

Keeping Our Place Open

Rabbonim, activists, lay leaders and politicians gathered at the home of noted *askan* Reb Avi Fishof in a display of support for Our Place. Following *divrei bracha* from Rav Avrohom Schorr, *rov* of Khal Tiferes Yaakov, Avi introduced Rav Nosson Scherman, general editor of ArtScroll-Mesorah Publications, who passionately spoke about helping this organization.

Avi then introduced Yisroel, a young



Dr. Ari Walfish, host of the Queens event, with Avi Fishof and his two sons-in-law.



Rav Yosef Frankel and Avi Fishof, host of the Flatbush event.



Avi Fishof speaking.

man who was helped by Our Place. Yisroel, a *yeshivish*-looking gentleman in his early twenties, related his life's history, beginning with his drug use, which he attributed to his unhappiness with his *yeshiva*, family and friends. He sunk to low levels, engaging in the use of heavy drugs and liquor, but he was subsequently introduced to Our Place.

Our Place continues to be involved in helping Jewish teens feel that people out there do care about them. Whatever level of alienation they feel or anti-social behavior

they engage in, troubled teens are showered with love and expert care by a wonderfully warm, caring and professional staff.

Our Place was founded in 1998 by Mr. Moishe Binik. R' Chaim Glancz is its program director.

Our Place provides a spectrum of services, from giving teens a place to hang out and have dinner - their first warm meal of the day - to rehabilitation for drug or alcohol ad-



Avi Fishof; Mr. Malcolm Hoenlein, Executive Vice Chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations; Councilman Mike Nelson and Rabbi Eliezer Fishof.



Queens co-host Mr. Moishe Engel with Rav Yisroel Belsky.

diction that can literally save their lives. It has been demonstrated that numerous tragedies related to substance abuse were averted through the affiliation of these teens with Our Place.

Unfortunately, government grants and funding for Our Place were recently cut to the tune of more than one million dollars. Our Place has been compelled to close down two locations this past year, but shutting down Our Place can mean shutting down the lives of *Yiddishe neshamos*. Concerned members of various communities are therefore making



A delegation of *rabbonim* from AJ Madison, a Brooklyn-based appliance retailer working to integrate electronic technology with Shabbos-mode appliances, at a meeting in the OU office. L-R: Rabbi Yisroel Belsky, OU Kosher Authority and Senior Halachic consultant, Rabbi Moshe Elefant, COO of OU Kashrus, Rabbi Yechezkel Strasser, AJ Madison Halachic consultant, Rabbi Tzvi Ortner, AJ Madison Halachic consultant, and Mr. Michael Gross, CEO of AJ Madison.

appeals in *shuls* and hosting parlor meetings to help raise the necessary funds to keep Our Place operational.

In addition to the Brooklyn emergency parlor meeting held at the Fishof home last week, dedicated individuals from Kew Gardens, Queens, hosted a parlor meeting at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Ari Walfish, coordinated by Mr. Moishe Engel. Despite inclement

weather, a large crowd turned out. Rav Yisroel Belsky, introduced by Avi Fishof, spoke movingly about the lost souls in *Klal Yisroel* - these teens, these "*nechsholim*," who are picked up and literally saved by Our Place. He implored the crowd to do their utmost to keep Our Place functioning.

For more information, visit www.OurPlaceNY.org.

Rav Elyashiv and Vaad Harabbanim: *Shliach* and *Meshalei'ach* on Purim

The *rabbonim* and *gabbaim* of Vaad Harabbanim experienced thrilling moments during the days of *Purim* at the home of the *posek hador*, Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, when he lifted up the money that was donated to Vaad Harabbanim for *matanos la'evyonim*, assuming the role of *shliach* for all the contributors, and then handed the funds to the couriers who passed them to the recipients *bo bayom*.

This unprecedented step taken by the *posek hador* expressed his unqualified faith in the Vaad Harabbanim charity fund, as he knows with total certainty that every penny that had been donated to Vaad Harabbanim for *matanos la'evyonim* had been given to truly needy people all over Eretz Yisroel.

Although people are familiar with the confidence that Rav Elyashiv has in the Vaad Harabbanim fund, this was a rare occurrence, with

Rav Elyashiv himself serving as the *shliach*.

One of the *rabbonim* in Yerushalayim remarked, "Maran made a point of telling us that this is the most exemplary *matanos la'evyonim* there is, and he himself was going to be our *shliach* to fulfill this *mitzvah*. This means that we could be 100% sure that we have fulfilled the *mitzvah* in the best possible fashion."

Those who were present when Rav Elyashiv performed the *shlichus* - which happened six different times, morning, noon and late afternoon, over the two days of *Purim* - were deeply impressed by the huge sums that *Am Yisroel* donated to the needy of the Holy Land.

Other *gedolei Yisroel* also expressed profound emotion when shown the piles of check stubs from the monies that were distributed on *Purim* to thousands of families in Eretz Yisroel.

