



2008-2026 • 5768-5786

18 YEARS OF FIRSTS

First 8 Kollel families land in Chicago, inaugurating YU Torah Mitzion Kollel with Rabbi Reuven Brand as Rosh Kollel

First *Parsha and Pizza* program

YEAR **01**

First *Bat Mitzvah* program

First Kollel Alumnus (Rabbi Aaron Leibtag) receives local rabbinic position (KJBS)

YEAR **02**

First *Film for Thought* program

First women's *Yarchei Kallah* & *GNOL* programs

YEAR **03**

First Kollel print publication, *Chicago Torah*, distributed in the community

First visit of Rav Hershel Schachter shlit'a hosted by the Kollel

YEAR **04**

First community-wide *Kumzits*

First year of Kollel fellows' *Gemara Seder* focused on *Kodashim* (*Masechet Menachot*)

YEAR **05**

First Rosh Chabura role inaugurated with Rabbi Aaron Kraft, now a CRC Dayan Kavua

First *Halacha Seder* focused on laws related to Assisted Reproductive Technology

YEAR **06**

First year of NILI's *Taharat Hamishpacha* hotline

First community *Medical Halacha Chabura* series

YEAR **07**

First *Tefillah* program in partnership with local day schools

First Kollel dinner honoring Rav Gedalia Dov Schwartz zt"l

YEAR **08**

First *Aron & Rivka Friedman Living Torah* series

First *JLT (Jewish Learning Together)* program

YEAR **09**

First *10-hour Learn-A-Thon* launching the Kollel's 10th year

First dinner hosted at the Crowne Plaza Hotel to accommodate a record crowd (450+)

YEAR **10**

First *Semichat Chaver* Program launched in Chicago

First *Sunday Night Learning (SNL)* program

YEAR **11**

First full-time NILI Director role created with Mrs. Emma Katz

First *Tanach B'shana* program for women

YEAR **12**

First year of online learning during COVID – a seamless and critical transition

First virtual *Yom HaZikaron* and *Yom Ha'Atzmaut* programs, hosting 1000+ families

YEAR **13**

First *Jewish Leadership Seminar* (led by Rabbi Reuven Brand & Dr. Gail Berger Darlow z'l of Kellogg) for community members

First *Talmud Tuesday* program for men

YEAR **14**

First leadership learning with The Ark

First *Torah SheB'al Peh Workshop* at ACHDS

First *Erev Shabbat Mishmar* at Hillel Torah

YEAR **15**

First Israel Wartime Initiatives

First year of *Young Couples Dinner and Discussions*

YEAR **16**

First year participating in *Rabbi Sacks zt"l Global Day of Learning*

First NILI *Teens Leadership Cohort*

YEAR **17**

First *Community Chanuka Celebration* in Northbrook

First year of *Inclusion Initiative*

YEAR **18**

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18 Years of Impact

ROSH KOLLEL

LETTER



Dear Friends,

This is an exciting time as we celebrate the “Chai” milestone of our Kollel. We raise our eyes to Hashem with gratitude for our countless blessings He has showered on our efforts, enabling our transformational impact across our community over the past eighteen years. From seeding our community with young Rabbis and families who represent and live our Mesorah to welcoming thousands of adults and kids into our world of Torah, the Kollel has far exceeded anyone’s expectations.

An important contribution that the Kollel has made to our community is that it has helped our community realize our immense spiritual potential. Would anyone have believed in 2008 that our community would invest in, support and celebrate Torah learning for 18 years? Our Kollel has proved that our community can take our Torah learning to the next level.

In 2008 did we understand the possibility and potential of creating a space for different schools and their parents to come together in conversation, as we have done with Rabbi Linzer & Rabbi Samber? Did we imagine what it would look like to have educators who celebrate our unique Mesorah inspiring students in classrooms at FYHS and ICJA?

We didn’t then, but we do now.

Only now do we realize that having a YU Torah Mitzion Kollel enables our shuls to realize their potential of even more Talmud Torah, whether throughout the night on Leil Shavuot or all day on Tisha B’Av, or through strengthening Sunday morning and week-night sedarim.

Only now do we realize that we can have men gather weekly for in-depth text-based chavruta learning, and that non-observant Jews can pack a classroom and Zoom screen for Torah learning.

Did we imagine that we would recruit, attract and support the trajectory of a Dayan at the CRC? Now we realize that our community is capable of nurturing future Rabbinic leaders.

These and countless more achievements are realizations of the Kollel mission of facilitating and nurturing spiritual growth across our community. They help us realize that we, our community, our Mesorah, have incredible potential. Our Kollel, with your support, has proved that we have the collective motivation, ability and commitment to continually raise our spiritual level and grow closer to Hashem.

Thanks to you, our Kollel constituents, for your role in opening the eyes of our children, friends and neighbors to our inner spiritual potential.

May Hashem continue to bless us with continued success in our efforts to realize the expectations that He has for us individually and collectively in the years to come.

