

intouch

MAGAZINE

- ❖ **Confessions of a Camp Carer**
- ❖ **Learned Helplessness**
- ❖ **It's Not What You Eat**
- ❖ **Independent Skills**

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Talking Towlette '1

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DISCLAIMER: We do not promote or endorse any specific methods, treatments, clinics and/or therapies mentioned in any of the articles. They are intended as information only. Always seek professional advice before trying anything new.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!!!

Do you have any:

Feedback, Stories, Letters, Articles, Tips etc?

Send your magazine submissions to:

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Note our email address specifically dedicated to magazine submissions

Email: editor.intouch@gmail.com

Letter From The Editor:

I can't believe it's almost Rosh Hashono. Where has the time gone? This question is particularly pertinent to me this year, as it is the year my son is going to be 13. My little man is not so little any more. Of course, with him it's no ordinary celebration. He won't have a proper Bar Mitzvah, he won't have Tefillin, and he's not עולה מצוות with מרחיב.

Through the pages of this magazine I have shared stories of Meilech's life and progress with you. I feel like we have all been watching him grow together.

My son is not even aware of how big a milestone this is in his life. But you all do, and it is heart-warming to know that I can share this Simcha with you, and that you all understand and can appreciate the mixed emotions I am feeling as I watch my son transform from a boy into a man.

Time moves on, it is unforgiving, it is relentless in its march towards the future.

Day by day, week by week, month by month, our lives continue, ever forward. And sometimes we might feel that although time is moving forward, we are not... we are stuck in the same place, unchanging.

But as the story of the Baal Shem Tov demonstrates, it is never too late. Hashem is always there... always listening... always waiting. We just have to grab the moment.

As we approach the new year may we cherish and appreciate every moment, and may each and every one of those moments be filled with sweet and happiness.

Wishing you all a טובה וחתימה טובה

Feigi Stein

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Touched by:

I am not a member of In Touch as I do not have a special needs child, but my auntie is a member and she lends me your magazine to read. I love reading it, it's so full of articles and inspiration that is relevant to everyone not just special needs parents.

I wanted to share a conversation I had with my little cousin that I thought is cute and will make your readers laugh.

I was at my auntie's house and one of her younger boys was teasing his older special needs brother. I asked him "why are you bullying your brother, that's not nice."

My cousin responded "but we all bully each other... that's what we do... we all fight."

I then said "but you shouldn't bully Dovi*" (*not his real name*)

My little cousin looked at me as if I'm stupid and asked "why not? We all fight. He's also our brother... he's no different to any of us."

Whilst the idea of siblings fighting might not be the best way to teach a lesson I thought it was cute the way he treated his special needs brother like any other normal child.

Name Withheld

In Touch Really Is A Family

I really enjoyed the article in the previous issue about "Finding My In Touch Family." I really identified with it. When I first joined In Touch I was really nervous. I thought all the mothers would be so serious and depressed all the time. I thought that I would feel awkward talking about my child because why would anyone be interested in my story when they've all got their own.

But I was so wrong. When I went to my first convention I was amazed at how happy everyone was. How everyone shared their stories and nobody thought it was stupid. Everyone really cares about each other, is there for each other and we can share tears, laughter, ideas, and inspiration. In Touch is my family.

Anonymous

New Day

I wanted to share something I do that helps me take each day as it comes. Every morning when I wake up, after saying Modeh Ani, I tell myself "It's a new day. A fresh start. Today is going to be a good day." I find that saying these words gives me a positive energy and makes me ready to face the day no matter what it may bring.

Also if I've had a particularly hard day, before going to bed I tell myself, "okay, today is done. Tomorrow is a new day." Then when I wake up I remind myself that it's a new day, and no matter what happened the day before, I feel more energised to face the new day.

Name Withheld By Request

Toddler Diet

I really laughed out loud at the "toddler diet" article. It pretty much described every meal time at my house.

Actually I wouldn't mind being a toddler. Somebody prepares all your meals at regular intervals. You can throw a tantrum when things don't go your way. You never have to clean up after yourself and somehow your toys always get put away. And best of all you get to take a nap in the middle of the day. Forget the toddler diet, I want the toddler life.

A toddler in a grown up body

Competition Winner

Congratulations to family Fried who won my "literal" competition.

Their response to "how did you enjoy this article" was "with my sense of humour."

Well done!!

I hope you enjoy your prize.

Look out for this issue's competition on Page 6!!

Good luck and enjoy.

Feigi



BY: MOLLY DELLINGER-WRAY

Molly Dellinger-Wray is a mother to her son, Patrick, who has autism. Molly shares her story of overcoming obstacles and meeting milestones on the way to Patrick's graduation.

The end of a long journey

Like thousands of other mothers, I planned to watch my son earn a college diploma. I was eager to sit in the audience like a member of every other family, eager to capture a photo of him in a cap and gown. For me, it would mark the end of a very long journey. I can't begin to put a label to the jumbled feelings of pride, gratefulness, exhaustion, and other emotions this day conjures up for me. Thankfully, the graduate, has little or no memory of the critical first years of his life.

Before starting my own family, I was a trained special educator with a focus on instruction of kids with severe disabilities and autism. After a few years of teaching, I used my professional skills to help families of children with difficult behaviours at home. I stopped working after having my first baby girl and less than two years later, welcomed Patrick into our lives.

Having had a talkative little girl, my concerns that Patrick wasn't meeting some of the developmental milestones were dismissed by professionals and friends. They reminded me that it was professional background raising antennae for a child who would be perfectly fine.

I no longer had the strength to battle it.

By his first birthday, Patrick had endured more than ten ear infections, and by age three, he still wasn't talking. The tactile sensation of clothing on his skin was so aversive to him that he ran around naked most of the time. As a stay-at-home mom with two children under the age of five, I no longer had the strength or energy to battle it. Patrick was quirky. Not aggressive, or naughty. Just different.

