal, on Shabbat Parshat Ki Tisa (Feb. 26/27). Rabbi Leventhal is a true ish chesed, representing the unique and effective "Smart Chesed" philosophy, which battles poverty by giving people a hand-up, not (only) a hand out.

He enlightened us about the work of Lema'an Achai with this interesting and insightful interview.

JL: What is Smart Chesed?

RAL: Smart Chesed is modern termi-

nology for the Rambam's highest level of charity—namely, to give a person help through providing work, a loan or providing an opportunity. Or, as the proverb so correctly says: Give a man fish, you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish, you feed him for life.

JL: You have over 30 programs, too many to list. Can you name a few?

RAL: Emphasis on rehabilitative services is central to our philosophy. So we have developed quite a few excellent programs with just that goal. Which programs are most important is a tricky question. No matter what I list, I will regret not having

stated other ones. But here goes: Financial counseling, therapies and vocational training. Citizens' rights, benefits and entitlements advocacy. And last but not least, our after-school program for at-risk children.

JL: What makes Lema'an Achai different from other charity/tzedaka organizations?

RAL: Lema'an Achai's goal is to give a hand-up, not (only) a hand-out. While other organizations often perpetuate poverty by simply providing money and/or food, Lema'an Achai helps families through, and out of, crisis. Since Lema'an Achai was founded in 2000, we have helped thousands of families in Israel become self-sufficient. The ROI (return on investment) is thereby far greater than most other charities that deal with the less fortunate.

JL: Who is eligible for assistance?

RAL: Residents living 10 percent or more under the poverty line qualify for Lema'an Achai services. A professional, multi-faceted "intake" ensures that this requirement is met and that the family is committed to take the necessary steps to independence.

JL: Where does the funding for Lema'an Achai come from?

RAL: Lema'an Achai counts on the generosity of good-hearted people throughout the world. Currently, roughly 80 percent of our support comes from within Israel and 20 percent from outside of Israel.



JL: What are your plans for growth?

RAL: Smart Chesed is a model which is needed in every community in Israel and beyond. We plan to operate mobile rehabilitation units to service places that cannot finance a local branch. After Operation Protective Edge, we opened our fifth dental clinic in Sderot. Our financial counseling and

thrift shop will hopefully be replicated in other cities.

JL: Please share a couple success stories.

RAL: Wow! That will take too long for a concise piece like this. The process of rehabilitation may take up to three years, and each of our over 200 families has a different personalized plan. Email me at avrohom@lemaanachai.org, write in the subject "Forklift Freddy or Rivki" and I will send you the story behind the success.

JL: I heard something about a program called 'Get Smart'—what is that exactly?

RAL: We feel strongly that part of our mandate is to educate the next generation how to view charity and chesed. The program is designed for high school students to look at crises as an opportunity to help others in a meaningful way. The "course" further provides Smart Chesed tools.

Please attend the evening at Joe and Lori Rozehzadeh, 19 Roosevelt Ave, West Orange, NJ, on Motzei Shabbat, February 27, at 8:00 PM.

Young Community Leader Applicants Sought for '18 Under 18'

The Partnership for Jewish Learning and Life is accepting applications for "18 Under 18 Who Bring Jewish Learning to Life." Up to 18 middle and high school students who live or go to school in Greater MetroWest will be awarded a \$250 Israel Bond and honored with special recognition at a banquet and in a supplement of the NJ Jewish News. Entrants will be challenged to explore how their interests, hobbies or activities "Bring Jewish Learning to Life," and to express those connections in an essay. Entrants will be provided with an educational coach to assist them along the way.

The initiative is a special event to honor the memory and legacy of Herb and Milly Iris. "Milly and Herb were giants in this community, and yet, so accessible to all of us, especially our young people," said Robert Lichtman, executive director of The

Partnership. "Milly had a love affair with the teens of Greater MetroWest. It was her vision and her generosity that established the Iris Teen Tzedakah program, and now, 10 years later, The Partnership is honored to introduce '18 Under 18 Who Bring Jewish Learning to Life' as a unique tribute to the legacy and the memory of Milly and Herb."

All information about "18 Under 18" including the application, which is due by April 1, and frequently asked questions is available at www.ThePartnershipNJ.org/18 or by contacting coordinator Shira Vickar-Fox, SVickar-Fox@ThePartnershipNJ.org or (973)929-2966.

"18 Under 18 Who Bring Jewish Learning to Life" is made possible by a grant from the Herb and Milly Iris Youth and Family Philanthropy Endowment of the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater MetroWest.

JCC MetroWest Slam Dunk Basketball League off to a Great Start

The practice-only time has ended and the JCC's Slam Dunk Basketball League has begun the games portion of the program. All the teams are really coming together. Participants are learning how to play as a team and are all improving their skills. The youngest players in grades preK-K are participating in game-type situations while working on their skills and improving a little bit each week. Children in the grades 1-4 league are learning offensive and defensive strategies with their teams and really working together. The gym is filled with energy on Sunday afternoons

and Wednesday evenings and we look forward to a great rest of the season.



Participants in the JCC MetroWest Slam Dunk Basketball League (CREDIT: JCC.METROWEST)

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Motzaei Shabbat February 27 8:00 PM

Join us for a Melave Malka

Tzedaka and Chesed:

Are We Doing it Right?

A symposium/Candid discussion with:

R' Avrohom Leventhal

Mitch Rich

Executive Director, Lema'an Achai ,
Former Director of Chesed Activities, Kushner Academy

Hosted by:
Joe and Lori Rozehzadeh
19 Roosevelt Avenue
West Orange

Founded in 2000, Lema'an Achai gives a hand-up, not (only) a hand out. Through its Smart Chesed Philosophy, Lema'an Achai helps families through, and out of crisis. Lema'an Achai boasts a remarkable 80% obliteration of second-generation poverty, with the community and supporters enjoying an unparalleled ROI (Return On Investment).

Joe and Lori Rozehzadeh
Beth Goldsammler
Larry Rein
Jay and Doris Hartman
Simon and Barrie Jacob
Michael and Bobbi Luxenberg
www.lemaanachai.org