With Torah blessings,

Rabbi Reuven Brand
Rosh Kollel, YU Torah Mitzion Kollel
Dean, Midwest Center for Jewish Learning
Bobins Family Chair in Community Jewish Scholarship



BOARD PRESIDENTS THROUGH THE YEARS



**OREN
SKIDELSKY**



**GARY
HOBERMAN**



**SHMUEL
SCHREIBER**



**MICHAEL
GLASS**



**LENNIE
WEISS**



**LARRY
LEONARD**



**HOWARD
KARESH**



**JOSH
LIPMAN**

ROSHEI CHABURA



RABBI AARON KRAFT

2013–2021

Dayan Kavua

Chicago Rabbinical Council Beth Din

Rosh Beis Medrash

Bais Chaim Dovid

"Serving as Rosh Chaburah in the kollel helped me grow tremendously in my learning, teaching and ability to contribute to the broader community.

I cherish the relationships I forged through many years of kollel programming."

RABBI NOACH GOLDSTEIN

2021–2023

Assistant Rabbi

KINS

Rebbe

Fasman Yeshiva High School

"It was an unbelievable privilege to serve as the Rosh Beit Medrash for three years. The opportunities to share Torah b'iyun both inside and outside the Kollel Beit Midrash, to help nurture the chavrei ha-kollel, and to build lasting relationships founded in Torah were invaluable. I am so grateful to Rabbi Brand and to everyone who makes the Kollel's indispensable work possible."



RABBI YITZCHAK MANDEL

2025– CURRENT

Current Rosh Chabura

YU Torah Mitzion Kollel

"The Kollel offers a unique blend of opportunities for personal learning and growth while at the same time providing numerous opportunities to teach, share Torah, and learn with others. For such a quantitatively small Kollel, its reach and impact on the Chicago community is tremendous."

WHAT WE'VE LEARNED...

DAY

IN THE KOLLEL

Year	First Seder	Second Seder
1	יבמות	הלכות שבת
2	פסחים	הלכות פסח
3	סנהדרין	הלכות יורה דעה חלק ב'
4	שבת	הלכות שבת
5	מנחות	הלכות סת"ם
6	ברכות	הלכות נדה
7	בבא קמא	הלכות שבת
8	זבחים	הלכות יום טוב
9	חולין	הלכות בשר בחלב ותערובת
10	נדרים	הלכות שבת
11	תמורה	מקואות
12	יומא	הלכות עכו"ם
13	מנחות	הלכות שבת
14	פסחים	הלכות פסח
15	יומא	הלכות תפילה
16	זבחים	הלכות שבת
17	נזיר	הלכות יום טוב וחול המועד
18	כתובות	הלכות פו"ר & הלכות נדה



9:00AM – 1:00PM

Morning Seder:

In-depth learning and analysis of the Talmud in classical chavruta (learning pairs) style. Often the focus is on tractates that are not typically covered as part of the yeshiva curriculum.

2:00PM –

5:10PM

Afternoon Seder:

Fellows learn halacha l'maaseh (practical laws) from original Talmudic source to contemporary application.



5:10PM – 5:30PM

Chizuk Seder:

During the final twenty minutes of afternoon Seder, fellows explore texts of Jewish thought and philosophy to deepen their appreciation for Torah and further inspire their growth.



8:00PM – 9:00PM

Night Seder:

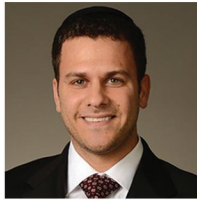
Our community night seder is devoted to offering one-on-one Chavruta learning to community members in shuls across the community.



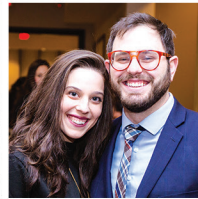
Weekly chaburot by the Rosh Kollel, Rosh Chabura and periodic guest shiurim by Roshei Yeshiva and other Torah experts augment the fellows' learning. Quarterly written exams add to the seriousness and accountability of the learning.

OUR ALUMNI

ROW
1



ROW
2



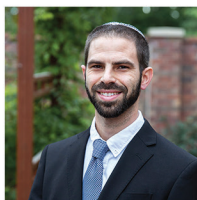
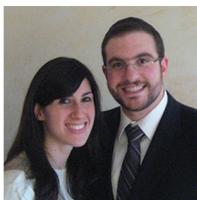
ROW
3



ROW
4



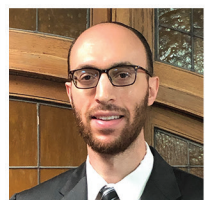
ROW
5



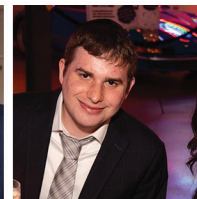
ROW
6



ROW
7



ROW
8



OUR ALUMNI

ROW 1 (l-r) Rabbi Noah Baron, *Chicago, IL*
 Rabbi Yoni and Alise Gold, *Chicago, IL*
 Rabbi Yosef Schwartz, *Skokie, IL*
 Rabbi Mayer Simcha and Shira Stromer, *Chicago, IL*
 Rabbi Ira Wallach and family, *Woodmere, NY*
 Rabbi Yehuda Meyers and family, *Lincolnwood, IL*

ROW 2 (l-r) Rabbi Ephraim Goldman, *Chicago, IL*
 Rabbi Michael Shtiglitz, *Israel*
 Rabbi Ephraim Rimel and family, *Israel*
 Rabbi Aaron and Ayelet Leibtag, *Chicago, IL*
 Rabbi Yitzy and Tiferet Sprung, *Houston, TX*