His diagnosis was autism. I would be lying if I said it wasn't somewhat of a relief for me to finally have an answer regarding what was different about Patrick. But I couldn't

come to grips with the fact that my smiling, cuddly son was part of the one in seventy boys his age who were diagnosed with autism. Ironically, the doctor who diagnosed him informed me that Patrick's behaviours would be problematic in the future, and that I should seek help from the behavioural intervention project from our local university – the same organisation that employed me in my younger days. That was one of my many emotional stomach punches that were going to come my way; I just didn't know it yet. As a professional I knew a lot about what was best for my son. But as a stay-at-home mom, I constantly second-guessed myself.

Traditional milestones were always worrisome

When I asked for my son to be included with typically developing children at our neighbourhood school, and was asked "Don't you want what's best for your son?" I had to stop and check myself. What my insistence for the least restrictive environment that important? I can

proudly say now that Patrick was the first student to receive special education inclusion services in both his preschool and elementary school... but not without a lot of sleepless nights on my part. Traditional milestones like going to camp were always worrisome. And the overriding questions of "would Patrick be happy and would this be the one thing that made a difference in determining a better future for him?" always haunted us.

In hindsight, I wonder how difficult my professional knowledge, combined with my mother bear instincts, made Patrick's school team feel about working with me. What if I was a problem parent? I knew from the research how critical it was to create positive partnerships between families and professionals. I was always walking the tightrope between demanding the most for my son, and striving to maintain that positive relationship. I steeled myself before each educational meeting with the same mantra, "Don't start to cry". I knew if my voice started to quiver just a little, my credibility as an advocate for Patrick would be dismissed. I rarely succeeded,

**AS A STAY-AT-HOME MOM, I
CONSTANTLY SECOND-
GUESSED MYSELF**

and in my conversations with other mothers of special education students, no matter how strong they may seem, revealed the exact same sensations. Were these times truly the best circumstances for parents to be making decisions? Now I understand why parents ask for advocates to attend the meetings with them.

Some dismissed my concerns

Communication with professionals proved challenging, but the most painful conversations were, well frankly, other parents. Some dismissed my concerns, while others offered condescending advice ("maybe if you tried reading aloud to him more"). To this day, I have not met another parent who has not struggled with this judgement and irritating, but well-meaning, advice. And the wounds run deep.

Equally memorable, however, are the wonderful things. I have a deep and profound gratitude to so many of the professionals who taught Patrick, and urged me to have high expectations for him. Their words were a lifeline that pulled me out of the vortex of paperwork focusing on deficits, poor test scores, and failure.

Like so many children, Patrick's life experiences surpassed many of the expectations that we were given in his early years. We exposed him to as many cultural, athletic, academic, and travel opportunities as possible. Now, as a young adult, Patrick is helpful and gets along well with others. He started a job bagging groceries at age 16, and has always felt more comfortable working than socialising.

So close, but not so close

A few days before his college graduation, Patrick called me to say that he would not graduate. He had all of the coursework and passing grades needed, but he came up short on the required extracurricular activities. The college would not award him a degree until the requirements are completed. Patrick cried. I cried. We all thought we were closing the chapter on school life, but, like so many things it will take a bit longer to complete.

When Patrick does finally walk across the stage to accept that diploma, I know the tears will be flowing. And I will say a silent prayer of gratitude to the kind and creative educators and tutors, the skilled therapists, the patient college professors, the devoted scout leader, loving camp counsellors and babysitters, the generous neighbourhood moms, and of course, to Patrick, who overcame so many obstacles that he doesn't even remember.

Credits: www.parentingspecialneeds.org



PATRICK AS A SCOUT

Do you have a story to share? We want to hear about your experiences.

Contact us by post, phone or email.

Details can be found on Page 2

"QUOTABLES"

"If you find a path with no obstacles, it probably doesn't lead anywhere."

Frank A. Clark

"Obstacles are seldom the same size tomorrow as they are today."

Robert H. Schuller

"It takes obstacles to learn, grow, be better."

Orlando Bloom

"IT'S NEVER TOO LATE"

It was time for נעילה. The טוב בעל's Chassidim and Talmidim were standing in awesome silence awaiting their beloved Rebbe's entrance into the בית המדרש to lead them in the closing תפילה of this holy day.

They waited and waited. Daylight was fast disappearing and the night was getting darker and darker as the day was coming to an end, and still they waited. The men stood in contemplative quiet, their eyes constantly darting to the door of the Shul for the appearance of their Rebbe.

Finally, the טוב בעל walked in, his טלית over his head, as he stepped up to the עמוד and with a heart-rending cry of "אשרי" began the exalted תפילה. He recited the תפילה with such a התלהבות, his sobs wracking through his body and he committed his body and soul with התעוררת and supplication. Never before had the Talmidim experienced such a נעילה.

his talmidim asked the טוב בעל why he had waited until so late to daven.

The טוב בעל began his story: "There was a big רשע who over the past year had committed every עבירה imaginable and treated the Torah and its statutes with disdain. When he saw Yidden rushing to Shul on יום ערב to daven כל נדרי he laughed and mocked their solemnity.

"When he woke up on יום כיפור morning and began his day as if it was just another day, he felt a slight twinge of guilt, but he dismissed the feeling. As the day wore on, the initial twinge grew, and as much as he tried, the little spark in his נשמה had ignited and he couldn't ignore it. During the afternoon he was tormented by questions and fear. He started thinking that the whole of ישראל כלל was in Shul, fasting, praying, and doing teshuva, and what was he doing? What was going to become of him? Try as he might, he couldn't squash down the inspirational awe of the day.

Finally as the time of נעילה approached he was gripped by an intense תשובה and he burst into the בית המדרש, ran to the ארון קודש and wept for forgiveness. This man's תפילות were so powerful, that they threw open all the heavenly gates.

"And therefore," The טוב בעל concluded "I waited for that auspicious moment because I wanted my תפילות to ascend up to heaven together with the תפילות of this תשובה."

This beautiful story can be heard in song form on a CD called ונאמר לפניו By Sheya Hanstater. The song itself is called אמר ר' יוחנן.

