



## MANALAPAN

### A Diverse Community, a Place for Everyone

#### *Imagine....*

*A warm and welcoming community full of limud HaTorah and chesed*

*A place where everyone counts and really makes a difference*

*A shul with easy access to a knowledgeable and caring Rav*

*A beautiful suburban area with affordable homes on large lots, quiet streets, trees, parks and room to breathe*

*A convenient location thirty minutes from Lakewood and one hour from NYC*



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The members of the Jewish Learning Center of Monmouth County (JLC) in Manalapan, New Jersey don't have to use their imaginations, because their *kehillah* offers all this and more. Led by their dynamic Rav and Rebbetzin, Rabbi Chaim and Ruthie Veshnefsky, the members of this growing community come from diverse backgrounds. Some are *baalei teshuva*, others are FFBS, but all share a common focus on Torah learning and *chesed*.

The deep appreciation they have for Torah was expressed this past February, when they scheduled their Eleventh Annual Dinner to coincide with the Siyum HaShas of one of their longtime members, Herschel Zoberg. After the *hadran* and *kaddish*, the crowd burst into song and dance (and lifted the celebrant onto a chair), as they shared in their beloved friend's unbelievable accomplishment.

This evening was just one example of their *chashivus* for Torah. In fact, just the night before the dinner, forty members of this community traveled right after Shabbos to a special meeting with one of the *gedolei hador*, Horav Nosson Tzvi Finkel, Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivas Mir Yerushalayim, for some *chizuk* and an appreciation of real *mesiras nefesh* for Torah.

*Chesed* is another foundation of this *kehillah*. A member relates that on the first Friday night after he moved

into the community, there was a sudden torrential downpour. Someone living a ten-minute walk away went ahead of the rest, only to return with raincoats for everyone. (There is an *eruv* in the community.)



As a skilled *kiruv* professional and master teacher, Rabbi Veshnefsky has had a tremendous impact on the community and the lives of its members.

Brian (Ephraim Baruch) Paul, a physical therapist in his thirties, is the current president of the JLC. He explains how this type of caring and warmth has made the community into "the JLC family."

"When my wife was laid up two years ago, the families in the community formed a rotation, and for ten weeks they delivered meals to our door. The Rav and Rebbetzin always supplied the food for Shabbos, and during the week, the commu-

nity pitched in."

Mrs. Paul describes that Pesach. "I was in the hospital by myself, and I had to conduct the Seder. **The Rabbi came down to the hospital to show me everything I needed to know to run my own Seder. He has a large family, and it was a hectic *erev yom tov* for him as well. I don't know where he found the time for it, but he was there for me when I needed him.**"

This is typical of Rabbi Veshnefsky's dedication to his community. For example, before Succos he always reviews the *halachos* of Succos, and then he goes running around the community checking everyone's *succahs* to make sure they are kosher.

Rabbi Veshnefsky opens his heart and home to the broader community as well. His son-in-law describes one Friday, two hours before Shabbos, when the whole Veshnefsky family was putting together a food package full of Shabbos delicacies.

For whom? A family with no connection to Judaism, who were sitting *shivah*. Rabbi Veshnefsky had just heard about them the day before and immediately responded by being *menachem avel*, sending over food, and bringing over his entire *shul* after Shabbos to give the family an opportunity to say *kaddish*. After Maariv, when everyone else had left, Rabbi Veshnefsky stayed on to speak with the family. He didn't come home until 11:00 p.m., three hours after Shabbos was over!



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As a skilled *kiruv* professional and master teacher, Rabbi Veshnefsky has had a tremendous impact on the community and the lives of its members. As Brian Paul relates, "Before I connected with the Rabbi, my knowledge of Yiddishkeit was very limited. Now I feel as if I have gotten a crash course in how to live as a Jew in just five years. The Rabbi is always learning with people and giving *shiurim*. If you tell him when you are available, he'll make the time to learn with you. He's a very unique teacher and a powerful orator. **Here in Manalapan, you have a very close one-on-one relationship with a Rav to whom you can go for great**

**practical advice, as well as *psak halacha*.**"

Sunday evenings are a special time at the JLC, when a group of young men come from Lakewood to learn

tors, even though we are around the same age."

The JLC community has just about what any *frum*, *Torahdike* community should have to offer: A *shul* with daily *minyanim*; *shiurim* on a variety of topics, such as Daf Yomi, Mishnayos, Halacha, Mussar, Chumash; and a Sunday night *kollel*. In fact, any night of the week you can walk

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with community members. Topics are chosen by each individual, and include Mishnayos, Gemara, and Halacha. According to the participants, "It's not just a *chavrusah*. It turns into a real friendship. We almost look at our *chavrusahs* as men-

into *shul* and find members of the community learning. The *shul* offers *shiurim* for women as well, and on Motzei Shabbos it has its own branch of the international Avos U'bonim Network. The *shul* put up an *eruv* encompassing approxi-



## AN INTERVIEW WITH MR. YOSSEI STAMLER

*Mr. Yossi Stamler recently joined the Manalapan community.*

**How would you compare Manalapan to Lakewood or Brooklyn?**

It's a breath of fresh air. I grew up in Boro Park. My whole life I went to yeshiva, but I like to think out of the box.