ROW 3 (l-r) Rabbi Yehoshua Liss, *Israel*
 Rabbi Gershon and Tzippy Meisel, *Houston, TX*
 Rabbi Yaakov Frankiel and family, *Chicago, IL*
 Rabbi Hagay Elitzur, *Israel*
 Rabbi Dr. Michael Teitcher, *Israel*
 Rabbi Michael and Elisheva Friedman, *Skokie, IL*
 Rabbi Gedalya and Tamar Shames, *Skokie, IL*

ROW 4 (l-r) Rabbi Yossi Katz and family, *Linden, NJ*
 Rabbi Menachem and Aliza Rosenbaum, *Chicago, IL*
 Rabbi Aaron Segal, *Israel*
 Rabbi Elie Schwartz and family, *Bergenfield, NJ*
 Rabbi Yaakov Ochana, *Israel*
 Rabbi Ari Zucker and family, *Livingston, NJ*

ROW 5 (l-r) Rabbi Etan Ehrenfeld, *West Hempstead, NY*
 Rabbi Dovid and Aliza Asher, *Richmond, VA*
 Rabbi Yehuda Fensterheim, *Israel*
 Rabbi Mordecai and Atara Turoff, *Skokie, IL*
 Rabbi David Pri-Chen and family, *Israel*
 Rabbi Mendel Breitstein, *Israel*

ROW 6 (l-r) Rabbi Eliezer and Shacade Danan, *Israel*
 Rabbi Daniel Kanter and family, *Chicago, IL*
 Rabbi Dovi Bergman, *Seattle, WA*
 Rabbi Yoni Fox, *Israel*
 Rabbi Ya'akov and Malka Trump, *Lawrence, NJ*
 Rabbi Reuven Lebovitz, *Teaneck, NJ*

ROW 7 (l-r) Rabbi Adir Shafir, *Israel*
 Rabbi Yoav Bar-Kochva, *Israel*
 Rabbi Yosef Berman and family, *Israel*
 Rabbi Noah Whittenburg, *Edison, NJ*
 Rabbi Aaron Kraft and family, *Lincolnwood, IL*
 Rabbi Aaron Feibush, *Cherry Hill, NJ*

ROW 8 (l-r) Rabbi Yair Lichtman and Sara Krishtul, *Skokie, IL*
 Rabbi Moshe and Ilana Spirn, *West Hempstead, NY*
 Rabbi Yehuda and Shira Rosenberg, *Chicago, IL*
 Rabbi Eli and Chaya Bracha Markowitz, *Chicago, IL*
 Rabbi Ephraim and Rebecca Wiesenber, *Chicago, IL*
 Rabbi Noach and Alexis Goldstein, *Chicago, IL*



ALUMNI IN CHICAGO



DR. NECHAMA BRAND

What is your current occupation?
I am a dentist in Downtown Chicago.

What did you know about the Chicago community before you moved here?

Growing up in Miami and going to school in New York, I didn't know much about Chicago until we moved here in 2008.

What have you learned about Chicago since you have arrived?

It is a terrific, large, vibrant Jewish community that boasts so many amenities, in addition to being a great kid-friendly city.

Why did your family decide to join the Kollel?

I had just graduated dental school, and it seemed like a great opportunity to share Torah in a community.

How has the Kollel impacted your life?

It has given us the opportunity to create relationships with so many amazing families.

What is something you love about Chicago or the Chicago Jewish community?

How warm and friendly everyone is despite the cold weather.

Children: Chaim (21), Ilan (19), Aryeh (16), Hila (12) and Ami (10)



MEIRA GERSHMAN

What is your current occupation?

I teach at Hanna Sacks Bais Yaakov and am finishing my Master's degree in Speech-Language Pathology.

What did you know about the Chicago community before you moved here?

I didn't know much about Chicago before moving here. I had a few awesome friends in seminary from Chicago, but that's about it!

What have you learned about Chicago since you have arrived?

Since living in Chicago I've gotten to see the unbelievable Chesed that happens. The amount of people who dedicate their time and resources to helping others is unreal. I've also learned that Chicago has delicious restaurants!

Why did your family decide to join the Kollel?

We decided to join the YU Torah Mitzion Kollel to help spread Torah around the Chicagoland area (especially Northbrook).

How has the Kollel impacted your life?

Rabbi Brand had the idea for us to move to Northbrook as part of our Kollel experience and we absolutely love our wonderful, warm community! We are so fortunate to be able to share Torah with the community with the guidance of Rabbi and Rebbetzin Brand.

Children: Tova (3) and Dovi (1.5)



SCHOLARS IN RESIDENCE

HIGHLIGHTS



Shiur Highlights

ANNUAL DINNER

Featured Shiurim have included insightful lectures and Divrei Torah from renowned Rabbanim and educators, representing the breadth and depth of the Torah world. Speakers have included:



Rabbi Dr. Aharon Adler
2014/5774



Rabbi Hayyim Angel
2013/5773



Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman
2020/5780



Rabbi Steven Burg
2015/5775



Rabbi Daniel Feldman
2017/5777



Rabbi Meir Goldwicht
2010/5771



Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis
2018/5778



Rabbi Menachem Penner
2019/5779



Rabbi Michael and
Professor Smadar Rosensweig
2023/5783



Rabbi Hershel Schachter
2012/5772



Rav Gedalia Dov Schwartz z"l
2016/5776



Rabbi Ya'akov Trump
2019/5779

SUMMER EVENTS



**LINCOLN
PARK ZOO**




Architectural
Artifacts, Inc.