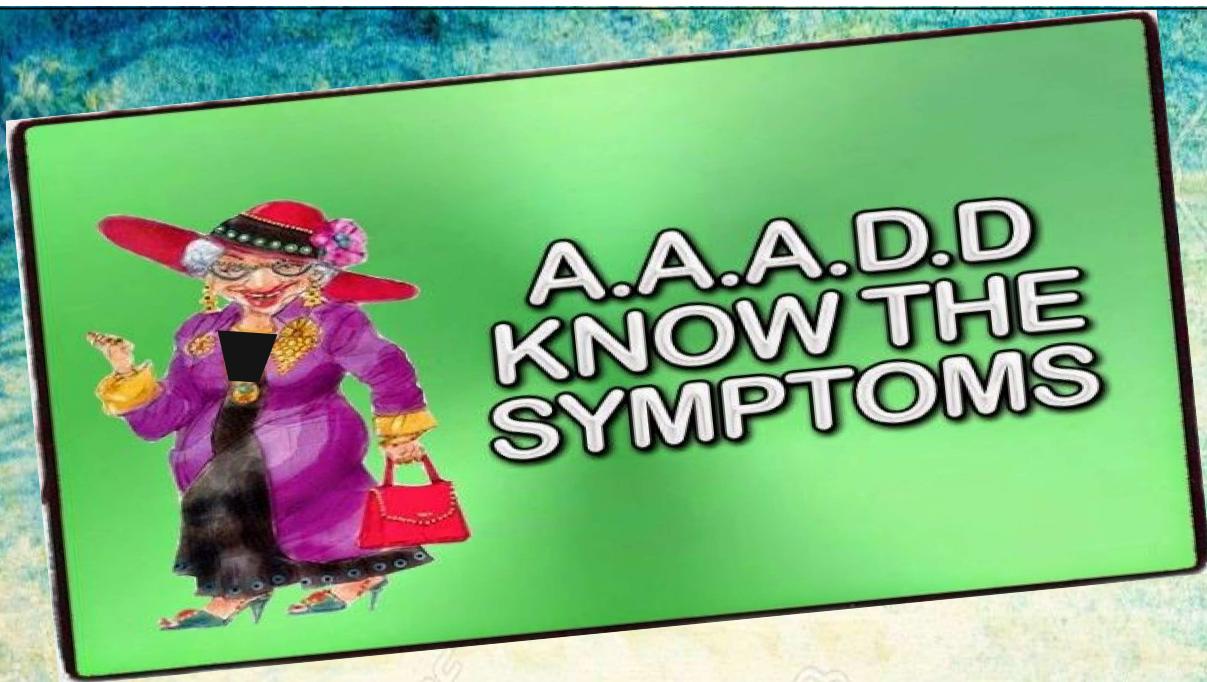
Sheya Hanstater has already produced five CDs which have achieved critical acclaim, and his sixth CD, which is due to be released on the day after Yom Kippur, will feature major singing sensations from the Chasidische world.

Sheya has generously agreed to give away a full collection of his CDs, including the latest release, to the first person who sends an article or story for the next issue of the magazine. He will also give a copy of the new CD to three runners up.

So come on, get writing... and celebrate your contribution with song.



**All Sheya's CDs are available to purchase at your local Hemishe music store or from www.?????.com
Keep an eye out for the much awaited new release on י"א תשרי.**



Recently, I was diagnosed with A.A.A.D.D. – Age Activated Attention Deficit Disorder.

This is how it manifests:

I decide to water my garden. As I turn on the hose in the driveway, I look over at my car and decide it needs washing. As I start toward the garage, I notice mail on the porch table that I brought up from the mail box earlier. I decide to go through the mail before I wash the car. I lay my car keys on the table, put the junk mail in the garbage can under the table, and notice that the can is full. So, I decide to put the bills back on the table and take out the garbage first. But then I think, since I'm going to be near the mailbox when I take out the garbage anyway, I may as well pay the bills first. I take my cheque book off the table, and see that there is only one cheque left. My extra checks are in my desk in the study, so I go inside the house to my desk where I find the can of Pepsi I'd been drinking. I'm going to look for my cheques, but first I need to push the Pepsi aside so that I don't accidentally knock it over. The Pepsi is getting warm, and I decide to put it in the refrigerator to keep it cold. As I head toward the kitchen with the Pepsi, a vase of flowers on the counter catches my eye—they need water. I put the Pepsi on the counter and discover my reading glasses that I've been searching for all morning. I decide I better put them back on my desk, but first I'm going to water the flowers. I set the glasses back down on the counter, fill a container with water and suddenly spot the book I'm in the middle of reading. Someone left it on the kitchen table. I realize that tonight after supper I'll want to read on the couch, but I won't remember that the book is on the kitchen table, so I decide to put it back in the den where it belongs, but first I'll water the flowers. I pour some water in the flowers, but quite a bit of it spills on the floor. So, I set the book back on the table, get some towels and wipe up the spill. Then, I head down the hall trying to remember what I was planning to do.

At the end of the day: the car isn't washed the bills aren't paid there is a warm can of Pepsi sitting on the counter the flowers don't have enough water, there is still only 1 cheque in my cheque book, I can't find the my book, I can't find my glasses, and I don't remember what I did with the car keys. Then, when I try to figure out why nothing got done today, I'm really baffled because I know I was busy the whole day, and I'm really tired. I realize this is a serious problem, and I'll try to get some help for it, but first I'll check my e-mail....

Every summer I wave my son off to camp with a mixture of emotions. I look forward to two stress-free weeks, but I also know I'm going to miss him like insanity. But one thing I do know is that when I hand him over to his camp carer I don't need to worry. I know that he will be well looked after, safe, and happy. I always wondered about these special girls and boys who volunteer to give up their summer to look after our children.

I spoke with four Camp Horizon carers, Toby, Rifky, Shloimy, and Pini, who agreed to share their experiences of being a camp carer.

BY: F STEIN

Confessions of a camp carer

What this your first year as a carer?

Toby: First time doing Summer Camp. I've done Playscheme and Winter Camp and those things made me want to be a Summer Camp carer

Rifky: First time doing summer camp. I've been doing playscheme, shabbatons, and Winter Camps for about 2 and half years.

Shloimy: I am a counsellor, not a carer. I am one of the heads. I've done various playschemes, Shabbatons, five Winter Camps and three Summer Camps.