**Would you care to elaborate?**

I ask a lot of questions. If you wear jeans in Boro Park, you feel out of it. When I used to play basketball in the park, walking there and back I felt different. Here in Manalapan, as long as you're looking to come closer to Hashem, that's fine. **No matter where you are holding on your personal ladder of getting closer to Hashem, you never feel like the odd man out.**

**How do the community members interact with each other?**

It's a community of *chesed* in an extraordinary way, so much so that if you don't ask for help when you need it, people will be insulted. They want to help. For example, there's a young family here who are wonderful people. They have two little boys. They really have their hands full because the older one, unfortunately, has leukemia, he should have a

*refuah shleimah.*

We were having trouble getting my son, Eli, to and from school because we have only one car, and I usually take it to work. I happened to mention our problem to this family. They immediately turned to me and said, "We could take him; we're going anyway." This was coming from people who really have their hands full!

**Would you say that the JLC and its Rav, Rabbi Chaim Veshnefsky, had any effect on your life?**

I'm amazed at how much I've grown. I've been rejuvenated spiritually. I always knew what to do without understanding; now I know details behind everything, the reasons.

**Do you feel that now you have a Rav you can relate to?**

I used to go Rav shopping, kind of like 800-DIAL-A-HETER. Once I moved to Manalapan, I ask all my *shailos* to Rabbi Veshnefsky, and whatever he says, I accept. In my house his word is final, and it makes no difference if it's a *chumrah* or a *kulah*. He's our family *rav*, and we follow his *psak*. **He's a tremendous *talmid chochom* in his own right, a *mus-***

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mately four square miles of the community. There are thousands of homes within this area, priced at \$225,000 and up.

In the larger community there is a day school, *mesivta* high school, and a *mikveh*. No good Yiddishe community would be complete without kosher eateries; Manalapan has four of them. There are more *chinuch* opportunities just a half an hour away in Lakewood and

Highland Park.

The JLC is a special kind of *shul*. Its

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members come from all types of backgrounds, held together by their thirst and desire to grow in Yiddishkeit. There is a common respect

amongst everyone, no matter where each person is holding in Yiddishkeit. When a guest visits, he is immediately greeted by all, making him feel right at home.

For more information about this special community, visit [www.jewishlearningcenter.org](http://www.jewishlearningcenter.org), email [rabbiv@kewnet.com](mailto:rabbiv@kewnet.com), or call Rabbi Veshnefsky at 732-792-2276 (study) or 908-770-3502 (cell). ♦

***mach of Bais Medrash Govoha, familiar with the entire Shas, with a close connection to Harav Reuvein Feinstein, shlita. I feel very confident in making him our family rav.***

***Growing up in Boro Park and then living in Chicago, I'm sure this was not your first encounter with a choshuve rav. What is it about Rabbi Veshnefsky that so impresses you?***

True, I've come across other *rabbonim*, but they were so inundated by *shailos* that all too often I would get short responses to my questions, without understanding the reasons for the answers. Now I get answers and explanations with clarity and depth. It's the same with all the learning here.

***How do you feel about the move in general?***

I'm ecstatic. I enjoy *kiruv*, and I feel as if I have a responsibility. The JLC just honored us at their Eleventh Annual Dinner. Of course, I had a nice showing from my family. They were impressed by the community – especially my grandfather, who said to me, "Yossi, if I was your age, I'd move to Manalapan in a heartbeat." He saw the community, the *chesed*, and the *chashivus* for Torah. He saw that it's not just a community; it's more like a family.

***Would you like to elaborate about the chashivus for Torah that your grandfather saw?***

When I first moved here, the Rabbi said to me, "As long as you enjoy learning, you'll be fine here." At the time I couldn't help but laugh. But now I have a few different *shiurim* that I listen to everyday, and I have five different *chavrusos* throughout the day.

***So what got you going?***

I was really inspired by Herschel Zoberg. He didn't go to a

yeshiva when he was growing up. This year the JLC scheduled their dinner to coincide with the day that he finished Shas with Daf Yomi. It was a milestone for him personally, as well as a milestone for the Manalapan community. In larger communities when you meet someone who was *mesayem Shas*, you have a certain respect. We in Manalapan now have a community member who was *mesayem Shas* (other than our Rav).

I *did* go to a yeshiva when I was growing up. I said to myself, *if he could do it, then I can too*. I announced publicly at the dinner that I, Be'ezras Hashem, would join the Daf Yomi that very night. It is my goal that in seven-and-a-half years, I will also be one of the *mesayimim*.

***Can you give us a taste of Rabbi Veshnefsky's shiurim?***

During my first Shabbos in Manalapan, when I heard Rabbi Veshnefsky's synopsis of the *parshah*, I was amazed! **I look forward to those *shiurim* every week.** Then I started to listen to his Chumash *shiurim* on Chumash Bereishis, which took him seven-and-a-half years to complete. His *shiurim* include a wealth of *mefarshim*. He makes the words of the Alshich, Malbim and Netziv come alive.

**I switched around my entire schedule in order to attend his Chumash *shiur* on Tuesday nights.** I work in Manhattan, and if my boss asks me to stay late, I'll stay, but on Tuesday it's, "I gotta go." I won't miss his *shiur* for anything.

***Mrs. Stamler, would you like to share your feelings about Rebbetzin Veshnefsky?***

She's such a sweet woman, incredibly knowledgeable. I especially enjoy her *shiurim* for women. It's not just a *shiur*; there's depth and discussion.

**Thank you both for your time.** ♦