MORGAN
MFG




**BRIDGEPORT
ART CENTER**



taste
of the
WORLD



the old
POST OFFICE



ChicagoHistoryMuseum



SPECIAL EVENTS



FILM FOR
THOUGHT

Aseret Yemei Teshuva
Initiative



SHABBATON
IN YOUR
HOME



ENHANCING OUR
TEFILLAH
Chinuch Perspectives

Behind Closed Doors:
JEWISH PERSPECTIVES ON INTIMACY

An evening of
Inspiration

ROBINSON
SHMIRAT HALASHON
INITIATIVE



TISHA B'AV
KINNOT AND
COMMENTARY



Summer
TORAH
SCHEDULE



COVID LEARNING

our
journey
through

COVID-19

bringing torah & inspiration
to our community



COVID
in the
NUMBERS



10000
learning
opportunities
in 365
days

ISRAEL AT OUR CORE

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS WITH R' YOSEF BERMAN

Kollel Fellow, Years 6-8

How do you view the unique role of the Israeli members of the Kollel?



In my humble opinion, the role of a shaliach is to have a state of mind – it's not really about a 'role' or a job that has to be done. There is no 'to do' or checklist. I would say that generally speaking, it is about bringing Israel to the table, with its values and lifestyle, packaged in Torah. Well, that's only one side of the coin. The other side of the coin is about connecting and understanding the values and life style – the needs and challenges – of the community where one does his shlichut (and in general, 'feeling' the Jewish people all over the world). It is about creating meaningful relationships and strong friendships with the community that, G-d willing, will last forever!

Why is it important for the Kollel to have Israeli fellows?

As a center of Torah and of religious Zionism in the Chicagoland area, Israeli fellows are an essential part of the Kollel and this ideology. It would be hard to teach and demonstrate values and messages of this kind without having some Israeli families in that Torah center in the community.

How did shlichut affect your family?

Our family had an amazing and outstanding experience during the three years we were on shlichut! It impacted our lives in so many aspects, and still does. It truly helped shape and build our personalities. Thank you for that unique opportunity!



TORAH MITZION IN CHICAGO: A BRIEF HISTORY

In early 1997, following the initial successes of America's first Kollel Torah Mitzion in Cleveland, Daniel Rothner approached his father, Eric Rothner, ATT Superintendent Rabbi Harvey Well, and the then Ida Crown Jewish Academy interim principal, Rabbi Leonard Matanky, with the idea of establishing a similar kollel in Chicago. Over the course of several months, meetings were held. With the support of Zeev Schwartz of Torah Mitzion in Israel, plans began to be formulated to create a small kollel based in ICJA with Rabbi Moshe Aberman of Yeshivat Har Etzion as the first Rosh Kollel.

Its primary goals were twofold. The first was to strengthen the Modern Orthodox/Religious Zionist community of Chicago by providing opportunities for Torah learning and young Torah scholars to be part of our community. The second was to strengthen opportunities for Torah study at Ida Crown Jewish Academy and offer its students role models of Religious Zionism.

We are grateful to all of the shlichim who came to be a part of the Kollel Torah Mitzion Chicago and to the great talmidei chachamim who led our Kollel: Rabbi Moshe Aberman, Rabbi David Lebor, Rabbi Chanoch Waxman, Rabbi Yisrael Shachor and Rabbi Yehuda Susman.

SPOTLIGHT ON: RABBI ITAI & SHIRA JACOBS

Rav Itai served as an IDF combat engineer in Gaza for **more than 330 days** during the recent war after October 7th/Simchat Torah. Shortly after his discharge from reserve duty in August, the Jacobs family moved to Skokie to join our Kollel.

Together with his wife, Shira, who is leading Bnei Akiva of Chicago and teaching at Ida Crown, and his two boys, Roi (3) and Gilad (1), Rav Itai is making his mark on our community, connecting our Kollel with the State, land, people and Torah of Israel.



THE SHELDON A'H AND
FREDA ROBINSON
**TORAT
ERETZ YISRAEL
INITIATIVE**



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS WITH **R' EPHRAIM RIMEL**

Kollel Fellow, Years 3-6



What do you think is the role of Israeli fellows/families in the Kollel?

I think that the main role of the Israeli families is to represent the ultimate goal of a religious Zionist Jew, to live a life of Torah in true devotion for Am Yisrael.

Why is it important for the Kollel to have Israeli fellows?
They add a special, unique and essential perspective that can't be transferred genuinely in any other way.

What did you, as an Israeli, gain from being on shlichut as part of our Kollel?

I gained a strong feeling for the vibrant Jewish life in the Diaspora and an understanding of what it means to be a Jew there.

How did it affect your family?

It was a big challenge which strengthened my family in many ways.

WEEKLY LEARNING

"The Kollel has been one of the quiet but most powerful forces shaping our community. Over the past 18 years in particular, under Rabbi Brand's thoughtful leadership, vision, and unwavering commitment, its impact has only deepened and expanded.

Today, the Kollel stands as a vibrant center of serious Torah learning for both men and women, while its influence extends far beyond its walls."

- RABBI DR. LEONARD MATANKY, DEAN, ICJA; RABBI, CONGREGATION K.I.N.S.



"The people of the Kollel, they become a great resource of study, of contact, and transmission of tradition. They are meticulous in their observance of Torah and transmission of Torah but they try to do that in the most illuminating and explanatory fashion, which is very important."