Pini: Yes, it was my very first year. I've never done any playschemes or worked with special needs kids before.

Was it anything as you expected?

Toby: It was so much better. We had loads of support. Everyone helped each other out.

Rifky: It was so much better than I expected. It was so professional and organised. It was really amazing.

Pini: I wasn't sure what to expect, so I went with an open mind.

Why volunteer?

Toby: I love children, and it's an amazing zchus to be with these kids. One Friday night when we were saying Sholom Aleichem one carer asked her child if he can see the מלאכים. He nodded that he could. When she asked how many מלאכים he could see, he showed five fingers and then pointed to various positions in the room where the מלאכים were standing. When she asked "why are they here?" he pointed to his carer as if to say "they are here because of you." That was a very special moment.

Rifky: I always liked working with special needs kids. It's so amazing to see how the kids are treated.

Shloimy: I always had a feeling that I wanted to help those less able than I am.

Pini: I've always been a little bit afraid of special needs children; I didn't know how to treat them, or how to act towards them. I wanted to gain experience and to learn to understand them.

Some kids cannot communicate so well, so how do you see if they're enjoying themselves/happy?

Toby: You can tell when they're enjoying. They're smiling, happy, relaxed, and some can sign to show their happiness.

Rifky: You can tell by their facial expressions. When they're happy they'll be jumping and smiling.

Shloimy: The parents fill in the profile so we know what to look out for, but it's visible when the kids are happy. They'll clap, smile, laugh. It's unmissable.

Pini: Sometimes it was hard to tell, but in general you could see if they were happy they would be smiling and clapping their hands.

Some parents don't call often and others want to speak every day. Which is better?

Toby: I don't think it's so good for parents to call every day. A few times a week is best.

Rifky: The child I was looking after is verbal and she spoke with her mother every night. On the whole it can be a bit too much pressure for the carer if the parent calls every day. 2-3 times a week is optimum.

Shloimy: Some parents need to call more, some less. I go along with what the parents need. In general the cares don't have a lot of time to speak to parents every day, it's best to call at set times like Erev Shabbos or if there is something you need to tell the carer.

Pini: I found that sending a short text every day was best. I don't think it's necessary to call every day.

I know this can be hard work, but do the carers also have fun? How do you unwind at the end of the day?

- Toby:** Camp was so well organised. Every evening there was something organised for the carers. Either we went out, or stayed in and watched a video. It was a very achdusdig atmosphere.
- Rifky:** The carers are really well looked after. We had shifts so every evening some of us were on duty and the rest of us enjoyed socials like going swimming, laser quest, shopping, games. It was so nice to see girls from all different backgrounds coming together and having fun.
- Shloimy:** We organise things for the carers in the evening. Some days we went out swimming, we played football, one evening we arranged for a chazzan to come sing and we had a kumzitz on the beach. One a couple of occasions we had hot tubs outside for the carers to relax and on Friday night we had a Bota after the kids went to bed.
- Pini:** The carers had activities every evening. We went ice skating, swimming, had hot tubs in the garden. We were well looked after. It was hard work, but we had a lot of fun.

What's the best part of being a carer?

- Toby:** It's a very special experience. I feel lucky to be able to spend time with these special children. To be in their world and to live with them.
- Rifky:** In general, it's really fulfilling when being a carer in clubs where I get to teach them a skill and watch them grow and develop what I taught them. In camp it's really exciting and fun to spend time with these children for two whole weeks.
- Shloimy:** It's a very warming feeling knowing that I can give these children a good time knowing that they wouldn't be able to have fun otherwise.
- Pini:** I am really happy that I got the experience to work with special needs kids.

And the worst part?

Note: Every carer I asked answered with "Nothing... there was no bad part." Only after much uhming in aahing and when I pressed did they say

- Toby:** Nothing – except that I didn't really have a holiday this year.
- Rifky:** Nothing really – but it is really hard when the kids are stubborn and don't listen.
- Shloimy:** Nothing. I cannot think of anything. I love doing it, it's a hobby of mine. If I had to say what the hardest part was it was Shabbos afternoon when the kids got bored and cranky because they couldn't go out.
- Pini:** Nothing really... except that it was really tiring.

You obviously build a relationship with the kids. Do you miss them after camp?

- Toby:** Sure. I dream of them. The child I looked after is verbal so I am able to speak with her on the phone, send her letters and exchange pictures.
- Rifky:** 100% I miss them. I see them every day for two weeks and then it's hard not to see them. I work regularly with the child I looked after, but other years when I looked after other children I could sometimes call or visit them.
- Shloimy:** Of course. And I always tell my carers that those who work harder with the children will create more of a bond.
- Pini:** Yes. I miss the child I looked after.

If you could give one piece of advice for future carers what would it be?

- Toby:** It can be hard work. But remember how special these kids are and what a huge zchus it is to be able to work with these holy neshomos. And when Moshiach comes they will be our advocates. They need us now, but then we will need them.
- Rifky:** It can be hard work and sometimes you can get frustrated. But if the child is being stubborn and you're getting nervous, don't get aggravated. Stay calm because the way you react will react on the child and if you stay calm then they will calm down.
- Shloimy:** Keep in mind that the more you give to the children, the more you will love them, and the more you will get in return.
- Pini:** It is very hard work in the beginning, but you do get used to it and you end up loving the children. It is a tough job but totally worth it.

Given the opportunity would you do it again?

- Toby:** For sure. It's so special. It's like being in a different world.
- Rifky:** Yep! 100%. I'm getting married soon so I won't be able to, but most of the carers in camp said they would definitely do it again.
- Shloimy:** Definitely
- Pini:** Definitely. I'm planning to do it next year.

As a parent of a special needs child I can honestly say that I felt privileged and humbled talking to these incredible volunteers. The enthusiasm with which they gave their responses was electric and I could feel the love for each child glowing with every word. I know that I speak on behalf of all parents when I thank you all for the amazing work you do with our kids in the summer and all year round. May Hashem shower all with the same love and generosity as you show our special children.



א 13 למצוות?

BY FEIGI STEIN

My son is an enigma; a contradiction, a dichotomy of parts that make up the sum of his whole. He is developmentally delayed but at the same time a really smart cookie. He's speechless but communicates volumes in his actions. And he was born early and simultaneously at the last minute.

