



# YESHIVA OF MINNEAPOLIS news

ADAR 5777 | Spring 2017

## Our Mission

Jewish education is key to our survival as a people, creating a link in the chain of our great nation. We instill within our students the timeless values of the Torah and a lifelong love for learning.

## Message from the Dean



As the season of גאולה (redemption) comes upon us, we can look to Purim and Pesach and sometimes be discouraged that the world hasn't changed. Things still seem to be the same and we

definitely don't see any great redemption going on.

But perhaps we all have to look at ourselves and see if we have made it through the harsh winter with our morals still intact and look back and see if we have given all we can for our family, friends and all those around us, and, most importantly, do we feel closer to G-d than we did a few months ago. If so, you can begin to experience the wonderful feeling of salvation, knowing you personally have passed all the tests this world has thrown at you. If not, now is the time to put into motion your own personal salvation.

At the Yeshiva, it is amazing to watch the sprouts of all the hard work and effort each

of the boys has put in to personal growth as students, friends, and, most importantly, as servants of Hashem. Many have been working on their Gemara skills, putting in extra time to learn a bit more than needed, training themselves to go that extra mile. Friendships have flourished through our Yeshiva Hockey League, ski trips and just spending time with each other.

We look forward to sharing our growth with all those around us so they, too, can have this wonderful feeling of redemption. It is our hope and prayer that we all experience our own personal redemption and merit to see the final redemption during this wonderful time.

Rabbi Shlomo Kutoff  
Rosh HaYeshiva  
Dean, Yeshiva of Minneapolis

YESHIVA OF MINNEAPOLIS  
**news**

is a publication of the  
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## The Strength of our Past. The Promise of our Future.

Last December, the Yeshiva of Minneapolis launched the "Excellence in Education Annual Campaign," mailing a fundraising brochure to more than 600 households. **To date, we have raised \$82,000 from 48 donors.** Thank you for your generous support!

To learn how your dollars can make a difference and how to contribute, log on to [www.yofm.org](http://www.yofm.org) and click on "Donate" or send a check payable to Yeshiva of Minneapolis to: Rabbi Shlomo Kutoff, Yeshiva of Minneapolis, 3115 Ottawa Avenue South, St. Louis Park, MN, 55416.



## Meet Collin Katainen



Collin Katainen came to the Yeshiva of Minneapolis four years ago as a social studies teacher and now serves as the school's General Studies Director, a position he has held for three years. "We have a rigorous course offering,"

said Katainen, in describing the General Studies program. "As teachers, we want to make sure we are preparing the Yeshiva students for any path they pursue after high school with confidence."

From science and technology to communications and economics, students are challenged to not just focus on the content of the book they bring to class but how to apply the lessons they learn to their daily lives, said Katainen.

"We took several fieldtrips with Mr. Katainen's class to local companies and learned, firsthand, how to do business," said Yaakov Knobloch, a senior at the Yeshiva. "We learned about supply and demand. We learned about how people invest in things. It made the lessons from the textbook real."

Katainen, a Minnesota native who grew up in Little Canada, has been in the education field since 2009. He obtained a Bachelor of Science degree at Upper Iowa University and later received his Masters of Education at Augsburg College in Minneapolis. With a passion for psychology, sociology and anthropology, he pursued a Social Studies License and began teaching at the high school level in the North East suburbs, including Mounds View, Forest Lake and White Bear Lake.

Before becoming a teacher, Katainen used to own a furniture business and also holds a Minnesota Real Estate license. He continues to work as a realtor with select clients. However, teaching is what he finds most rewarding. "Witnessing the success of our students as they find new appreciation for higher learning is very rewarding," said Katainen. "The overall growth I see from the beginning of a school year to the end keeps me focused and dedicated to push myself and our staff to give more."

Katainen currently lives in Vandais Heights with his wife, Rebecca, and their two children, Dylan, four, and Hayden, two. When not at the Yeshiva, you'll find him going on "adventures" with his family. "We like to check out new parks and museums. I want to go to places while my kids are still young enough to want to hang out with me."

## How Studying Gemara Sent 9 Yeshiva Students to Keystone, Colorado



Pictured L to R: Elisha Kirshner, Albert Miller, Eitan Miller, Yosef Nussbaum, Avi Mandelbaum, Eli Mandelbaum, Adam Fiterman, Yoni Chodos, Noach Goldberger, Ari Livshutz and Rabbi Shlomo Kutoff.

In mid-February, nine Yeshiva students along with two adult chaperones, Rabbi Shlomo Kutoff and Albert Miller, enjoyed a three day ski trip to Keystone, Colorado. This trip was a reward for students who memorized a section of the Talmud/Gemara (approximately 60 pages in length). Throughout the school year last year, these students spent extra time each week studying to master the material. Below, two students share reflections about the trip that included skiing, snowboarding, ice skating and lots of eating!