- RABBI GEDALIA DOV SCHWARTZ, Z"L
ROSH BEIT DIN, CRC

KOLLEL WEEKLY COMMUNITY LEARNING

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
8:40-9:00AM RAV KOOK CHABURA Rabbi Reuven Brand <i>Or Torah Beit Midrash</i>	8:00PM THE PARSHA BLUEPRINT Rabbi Mayer Simcha Stromer Zoom ID: 868 1349 8889 PW: 613613	10:00AM PARSHA & POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY Mrs. Alissa Zeffren <i>Cong. Or Torah</i>	5:50-6:50PM PARSHA AND PIZZA <i>3rd & 4th Graders Cong. Or Torah</i>	Online Drop PARSHA MIMKORA www.torahchicago.org/parsha-mimekora	8:00AM PARSHAT HASHAVUA Rabbi Yehuda Rosenberg <i>Extended Care Offices</i>
9:00AM GREAT CHASSIDIC MASTERS Rabbi Reuven Brand <i>Cong. Or Torah</i>	8:00PM FROM THE DAYAN'S DESK Rabbi Yona Reiss <i>Cong. K.I.N.S.</i>	11:30AM-1:30PM TALMUD TUESDAYS <i>For Men ICJA Beit Midrash</i>	8:00-9:00PM WINDOWS INTO THE WORLD OF TORAH <i>WiFi Beit Midrash 8150 McCormick Ave.</i>	11:30AM-1:30PM THE JOURNEY OF HALACHA <i>For Men ICJA Beit Midrash</i>	VIDEO VORTS Youtube.com/kollel613
9:00-11:00AM COMMUNITY BEIT MIDRASH <i>Cong. Or Torah</i>	8:00-9:00PM COMMUNITY BEIT MIDRASH <i>Cong. K.I.N.S.</i>	8:00-9:00PM GEMARA SHIUR Mrs. Sara Krishtul Zoom ID: 817 4248 7799 PW: 613613 <i>Cong. Or Torah</i>	8:00PM BATTLEFRONT HALACHA: QUESTIONS FROM GAZA Chabura with Rav Itai Jacobs <i>Kehilat Chovevei Tzion</i>	8:00PM MISHMAR CHABURA Rabbi Yitzy Weiss <i>Cong. K.I.N.S.</i>	WHATSAPP LEARNING MISHNA YOMI Rabbi Reuven Brand <i>Drops Daily</i>
6:30-7:30PM SNL <i>For High School Boys Congregation K.I.N.S.</i>				8:45PM MEN'S BEIT MIDRASH NIGHT Rabbi Yonatan Gershman <i>Darchei Noam Glenbrook</i>	TEFILLAH TUESDAYS Rabbi Reuven Brand <i>Drops Tuesdays</i>
COMMUNITY LEARNING			WOMEN'S LEARNING		
			YOUTH LEARNING		
New Audio Series! OLAM HAMIDDOS WEEK BY WEEK Mrs. Emma Katz yutorah.org					

ARON AND RIVKA FRIEDMAN

KOLLEL *YOM* RISHON

ARON & RIVKA FRIEDMAN

LIVING TORAH

Through the Aron and Rivka Friedman Kollel Yom Rishon and Living Torah Programs, the Kollel has brought more than one hundred diverse, world-class Torah presentations to our community, featuring renowned scholars and speakers from around the world.

GUEST SPEAKERS



DAY SCHOOL PROGRAMS



"The Kollel provides an invaluable resource for all ICJA students through its outstanding workshops and engaging presentations. The Kollel's members also serve as role models to our students of Torah U'Mada through their learning, meaningful interactions, and ongoing inspiration and leadership."

- RABBI SHMUEL KURTZ, TALMUD CHAIR



The Kollel runs an annual Yom Yerushalayim Program, provides Holocaust education to the 8th grade students, organizes kumzitzes throughout the year and has plans for programs such as a glance at Shisha Sidrei Mishna, Practical Hilchot Shabbos from the army, delving into tannaim and ammoraim, and the mesora of the Torah. The Kollel has also organized a Bar Mitzvah program for 7th grade boys.

At ICJA, the Kollel runs a weekly breakfast and learn, focusing on the sefer B'Yam Darkecha, a sefer drawn from Chassidic teachings that explores core Torah ideas, organized a Chanuka Yom Iyun event and has plans for regular Friday oneg/ruach tisch style events. We have also run Emunah workshops, Tefillah workshops, Pesach hands-on programs, and partnered with teachers to assist classes in small group learning.

"Working together with Rabbi Brand and the members of the Kollel over these eighteen years has been tremendously gratifying. Arie Crown and Yeshiva University Torah Mitzion Kollel have forged a partnership built upon a shared desire to ignite the passion of Limud Hatorah and Kavod Hatorah in the hearts and minds of our students."

- RABBI ELI SAMBER, PRINCIPAL



The Kollel runs a weekly Friday mishmar at Hillel Torah. It is a wonderful opportunity for students to opt-in to learning on their own lunch time! Previously we have offered parent-child learning, an Aseret Yimei Teshuva initiative, a Shmirat Halashon Program and pre-holiday kumzitz.