He was almost literally born in the final minutes of the year.

His birthday is **ערב ראש השנה** one hour before **זמן**.

And this year on **ערב ראש השנה** he's going to be thirteen. That's a big moment in a boy's life; it's when he becomes a man responsible for his own actions.

Most parents, on the day of their son's Bar Mitzvah, say – **ברוך שפטרנו** – "I will no longer carry the burden of your aveiros."

For 13 years the child is a complete innocent because if he does have any aveiros his parents are the ones who get tarnished. It might seem a bit unfair to we mere mortals. But, think about it. It's the parents job to raise the child, if they don't raise him right and he does aveiros, it's on them. However, when he comes of age, a man capable of knowing right from wrong, of learning the Torah and following its statutes, he can no longer blame his parents for not following the righteous path.

But, herein lies the problem. Meilech cannot tell right from wrong. He doesn't know a good deed from a bad deed. He is not **ממחויב** with mitzvos and I can guarantee that his soul is as pure as the day he was born. He has no aveiros.

But that doesn't mean he has a "get out of hell" free card. That doesn't mean that he has carte blanche to do whatever he likes. For example, he's not allowed to eat non-kosher food, or chometz on Pesach. But he doesn't know. He has no idea to refuse the delicious looking chocolate egg from the Easter Bunny in Regents Park on our Chol Hamoed outing.

Which means that I am responsible. On his 13th birthday, I effectively become "the man." I take on his **עול** **מצוות**. I am literally responsible for his **עולם הבא**.

This is a huge responsibility. We make choices every day and sometimes our choices may contravene or slightly veer away from the path of Torah. But we make our choices for ourselves and if we misstep it is between us and Hashem. Now, my choices don't just affect me. It is no longer just between myself and the Ribono Shel Olam. I have to make sure that my son's soul remains as pure as pure he is.

It's a gargantuan task. One I cannot do alone. And **ברוך ה'** I haven't had to.

Throughout the years Meilech has attended Side by Side school, enjoyed after school activities with Step by Step, and is now a member of Step-up Boys.

אשרינו that we have these wonderful Heimishe services in our community.

I would love to thank every single person individually who has taught, cared for, and looked after Meilech throughout the years, but I would need an entire magazine just to list all the names, probably two issues. And I daren't begin for fear of missing someone out.

Every single Step by Step volunteer, every girl who has patted him on the head, or chucked his chin. Everyone who has ever tied his shoe, put on his jacket, or given him a smile. Every yungerman who takes him by the hand with a cheery "good morning Meilech," and every bochur who gently escorts him on to the coach for camp. His motivated and dedicated teachers who so lovingly guide him and make him the best version of himself and revel in his little progresses the way I do. He is never merely a job to them... he is a vocation; a triumph.

Every member of staff, from the office administrators, to the therapists, to the support assistants. Every play worker, camp organiser, and carer. Every single one of those people has played in part in the physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing of this gorgeous little boy, who is now taking his innocent steps into manhood.

Every single one of you takes on a tiny bit of the burden of his spiritual responsibility to ensure my son maintains his purity. I am not doing this alone. I have hundreds of helping hands guiding me in ensuring my son's place in **עולם הבא**.

It is an incredible **זכות** and there are simply no words that can eloquently and completely describe my gratitude.

Because for us there is no such thing as **שפטרנו**.



When the bill arrives at a restaurant, men will each throw in £20 even though it's only for £32.50. None will have anything smaller and none will admit they want change back.
When the girls get their bills, they will bring out their phone calculators.

A man will pay £2 for a £1 item he needs.
A woman will pay £1 for a £2 item that she does not need, but it's on sale.

A man has five items in his bathroom. A toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, shampoo, and towel.
The average number of items in a typical woman's bathroom is 337. A man can only identify 20 of these.

A woman has the last word in any argument.
Anything a man says after that is the beginning of a new argument.

A woman worries about the future until she has a husband.
A man doesn't worry about the future until he gets a wife.

A successful man is one that makes more money than his wife can spend.
A successful woman is one who can find such a man.

A woman marries a man expecting he will change but he doesn't.
A man marries a woman expecting that she won't change but she does.

A woman will dress up to go shopping, water the plants, empty the trash, answer the phone, workout, read a book and to go shopping.
A man will dress up for weddings.

A woman knows everything about her children. She knows about dentist appointments, best friends, favourite foods, secret fears, and hopes and dreams.
A man is vaguely aware of some short people living in the house.





READER'S FORUM

LAST ISSUE WE ASKED: ARTS AND CRAFTS IDEAS FOR RAINY DAYS

I found this cheap and fun activity and my kids spend hours making them. Paper plate fish... all you need is some paper/plastic plates, paint, stickers, markers, and some coloured bits of paper for accessories. Add some googly eyes for extra whimsy and watch them create a whole fishy pond. Have them make mini puppet shows afterwards with their creations.



For me the best activity I can do with my children is bake with them. We make chocolate chip cookies, cupcakes, or chocolate rice krispies. Anything that little hands can cope with. I let them play with sprinkles and icing. You do have to be prepared for the mess... but their smiling colourful faces makes it totally worth it.

TOPIC FOR NEXT ISSUE: BEDTIME: HOW DO YOU TAKE THE ANGST OUT OF BEDTIME

SEND IN YOUR TIPS AND ADVICE TO THE MAGAZINE SUBMISSIONS
ADDRESS ON PAGE 2

WE ALSO WELCOME SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE TOPICS

Linguistic Linguine:

Linguine: *n.* [ling-wee-nee]. 1. A kind of pasta in the shape of thin flat strands. Origin: from Italian (small tongues).

NEW:
Language Column:
Discovering the
English Language

PORTMANTEAU WORD

A portmanteau word is a linguistic blend of words in which parts of multiple words are combined into a new word.

Portmanteau differs from a "contraction" which are formed from words that would otherwise appear together in a sequence, an example of a contraction is "do" and "not" to make "don't."

A portmanteau, on the other hand, is formed when two or more independent words each representing an individual concept, are formed together to create a new word or concept.

