**For a man who has been involved in Organizational Chesed since 1989,**

**Rabbi Leventhal's declaring 5778 תהא שנת עשיית חסד is significant and noteworthy.**

**What does it mean to him? What does it mean to Lema'an Achai- the organization he has masterfully been running since 2006? To us, the average reader?**

**We took a few minutes to hear from Rabbi Avrohom Leventhal .**

**Who is your 'chesed' inspiration?**

My parents, they should be well. Even when times were financially difficult, they raised my siblings and I with the notion that it is fundamental to do for others. Their chesed, however, always included elements of what I call today “Smart Chesed”. Sometimes it was to help with the notion of “paying it forward”. Other times, my parents would guide the recipients with the goal of helping them to help themselves.

**Your all time favorite success story?**

Lema’an Achai works together with domestic violence shelters. After leaving the shelter we take over to help the (now) single mother acclimate back into society and to stand on her own. One courageous and determined woman left the shelter, entered our office and left with her own business, kids settled in school and an active member of her community.

**What are the common ingredients for successful rehabilitation?**

The first ingredient is the desire and determination of the family to change their current situation. From there we guide people how to better manage and provide for themselves. By instilling hope, by encouraging people to try new things, by sharing our experience and professional expertise, by advocating, and by simply being there with the consistent message: 'you can do better and you're worth it!'

We have found time and again that the core ingredients remain the same, even if requiring lengthier and more intense intervention: professional treatment and counseling, regular prodding and mentoring, and moral and material support.

**Who would you like to be for a day?**

This may sound corny, but I feel I have the best job in the world. I am doing meaningful work helping people every day, working with wonderful people that come to work happily with a deep desire to do chesed, and meet with community members and donors who strongly support our mission. One thing that might be nice, though, is to go back to a time before smartphones!

**What motivates you day in day out to give of yourself to others’ well being?**

Many factors motivate me; here is a more significant one. Our Rabbis teach us that to be healed, we should pray for the healing of others. With this in mind, I pray for all those who are in a good place- emotionally and financially- should never find themselves in crisis. And I pray for those in crisis, to sustain the willpower and bandwidth to reach independence. This motivation is strengthened by the many success stories of families and individuals whose lives have been dramatically changed for the better through their association with Lema’an Achai.

**Any last thoughts?**

To our supporters I thank you for having the insight and patience to “invest” your charity in the long-term goal of breaking the cycle of poverty. For many, the vision of a child with an empty soup bowl motivates them to provide a “quick fix”. Smart Chesed looks to fill that bowl today while providing the tools for the family itself to keep on filling it in the future.

To our families: It takes a lot of guts and internal strength to come forward and say -- I need help. So I salute each and every person/family that does reach out to Lema'an Achai and declare that they want to help themselves to become independent. There is a well-known anecdote of a man who is stuck in a serious flood, so serious that a rescue boat comes to his house. He declines the offer and says I trust in Gd. The floods get worse and he escapes to a higher floor, and yet another boat comes and tells him to hop on and be saved. He again refuses and says I trust in Gd. The situation becomes even more critical and a helicopter flies low, ready to haul him in and again he refuses and says I trust in Gd. A few minutes later he drowns and finds himself in front of HKBH, he cries why didn’t you save me I have full faith in You? To which HKBH replied, I did -- I sent you 2 boats and a helicopter.

Lema’an Achai families wisely choose to hop on the boat before it is too late.