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LUBAVITCH HOUSE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
Campus Report

Incoming chairman of the board of Trustees honored at a reception

At an intimate evening with student and alumni leaders, Mr. David L. Cohen, executive vice president of Comcast Corporation, and incoming chairman of the Board of Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania was honored at Lubavitch House.

Student leaders discussed their involvement at Lubavitch House and the Jewish heritage programs as faculty and supporters listened on.

As Rabbi Menachem Schmidt, executive director of Lubavitch House, presented Mr. Cohen with a leather bound copy of the newly published Gutnick Edition of the

Chumash, he said that he has been to many such receptions between his roles in the city and the University but is able to assure "that I have never received a gift like this before". Cohen commented that he thinks he is "the first Jewish Chairman of the Board of Trustees that the University has ever had" and that his "relationship with [Rabbi] Menachem [Schmidt] goes back to when we were young kids growing up together. I think that the activities that you are doing here are terrific, and it was great to hear the students tonight speak about their involvement."



David Cohen & Rabbi Menachem Schmidt



Alumni Sara and Joshua Bleier with Rabbi Ephraim Levin

Birthright still going strong

As the global financial crisis affects Jewish Philanthropy everywhere and the tremendous decrease in the 'birthright Israel' budget, Lubavitch House at Penn, after having to turn down some 80 applicants still managed to take 50 Penn students to Israel this summer.

The first group accompanied by two student leaders and Rabbi Levi Haskelevich traveled and explored Israel from its northern tip down south to the Negev dessert, the second was a group of seniors accompanied by Rabbi Ephraim Levin along with students from Yale University. One highlight of the trip, was an educational and spiritual exercise at the tomb of Rabbi Moses Maimonides in Tiberias. Students studies a variety of chapters of his writings according to their choice in preparation, and all made brief presentations to each other under the giant wrought-iron sculpture sheltering Maimonides tomb.

"I don't know much about Maimonides," said Molly Seltzer, who will begin her senior year at Penn this fall. "But to hear everyone's chapter and

their own perspectives on what they learned made the whole exercise so interesting".

The timing of our stop coincided with what was the last day of the 27th annual cycle of Maimonides study, in which thousands of Jews worldwide participate annually to complete a study of Maimonides 14-volume work of Jewish law.

"I went to a Jewish day school, from kindergarten to fourth grade, long enough that I heard about Rambam [Maimonides], but I had never really learned anything about him" said Jeffery Kaplan, a junior in Wharton. "And here we were, among the only people in the world at this time who were at his [resting place]. It's amazing that we're here. The timing [of the trip] was ironic. On a spiritual level, it was awe-inspiring".

-Josh Runyan from Chabad.org assisted with this report. Birthright photos on Page 4

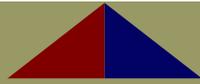


Prof. Talia Fishman talking with students



Student Leaders discuss the role Chabad House plays in their life





Former Penn President, Professor Sheldon Hackney addressed graduating seniors at Lubavitch House



In a room full of graduating seniors and graduate students, popular Penn history professor Sheldon Hackney recounted anecdotes from the life of his late father in law, Clifford Durr an Alabama lawyer who defended Rosa Parks in her challenges as well as many other courageous endeavors. Professor Hackney challenged the students to think about where they would draw the balance between personal gain and sacrifice for ideals and up until **what point would they say “let me remain silent now, until I reach a position of influence”.**



At the event students offered Lchaim-toasts and shared memories of their times at Penn. Jonathan Aubrey remarked **that he was “leaving Penn with great memories of the Lubavitch house, from the Hakkafos [dancing] on Simchat Torah at the fraternity houses to driving down the streets of Philadelphia with a Menorah strapped on top of [his] car”**, while graduating law student Jason Levine said **“the Chabad family are at the top of [the Penn] support network by always providing Jewish students a second place to call home. From small Shabbat dinners with some of my fellow fraternity brothers to dinners with hundreds of people, I always look forward to my time [at Chabad].**



Similar sentiments of Chabad House serving as a home away from home were written by Valeria Asher from Kiev,

Ukraine. Valeria who lives more than a 10 hour flight from home, found a place where she **felt welcomed. “From the first moment I entered the doors of Chabad, I felt like part of the community. Always having someone who cares about you and is looking forward to seeing you every week. During mid-terms and finals Lubavitch House at Penn served as an escape from my stressful life”.** For many like Valeria **“Lubavitch House at Penn is a place to study, to meet new wonderful people, to laugh and to create friends who will be with you forever”** She wrote in her reflection.