Examples of portmanteau words are:

- "Brunch" - breakfast and lunch
- "Smog" - smoke and fog
- "Brexite" - Britain and exit
- "Spork" - spoon and fork
- "Chillax" - chill and relax
- "Dancercise" - dancing and exercise
- "Telemarketing" - telephone and marketing

DEPENDENT ON SKILLS

BY: ROCHELLE ABRAHAMS

When teaching independent skills to a special needs child remember that it will take longer than it does with the more able child.

Why?

This may sound like a stupid question, but it is not. People who are “outside” of your home have to accept and understand that not all children and teenagers are the same.

When trying to teach a new skill to a less than able child there are a few factors you need to consider.

- ◆ Understanding what is required of the child and how best to teach it. Break it down. Teach a little at a time.
- ◆ Does the child have the physical capability to be able to do the skill you are trying to teach?
- ◆ Has the child fully understood the task? He may have understood the beginning or just the end but may not have grasped all the words you have spoken.
- ◆ Are you teaching a particular skill for the improvement of the child or for your own convenience?

Teach your child the independent skills that will help them help themselves. Build on these skills as they grow. If you don't succeed the first time, don't get frustrated. Leave it for a while and then go back to it at a later date. There may be some retention of memory which will make it easier the second, third, or maybe even the fourth time around.

If you know someone who has taught an independent skill to their special needs child, ask them how they started. Parents are really excellent helpmates, advisers, and sources of information. Everyone wants their children to have the skills which will help them.

So take independent advice from independent parents to teach independent skills.

“Quote”

Teaching is the greatest act of optimism

Colleen Wilcox

Tourette Syndrome

SOUNDS
MOVEMENTS
TICS
SOUNDS
MOVEMENTS
TICS

Tourette's syndrome is a neurological condition (affecting the brain and nervous system), characterised by a combination of involuntary noises and movements called tics..

It usually starts during childhood and continues into adulthood. In many cases Tourette's syndrome runs in families and is often associated with obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Signs and Symptoms

If your child has tics, it doesn't necessarily mean they have Tourette's syndrome. Children often develop tics before growing out of them after several months. These are known as transient tics.

For tics to be classified as Tourette's syndrome, they have to be present for at least a year and include at least one vocal tic:

Tics can be:

- ❖ Vocal sounds - such as grunting, coughing, or shouting out words
- ❖ Physical movements - such as jerking of the head or jumping up and down.

Tics can be either simple, for example making a small movement or uttering a single sound, or complex, for example, making a series of movements or speaking a long phrase.

Most people diagnosed with Tourette's syndrome have a combination of physical and vocal tics, which can be both simple and complex.

Causes

The causes of Tourette's syndrome is unknown. However, it's thought to be linked to problems with an area of the brain known as the basal ganglia.

The basal ganglia are a group of specialised brain cells located deep inside the brain. The cells help regulate the body's movements. Research shows that the basal ganglia may also play a role in higher brain functions such as motivation and decision making.

In people with Tourette's syndrome, it appears tics are a result of a temporary problem occurring inside the basal ganglia which disrupts the decision-making process. The person suddenly develops an unconscious urge to perform an action (the tic) that the conscious mind regards as both unwanted and unexplained.

Genetics appears to play a part in some cases of Tourette's syndrome, as it often runs in families.

Further evidence suggests that if one identical twin develops Tourette's syndrome, there's about a one in two chance the other twin will also develop it.

Treatment

The first and foremost important part of treatment for Tourette's syndrome is to ensure you, your child and, if needed, your child's teachers, friends and other family members all have good information and knowledge about the condition.

Next the treatment plan for tics could involve one or more of the following.

- ❖ Non medical treatments - treatments like behavioural therapy may be needed if the tics are relatively mild and infrequent.
- ❖ Medication - in cases where a person's tics are more severe and disrupt day-to-day activities, a combination of therapy and medication may be recommended.
- ❖ Surgery - in extremely rare, severe cases, surgical techniques may be suitable. This is usually only recommended as a last resort if the tics are particularly severe and fail to respond to other treatments.

Credits: www.nhs.uk

MARIA'S STORY

Living with Tourette's

Tips for Parents

Maria, aged 14, was diagnosed with Tourette's Syndrome when she was 11. At first she was apprehensive about telling her classmates, but they were understanding once she explained. Here she tells us why it is so important to educate people about this misunderstood condition.

A child with Tourette's syndrome is a person first... who happens to have TS. It is important to understand how to teach and be supportive of a child with this complex neurodevelopmental disorder. Whilst each child is unique the following are general suggestions that may help a child with TS achieve academic and social success.

I always said that my personality is so weird and outgoing that my tics almost suit it. I've just never been self-conscious about my Tourette's, it's just part of who I am and I've very sure of who I am. I feel like a lot of young people are so occupied about how other people perceive them. Nobody is really that concerned about that one pimple on your face or that bad haircut you got. And nobody's really that concerned about your tics either, if you're living with Tourette's. Just own it.

I have a lot of motor tics and some vocal tics.

When I first got my diagnosis I thought that going to school was going to be such an ordeal. I thought I was going to be ostracized and made fun of, but surprisingly, the kids at my school have been so accepting about it that it's got to the point where some of my classmates say "I wish you would have tic'd more in the middle of that test, it lightens the mood."

It's important to explain to people what Tourette's is because many people don't really understand it. Once my classmates were more educated about the condition they realised that it's not such a big deal. These days my friends don't even notice it. Some days when I have a bad day my friends are there to help me out and get through it.

If you don't have Tourette's I challenge you to stand up to people who make insensitive and ignorant jokes about people who have Tourette's.

If you do have Tourette's I challenge you to spread more awareness so that we can educate people and get rid of those insensitive jokes and tell people what Tourette's syndrome is really about.

People with Tourette's are just like anyone else, but there are a lot of misunderstandings about the condition. If we can educate people we can avoid having a TS sufferer feel the pain of humiliation of an offhanded comment or joke which can really hurt sometimes.