"For nearly two decades, the YU Torah Mitzion Kollel has been a vital source of Torah learning, inspiration, and authentic role models for our students and families. Through in-school learning and community initiatives such as Friday Mishmar at Hillel Torah, Parsha and Pizza and the Sunday Open Beit Midrash, the Kollel has inspired our students, engaged our parents, and strengthened our broader community. The impact of the Kollel's learning and leadership continues to be felt throughout Hillel Torah and beyond."

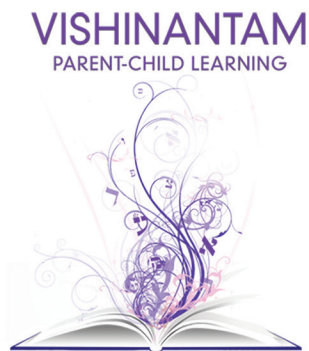
- RABBI MENACHEM LINZER, PRINCIPAL



The Kollel runs two weekly shiurim for Fasman Yeshiva High School students: A Monday Parsha Shiur and a Friday Kumzitz and shiur. We also learn with the students for a winter Yarchei Kallah, provide yimei iyun around the Chagim, and facilitate chavrutot. We provide Holocaust education and Yom Haatzmaut programming.

MISHNA TO THE Max

YOUTH PROGRAMS



Vishinantam was a parent-child learning program for four weeks on Motzei Shabbat in the winter. The program included experiential learning, raffles, prizes, and pizza. Topics had included cities in Eretz Yisrael, the different aspects of the Beit Hamikdash, hilchot Shabbat, and kashrut. During COVID, the program transitioned to Zoom and then became a weekly Motzei Shabbat program during the months between Sukkot and Purim. Parents and children would learn the weekly parsha together at home and join other families for stories, divrei Torah, and of course, a raffle!

SNL SUNDAY NIGHT LEARNING

Every Sunday night the K.I.N.S. Beit Midrash is packed with high school boys ready to learn b'chavruta at SNL.



Parsha & PIZZA

Our Kollel staff dazzle 3rd-4th grade boys and girls every week with entertaining and engaging parsha insights, questions, and stories.



בכל דרכך



בכל דרכך was a weekly program for 5th-7th grade girls. Each week the girls would combine Torah and STEM for an amazing experiential learning experience.



NILI WOMEN'S LEARNING



ALISSA ZEFFREN DIRECTOR OF NILI



Alissa Zeffren is the Director of NILI. She has a passion for developing opportunities for women's Torah learning and spiritual growth. Alissa has been an educator for over 17 years. She was a '23-'24 Sacks Research Scholars Fellow through the Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks-Herenstein Center for Values and Leadership at YU, and is a doctoral student at Azrieli Graduate School for Jewish Education and Administration. She holds Masters degrees from Loyola University Chicago in Modern European History and American History, and was in the 2024 OU Women's Initiative "COLI Chicago" inaugural cohort. Alissa teaches Tanach and Jewish history at Ida Crown Jewish Academy, where she also directs the Student Activities program and is the Director of Student to Student Chicago—a program that empowers Jewish teens to combat antisemitism through classroom-based presentations about Jews and Judaism to non-Jewish peers. She lives in "Skevanston" with her husband and four children.

NILI: A BRIEF HISTORY

NILI began as a vision of our Rosh Kollel, Rabbi Brand. Rabbi Brand noticed a vibrant spark, interest, and commitment from the women of our community to expand their knowledge and take an active role in shiurim and Torah advancement. After lots of brainstorming, it was decided that NILI: Chicago Institute of Women's Learning (or 'NILI M'dor L'dor') was to be created as a separate entity of the Kollel just for women. A Women's Advisory Council was formulated and the plans came to fruition offering diverse learning opportunities for the women throughout the Chicagoland and suburban communities. NILI has not only grown to be its own unique component of the YU Torah Mitzion Kollel of Chicago with a Director and supporting staff, but most importantly, NILI has become a household name serving hundreds of women for the past 9 years with over 50 different programs.

Mrs. Jessica Weiss and Mrs. Tami Miller
Founding NILI Co-Chairs

NILI PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

The Parsha Blueprint
Parsha & Positive Psychology
Women's Gemara Shiur
Windows into the World of Torah
Olam Hamiddos Week by Week
Art & Soul Melave Malka Series
Art & Soul Tehillim Series
NILI Beit Midrash
NILI Book Club
Journey of Inspiration
Women's Health Forum
Chanuka Sparks
Yarchei Kallah
Mid-Winter Yarchei Kallah
Haggadah Highlights
Annual Teshuva Drasha
Perek Shira at the Botanic Gardens
Exploring Megillat Esther
Elul Series
Shabbat Afternoon Shiurim
Simchat Torah Shiurim
Shavuot Learning for Women & Teens
Taharat Hamishpacha Chaburot
Wholesome and Holy Podcast
Parenting Chabura
Museum Series
MiDor L'Dor
Mother's Day Learning
Mother-Daughter Melave Malka



PARTNER PROGRAMS WITH

Matan	JOWMA	GPATS
Nishmat	JWE	COLI
Or Torah Stone		

monthly *tehillim*
ART & SOUL

"Since I was 12, visiting Tzfat, I longed to connect Tehillim with my art practice. NILI's Art & Soul program has been an opportunity to learn and engage in this spiritual endeavor at such a powerful time in my life. It has heightened my spirituality and bonded a group of women in a meaningful creative process."