Students like Levine assured **that they “look forward to staying in touch with Penn generally, but in particular with Chabad House which has made my seven year experience [at Penn] so special”.**

Reactions to Prof. Hackney’s talk were very positive as well, as Brad Rubin, a graduating senior who will be spending next year studying at a Yeshiva in Israel commented, that Prof. Hackney **“sounded like a Chabad Rabbi with a southern accent”**, while graduating law student Dana Livne strongly agreed that **“the Professor’s interactive speech was one of the most interesting and memorable farewell speeches I have ever heard”** asserting that **this is in spite of that fact that she has “heard quite a few”.**





Abenaim Program for Jewish Literacy

This semester saw the establishment of the Abenaim Program for Jewish Literacy established with the support of Yoni (DMD '05) and Sarah Abenaim.

The program offers a plethora of Torah study sessions from weekly Talmud classes for beginners, to a **weekly women's discussion group** on topics in Jewish thought. From a weekly Jewish mysticism class to a discussion group in a fraternity, and a variety of other offerings listed on our website at: www.LubavitchHouse.com/study

Lubavitch House has been credited with founding all of the Jewish **"Lunch and Learn"** programs now ongoing in the Law, Medical, Dental schools. During this past fall and spring semesters we partnered with JAMBA and the Zicklin Center for Business Ethics respectively and expanded the Lunch and Learn program to Wharton where we offered a series on Jewish business ethics based on a curriculum prepared by the Rohr Jewish Learning Institute.

In the upcoming semester, we are looking forward to expanding the Lunch and Learn series at the Vet school with a series on Kosher and Kosher slaughter.

In the area of guest speakers the program sponsored a visit by Bronya Shaffer who discussed

issues on college women's minds from sexuality to career aspirations, and balancing all facets of life. That evening included a performance by the Quaker Notes accapella group and raffle prizes.

The program also sponsored talks by visiting scholar Rabbi Dr. Shmuel Klatzkin from Dayton, Ohio, who spoke to the topics of **"Who wrote the Bible?"** and **"Faith and Reason"** both from very unusually fresh perspectives.

For alumni in NYC the monthly learning dinners continued as well as an event entitle **"Gulag Memoirs: a tale of Jewish survival under soviet oppression"** with guest speaker Reb Mottel Lifshitz, himself a survivor of the Gulag and incidentally also **Rabbi Levi's maternal grandfather**.

The Abenaims have sponsored these dynamic additions to Jewish learning at Penn and for Penn Alumni in honor of their parents Salomon and Dina Abenaim, and Zevi and Rebecca Isseroff, who have raised them with a love for Torah study. The students and staff at Lubavitch House are very grateful for their support and wish them Mazal Tov for the newest addition to their family, daughter Mica.



Lunch and Learn at the Medical School



Lunch and Learn at the Law School



Alumni Learning Dinners—midtown NYC



Women's evening, with Bronya Shaffer discussing the topic of "Constructing the Female Jewish Identity"



Full house at the NYC "Gulag Memoirs"



Sinai Scholars with the 'Comic Book Rabbi' Simcha Weinstein



Jewish Business ethics Lunch 'n' Learn series at Wharton



Snapshots



Birthright Israel summer '09



At Ascent in Safed



Chabad & Amtrak distribute hot latkes and Menorahs at 30th St. Station



Penn & Yale Alumni Purim Party in NYC



Jeeping in the Golan



Matzah distribution on campus



Egg consumption contest in Tiberius



Students wrap Tefflin on Locust Walk



Sinai Scholars field trip to NY



Early morning blessing over the sun at the Franklin institute once in 28-year opportunity



Our Passover Seder tent accommodating the larger crowd



Birthright reunion in NYC



Alumni Wedding in Panama



Chanukah Celebrations



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