Credits: www.tourette.org

- ❖ Recognise that tics are involuntary movements and sounds that wax and wane and can change unpredictably. In many cases, a child with TS may attempt to suppress their tics to avoid negative attention from others. While the tics may appear to be within the child's control, they are not.
- ❖ Stress typically increases symptoms. Therefore noting what factors increase stress and implementing strategies or special education services will help reduce stress and therefore reduces symptoms.
- ❖ Identify the skills deficit that may contribute to increased stress/symptoms, as well as the strategies and supports to address the skills deficit.
- ❖ Ignore the symptoms that can be ignored. This demonstrates acceptance and normalises TS and other related symptoms. Modelling acceptance can reduce both bullying and stress and may help the child with TS focus on academics and social activities rather than tic suppression.
- ❖ Be aware of co-occurring conditions, such as Obsessive Compulsive Disorder or ADHD, which are very common for children with TS. The characteristics of these conditions are often more problematic and harder to manage than the tics themselves.
- ❖ Be creative with interventions. Teaching life-long strategies and providing supports, accommodations, and modifications are typically more effective than relying on consequences.
- ❖ Consider whether accommodations are needed for handwriting issues. Handwriting issues are among the most common difficulties for children with TS. Accommodations can include the use of a computer, tablet, or having notes provided.
- ❖ Involve the child in developing plans and strategies for managing symptoms that can be difficult or impossible to ignore.
- ❖ Promote communication with friends, teachers, and caregivers. Be sure to share the child's strengths and achievements, and not just their weaknesses.

Credits: www.tourette.org

TOP 10

IF LAZINESS WOULD HURT...

BY: F. STEIN

Come on... admit it... you've all had those moments when you've taken the easy way out. When making the effort seems like...well... too much effort. Well, don't worry... you're in good company. Here's a list of "the lazy options." How many have you committed. Be honest now.. I won't tell anyone....I'm even too lazy to gossip.

- 1 *If I can't reach it; I don't need it.*
- 2 *You use your fluffy slippers or socks as a broom*
- 3 *You've stuffed dirty dishes in the oven to avoid tidying up before guests arrive*
- 4 *You hang your creased dress in the bathroom so that steam from the shower will "iron" it*
- 5 *Every child has a different menu at supper - each one a mystery microwaved leftover container.*
- 6 *Folding washing?? You can wear clothes straight from the dryer. In fact, you wonder why you even have a cupboard.*
- 7 *If it rolls under the bed, it's considered gone forever.*
- 8 *You sent a text to someone in the next room because you couldn't be bothered getting up or raising your voice.*
- 9 *You stay up half the night because you're too lazy to get off the couch to go to bed.*
- 10 *A list of 10 items only has 9, because you couldn't be bothered thinking of a tenth.*

"QUOTABLES"

"I want time to sit and read, take a nap and snack. Basically I want to be in Kindergarten. "

Unknown

"Progress isn't made by early risers. It's made by lazy men trying to find easier ways to do something."

Robert A. Heinlein

"I've heard hard work never killed anyone, but I say why take the chance?"

Ronald Reagan

Time to Love



Once upon a time all feelings and

emotions went to a coastal island for a vacation. Each one was having a good time according to their nature. Suddenly, a warning of an impending storm was announced and everyone was advised to evacuate the island.

The announcement caused sudden panic. All rushed to their boats. Even damaged boats were quickly repaired and commissioned for duty.

Yet, Love did not wish to flee quickly. There was so much to do. But as the clouds darkened, Love realised it was time to leave. Alas, there were no boats to spare. Love looked around with hope.

Just then Prosperity passed by in a luxurious boat. Love shouted, "Prosperity,

could you please take me in your boat?"

"No," replied Prosperity, "my boat is full of precious possessions, gold and silver. There is no place for you."

A little later Vanity came by in a beautiful boat. Again Love shouted, "Could you help me, Vanity? I am stranded and need a lift. Please take me with you."

Vanity responded haughtily, "No, I cannot take you with me. My boat will get soiled with your muddy feet."

Sorrow passed by after some time. Again, Love asked for help. But it was to no avail. "No, I cannot take you with me. I am so sad. I want to be by myself."

When Happiness passed by a few minutes later, Love again called for help. But Happiness was so happy that it did not look around, hardly concerned about anyone.

Love was growing restless and dejected. Just then somebody called out, "Come Love, I will take you with me." Love did not know who was being so magnanimous, but jumped on to the boat, greatly relieved that she would reach a safe place.

On getting off the boat, Love met Knowledge. Puzzled, Love inquired, "Knowledge, do you know who so generously gave me a lift just when no one else wished to help?"

Knowledge smiled, "Oh, that was Time."

"And why would Time stop to pick me and take me to safety?" Love wondered.

Knowledge smiled with deep wisdom and replied, "Because only Time knows your true greatness and what you are capable of. Only Love can bring peace and great happiness in this world."

"The important message is that when we are prosperous, we overlook love. When we feel important, we forget love. Even in happiness and sorrow we forget love. Only with time do we realize the importance of love. Why wait that long? Why not make love a part of your life today?"

Credits: <http://academictips.org>



LEARNED HELPLESSNESS

BY: CELIA TAYLOR

Letting go happens in small increments in the life of a parent. A child rejects his mother's milk; he loosens his grip on the fingers holding him up as he begins to walk, he grabs the spoon to bring it to his own mouth; comforting himself becomes automatic when he wakes up briefly in the night. Then he starts to have an opinion about what sneakers to buy and gets embarrassed when his mother kisses him.

The progression of steps toward independence in kids with Down's syndrome occurs as surely as it does with their ordinary peers. Although our children tend to linger in a particular stage longer than an ordinary child, and the level of independence depends on the individual, people with Down's syndrome can and must become as self-reliant as they are able to me. My children will grow up to have lives of their own. The skills I teach my non-disabled children are the very same skills my child with Down's syndrome needs to learn, i.e. telling the left shoe from the right, pouring his own juice, making his own sandwich, picking out the clothes he will wear for school. This is the voice of reason speaking. So why am I still picking out his clothes, making his sandwiches, pouring his drinks and putting his shoes on for him?