- DR. MARNI ROSEN, *HOST OF ART & SOUL*

The NILI Beit Midrash meets monthly for an in-depth exploration of topics relating to women and halacha, using materials from Deracheha.org. Each session is self-contained & organized around chavruta-style or chaburah-style text-based study and discussion. Open to all learning levels. And, of course, coffee and donuts are served!

NILI BEIT MIDRASH



A JOURNEY OF Inspiration

Local women from our community share their personal spiritual journeys on a panel that is uplifting, humorous, and inspirational. This year's program focused on women who hold up our community through chesed.

"Journey of Inspiration is an annual favorite NILI event for so many. It offers a different modality of learning for the women of our community. It's a guaranteed uplifting event where we can gather together, learn from other's experiences, and support one another. Journey of Inspiration is one of my most meaningful events of the year!!"

- MRS. TAMI MILLER, *NILI WOMEN'S COUNCIL, NILI FOUNDING MEMBER AND FORMER CO-CHAIR*



NILI Bat Mitzvah Year Celebration

Celebrating 12 Years of NILI in Our Community

It was a true honor and privilege to be able to work with and learn from so many amazing women in the Chicago community.

- MRS. LYNN KRAFT
PAST DIRECTOR OF NILI



"It was an extraordinary privilege to spend five years as NILI's director, working within an organization whose sole mission was "lehadgil Torah u'leha'adira." I was inspired daily by the women who made Torah learning and personal growth part of their lives, and by the kollel leadership that so passionately supported them in finding the path that fit them best. To see women from across the hashkafic spectrum come together for the sake of Torah was one of the most uplifting experiences of my career."

- MRS. EMMA KATZ, *PAST DIRECTOR OF NILI*

WOMEN'S HEALTH FORUM



"The Women's Health Forum is an amazing and powerful initiative! It combines Torah values with important, often life-saving information for women of our kehila. The Mishna tells us 'Whoever saves a single life, it is as if they have saved an entire world.' And when we empower women with information about their health, we are giving them tools to keep themselves and their loved ones healthy!"

- DR. JENNIE BERKOVICH, *NILI WOMEN'S COUNCIL AND JOWMA DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION*



Led by over twenty local and international scholars, this unparalleled two-day learning conference offers opportunities to attend a selection of over twenty-five shiurim focused on Jewish philosophy, Halacha, Tanach, and Jewish history.

NILI YOUTH LEARNING

BAT MITZVAH SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Run by our fantastic Bat Mitzvah educators, this eight week, interactive program allows Bat Mitzvah aged-girls to explore who they are and how they relate to the Jewish community and the world as they enter into this new stage in their lives. The students learn with their mothers over the course of the week using the Bat Mitzvah mother-daughter booklets and then come together with their fellow students and the educators for activities that help them to understand their learning on a deeper level.



NILI TEENS

NILI Teens is a program that connects girls of different high schools in Chicago through Torah learning and fun activities. The events are planned by our NILI Teens leadership board made up of representatives from ICJA, HSBY, and BYHSC. The girls work together to plan events that they know they and their friends will find fun and meaningful. Most of the members of the NILI Teens leadership board have completed the NILI Teens Leadership Fellows Program.



NILI TEENS

Leadership Fellows PROGRAM



The NILI Teens Leadership Fellows Program is designed to empower young women as leaders in the Jewish community, honing individual character strengths, passions, and goals – through learning, collaboration, and creating meaningful impact projects. During the fellowship year, the teens meet monthly to explore different ways to be a leader and to hear from experts in the community. Each meeting begins with a learning chabura before launching into the leadership focus for the month. Throughout the fellowship, the teens work in groups to create and implement impact projects in the community.



iGive is a chesed program for 5th-6th graders. Every few months, the girls get together to do different projects to benefit various chesed organizations in the community.



Chicago is a unique Jewish community in many ways. One of its treasures is a resource for women in the areas of Mikvah and Taharat Hamishpacha. Founded in 2014, the NILI Taharat Hamishpacha Hotline provides women with personal Halachic guidance of a local rabbi with the comfort of speaking to another woman and remaining anonymous.

The Hotline was created by several local Kallah teachers (marriage preparation counselors) who noticed that many women aspire to keep the complex laws of family purity but lack ongoing guidance. The Shirley Rothner a"h Taharat Hamishpacha Resource for Women was created to address this pressing need. As part of NILI, this resource enables local Kallah teachers to offer new classes in the community, welcome guest speakers, and partner with other local efforts to bring this Torah education to women. Its flagship project is the one-of-a-kind, confidential hotline that combines technology and Halacha to make a difference in the lives of couples in the community.

Much like doctors on call in a medical practice, five specially trained Chicago Kallah teachers rotate fielding any mikvah and taharat hamishpacha related questions. With a system of four modes of access—phone, text, email, or webform—questions are submitted either online, through email, or via a special encrypted form to ensure privacy. The Kallah teacher on call is available for general guidance and support and relays the halachic questions to a local rabbi on the woman's behalf, ensuring timely, sensitive responses.

The Hotline is under the Halachic auspices of Rav Yona Reiss, Av Beit Din of the Chicago Rabbinical Council. The medical advisory committee includes Dr. Rachel Alton (OBGYN, MFM), Dr. Carol Ellman (OBGYN, FACOG), and Dr. Nathan Fox (OBGYN, MFM).