### By Yoni Chodos

We woke up on Sunday morning bright and early at 4 a.m. We reached the airport with plenty of time to spare. We flew through security and headed straight to the gate. When we arrived in Colorado, we had an hour-and-a-half drive up to Keystone. The drive itself was beautiful. Mountains lined the road as we climbed upward. Eventually, we reached the snow covered ones that we would be skiing on the next few days. The house we stayed in was nice and large with a hot tub on the deck. We had a massive barbecue that night and then went to sleep excited for the next day.

The next morning, we loaded onto the gondola and headed up the mountain. After a never-ending ride up, we found an easy run and started the long way down. Tall, majestic, lush green trees lined the path and the powder was perfect for skiing. All of that plus an incredible view of the mountains on the way down made for an unbelievable time. I think everyone had that same overwhelming feeling with the sheer massiveness and natural beauty of the mountains. For the three days we were there, everything was great – the weather, the rooms and, most importantly, the guys.

### By Adam Fiterman

Our trip was amazing. We went to the Rockies and went skiing. I snowboarded. When we arrived in Denver, we went to buy kosher bagels at the local bakery and then started to head up into the mountains. As we were driving, our ears got plugged and we all got lightheaded. We finally arrived at our resort and we piled out of the car and went to check in. The person at the front desk said that there was ice-skating nearby so we ended up going. That night, we had a major barbecue with hotdogs, hamburgers and steak. We went to bed after a jump into the hot tub. The next morning, we woke up and skied all day. The chairlift took 10 minutes to get up the mountain. We got down the mountain and it took 25 minutes. The powder was amazing and the sun was so nice. Everyone had a great time.

## Yeshiva Hockey League Hits the Ice for Year Two



The S.P. Eagles pictured with their team sponsor, Daniel J. Spiegel.

What originally started as a floor hockey league moved to the ice rink as the YHL (Yeshiva Hockey League) launched its second year in December. Students have the chance to play for one hour every Saturday night for about 10 weeks at the Hat Trick Ice Arena in St. Louis Park. Three teams of nine players were formed with the help of three generous sponsors: Makor Solutions, Pergola Management and Daniel J. Spiegel.

“By having a league like this we can let off steam which potentially would stop us from learning during the week,” said Eli Wenick, a senior on the S.P. Eagles team. “But most importantly, it shows us all how to work together as a unit which is very useful in life. And it is done in a fun and healthy way.”

# Jewish education is key to our survival as a people...

## The Zeffren Family



Chaim Zeffren, 18, third from left, and his mom, Donna, center, pictured with members of the Zeffren family dressed up for Purim in 2016.

Donna Zeffren, whose son Chaim is a senior at the Yeshiva of Minneapolis, says that she loves having a house full of people. That’s pretty much a guarantee when the Zeffren clan gets together. Donna and her late husband, Rabbi Gershon Jonathan Zeffren, have 11 children ranging in age from 11 to 28, along with six grandchildren. Chaim, who is 18, is eighth in line.

“It’s awesome coming from such a large family,” said Chaim. “It’s never boring. There is always someone around to hang out with.” In describing her family, Donna says they are a vibrant, impassioned and inclusive group. Chaim agrees, adding that they are also a fun group. “One thing we do as a family each year is dress up for Purim. My mom comes up with the theme and makes all the costumes. This year, we are having a Scottish theme. I’m not too excited about wearing a kilt,” he said.

Chaim, a native of St. Louis, Missouri, came to the Yeshiva of Minneapolis when he was in 10th grade. “The Yeshiva had a stellar reputation for solid *chinuch* (Jewish education) and astute insight into each Talmid (student) as a complete person,” said Donna. Even though it meant sending her child to live out of town, Donna has never regretted the choice. “If anything, the school has exceeded my expectations. If the Yeshiva had a fan club, our family would be president.”

Donna, who attended a day school and yeshiva in high school in her hometown of Atlanta, Georgia, currently works as Director of Chinuch.org, a website designed to enable Torah educators from around the world to share educational ideas and materials. “I started as a volunteer,” said Donna, “sharing my own materials when I was a teacher and became so enthralled with the idea of a worldwide network of teachers supporting each other.”

Her late husband also received a day school and yeshiva education in both St. Louis where he grew up, as well as Chicago. His passion for teaching led him to the Bais Yaakov High School for girls in St. Louis, where he was recognized and honored for his tremendous contributions

as a teacher and mentor.

With two parents who were teachers, it’s no surprise that Chaim has an interest in this field

as well. “I imagine I will be an educator of some sort, just not sure exactly where I see myself,” said Chaim. But to walk in his father’s footsteps would be something he would be proud to do. “My dad had such an impact on his students. They would come to our house all the time to seek out his advice or just to talk. I hope to have that kind of impact on people someday.”

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**YESHIVA OF MINNEAPOLIS**  
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YESHIVA OF MINNEAPOLIS  
**Excellence in Education Annual Benefit**

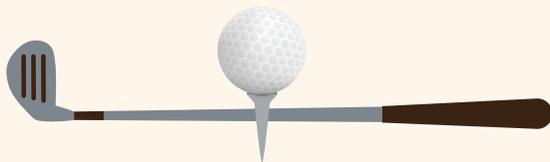
Monday, August 14, 2017

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700 OAK RIDGE ROAD • HOPKINS

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