The Hotline is staffed by five highly trained kallah teachers: Dr. Nechama Brand, Mrs. Alise Gold, Mrs. Lynn Kraft, Mrs. Tami Drapkin, and Mrs. Atara Turoff.



Listen to NILI's Taharat Hamishpacha podcast series: "Wholesome and Holy"

"The NILI Hotline allows women to ask shailahs in a way that makes them feel most comfortable. It gives women a space to text, call or email and it ensures that they have an address for any questions they might encounter in the realm of taharat hamishpacha. We are so happy to be able to provide this service to the women of Chicago and beyond."

-MRS. ALISE GOLD, KALLAH TEACHER & NILI HOTLINE MODERATOR



847.636.9723
Please leave a message



847.636.9723
Text your question



hotline@nilitorah.org



hotline.nilitorah.org

HOURS: Sunday-Thursday 8:00AM - 10:00PM | Friday 8:00AM - 12:00PM

MCJL

OUTREACH LEARNING

MIDWEST CENTER
FOR JEWISH LEARNING



We know the Torah has something meaningful to offer all Jews. Regardless of background, learning level, or affiliation, its messages are real, personal, and timeless. The Kollel's MCJL division provides Chicagoland's diverse Jewish communities with our Torah learning. Through organizational partnerships with local institutions, including the Illinois Holocaust Museum, JCC Chicago and the L'Chaim Center, we have made creative and innovative learning accessible to a broad spectrum of Jews.

Programs have included:

- Buffalo Grove Monthly Learning Group for Women
- Living Room Learning
- Pray With Purpose
- MCJL Family Purim Experience
- Words for the Soul
- JCC Leadership Torah Learning Sessions
- Staff Learning at The Ark



ILLINOIS HOLOCAUST MUSEUM & EDUCATION CENTER

"Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center is proud of our meaningful partnership with MCJL. The continued strengthening of our work together has become an integral component to our educational program and mission. The seminars MCJL staff conduct at our museum connect the complex history of the Holocaust with depth of knowledge, powerful storytelling, and dynamic and passionate presentation style. Each seminar opens a window to the spiritual, ethical, and intellectual responses of Survivors and victims, as well as the character, dignity, and resilience that ensures their legacy guides us today and into the future."

- MS. KELLEY SZANY, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, ILLINOIS HOLOCAUST MUSEUM AND EDUCATION CENTER



Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center

STUDY GROUP

Through MCJL's ongoing partnership with the Illinois Holocaust Museum, participants explore Jewish spiritual responses during and after the Holocaust through a new lunch & learn monthly program.

TISHA B'AV

In recent years we have hosted a unique evening Eicha program at the Illinois Holocaust Museum on Tisha B'av evening, in which each of the five chapters of Eicha is introduced with meaningful and resonant stories and learning.



Our Kollel community lives our Torah values through many Chesed partnerships. Through organizational partnerships the Kollel enables participation in numerous community chesed initiatives, including:

- **ChesedChicago**
Annual Thanksgiving volunteering
- **ARK Chicago**
Assisting with organizing and stocking the ARK Pantry
- **Maot Chitim of Greater Chicago**
Assisting with holiday food packages and deliveries
- **Libenu Foundation**
Supporting inclusion and opportunities for individuals with disabilities
- **Yachad**
Partnering in inclusive Torah and social programming
- **Bikur Cholim Kitchen**
Preparing Food Packages
- **Chicago Center**
Stocking supplies and organizing the warehouse
- **Chai Lifeline**
Creating Activity Packets



CHESED ACTIVITIES



18 YEARS OF IMPACT

Shlichim
families
from
Israel

14

145,600
views of Youtube videos

Podcast downloads

29,220

12,000+

Participants at the
annual summer
and dinner events

Hours of Chesed

200+

150,702

Hours of
Kollel fellows
Beit Midrash
Learning

768

Gifts to the 5786
crowdfunding campaign

...18 YEARS OF INNOVATION

2008 - 2026 | 5768 - 5786

Yimei Iyun
for FYHS
and ICJA
Students

115

2,240
Followers on Social Media

900+

Arie Crown and Hillel Torah
students learned with
Kollel rabbis

Out-of-town scholars
hosted by the Kollel

140

200

Female speakers at NILI's
Annual Yarchei Kallah

Hours of Torah
education at the
ILHMEC

175+

20,640

Slices of pizza served
at Parsha and Pizza

18
Alumni
living in
Chicago

Rabbi Reuven Brand
Rosh Kollel

Rabbi Yitzchak Mandel
Rosh Chabura

Mrs. Alissa Zeffren
Director of NILI

Mrs. Tracy Schultz
Director of Operations

Mrs. Abby Schneider
Director of Marketing

KOLLEL
STAFF
5786

FULL TIME KOLLEL FELLOWS

Rabbi Yitzy Weiss- *Kollel Fellow, Year 3*
Rabbi Yonatan Gershman- *Kollel Fellow, Year 1*
Rabbi Itai Jacobs- *Kollel Fellow, Year 1*

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WILDER
FOUNDATION



INSPIRATION AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Follow YU Torah Mitzion Kollel of Chicago on Facebook, @torahchicago on Instagram, and @YUTorahMitzionKollelofChicago on YouTube (scan the QR code)! Through Torah opportunities for women, men, and children across the Chicagoland community, the YU Torah Mitzion Kollel and NILI share inspiration, programs, and learning experiences online.