On an intellectual level, I know he has to learn these things. At 11, given what I believe is his current level of development, I know he is capable of doing much more than he does. By report the same is true of my friends' children. But what is my reality? My reality is that I am hesitant to allow him to follow the natural progression towards self-reliance. It is a hesitancy born of fear and of love. It is sometimes deliberate and sometimes unconscious but always well-intentioned. Who in the world wants her child to fail, to get hurt, even to stumble? I recently watched as my son tried to get a game of "Kick the Can" started with the neighbour's children. After seeing he couldn't get their attention, I intervened and did it for him. I couldn't bear to watch as he sat dejectedly with his head in his hands. The game did get started and he had a ball, but did I help him? Or did I just show him that he needn't bother to try next time?

A second reality involves old habits and expectations. If you have always taken the bowl and the cup out of the cupboard and poured the cereal, milk, and juice for breakfast, chances are you'll continue to do it longer than you need because daily routines are hard to give up. The expectation on the part of my child is also a factor. On one recent morning, my son was up before me. I soon discovered him sitting at the kitchen table, ravenous, waiting for me to get his breakfast. He is fully capable of getting a cup and bowl from the dishwasher, milk and juice from the fridge and cereal from the cupboard. But his expectation is that mum is supposed to do it.

Reality also states that time is a factor in my everyday life. There is a finite amount of time to get the kids on the bus

and myself out the door in the morning. So if being on time for appointments means putting on my child's coat and shoes. That is what will happen. At stressful times of the day, I have always chosen what is the most expeditious. I also have two other children, and at aged two and five they demand a lot of my attention. They are a definite factor in how my time is managed throughout the day. Less and less time seems to be devoted to creating an autonomous atmosphere for the child who needs it most.

Finally, there are times when I don't give my son enough credit. The assumption that he can't complete a task is unfair. Until he tries it, how do I know? For the longest time, I didn't bother giving my son household chores. I figured he couldn't do them. He didn't make the bed or set the table or put the toys away. One enlightening day, he surprised me by volunteering to feed the dog. I let him. A lot of it didn't actually end up in the dog's dish, but so what? He put the bag down and, with a big grin said, "I did it!" That was the summer he slowly but surely started doing other jobs around the house. I had assumed wrong.

The reasons for my son's learned helplessness are just excuses. I have already started to re-examine the way I do things. Resolve has replaced languidness. My expectations are much higher and reflect what I believe he is capable of. The knobs on his dresser now have painted pictures of trousers, shirts, socks, and underwear, so he can get out his own clothes. The milk carton is a quart size so he can pour it easily. The spice cupboard is now the cereal and snack cupboard, placed lower for easy reach. We practice the phrases he needs to be social with the kids next door. Little changes reap big rewards.

Our children and young adults with Down's syndrome are capable, wonderful people. To keep them from developing to their full potential is to cheat them of the autonomy and dignity they deserve. The same energy we put into teaching them to be helpless, unintentional though it may be, can be channelled differently. It is extremely difficult to "unteach" them after they've got used to having full-time servants. But the discovery of their ability to be self-reliant is soul-satisfying. It's the thing to remember when this wonderful, capable person tell you to go jump in the lake when you tell him, "Do it yourself."

Postscript: This morning, my son got his own breakfast. I insisted. The dog had a feast on the orange juice and Cheerios that fell, but I told him it just takes practice. As he walked towards the bus afterwards, he turned to look back at me. He smiled and was gone. There was a fleeting picture in my mind of my first born getting on a city bus, off to work and friends in the future. I walked back into the kitchen, smiling as I washed the kitchen floor.

(Reprinted from the newsletter of the group Down syndrome/Aim High! June 1996)

Don't Worry About What You Eat

For those of you who watch what you eat. Here's the final word on nutrition and health. It's a relief to know the truth after all those conflicting medical studies.

- 1. The Japanese eat very little fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.*
- 2. The Mexicans eat a lot of fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.*
- 3. The Japanese drink very little red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.*
- 4. The Italians drink excessive amounts of red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.*
- 5. The Germans drink a lot of beers and eat lots of sausages and fats and suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.*

CONCLUSION: Eat and drink what you like. Apparently, speaking English is what's bad for your health.

Now You Just Eat

In a previous issue I touched on the topic of “executive functions.” Here I will discuss these in greater detail.

WHAT ARE EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS?

Executive function means self-directed action. This means the actions one needs to carry out in order to be successful in life. Executive function skills develop over time. Executive function skills mature only in the late 20s and beyond.

Those with ADHD, and ASD their executive function skills will never mature. They will always need external support for their executive function deficit.

THE 11 EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS (PART ONE)

I like to call executive function skills life skills. These are skills that you are born with.

There are 11 “executive functions.” If you suffer from ADHD or ADD you will very likely have challenges with these executive functions.

In this issue I will discuss six of these “life skills,” with the rest to follow in a future issue.

Metacognition This is the voice in your head that is talking to you about the choices you are able to make in life. Those with ADHD have the voice in their head set at a much lower volume or turned off completely.

Are you able to stop doing what you want to be doing to do something else you don't want to do of your own accord and on time?

Motivation is sticking to a project until completion. Can you stay focused on your work without wandering off and forgetting to come back to finish it? Can you stick to jobs that are boring just as easily as jobs that are interesting? Can you finish jobs till the end, especially for boring jobs?

Do you finish projects instead of having partially completed projects lying around?

Flexibility is not the kind of physical flexibility developed in yoga or gymnastics. This refers to mental flexibility. When you are faced with a problem, how easily can you “flexibilise” yourself to find an appropriate “good enough” solution?

Flexible thinking skills are one of the keys to life's success. Do you try a different approach when you are stuck? When you plan a project do you get stuck on doing it perfectly or are you happy to do the job in a good enough fashion? Black and white/perfectionist/all or nothing thinking are the symptoms of challenged flexible thinking or rigid thinking. This also refers to having trouble *transitioning* from one activity or task to another. If you learn a skill in one setting are you able to transfer the knowledge to another one with ease?

Do you have trouble transitioning from one activity or time frame to another?

When you are faced with a task do you know how to independently break down the job to reach completion?

Sustained Attention means the ability to stay focused on a task. This is especially true for the ADHD mind. Do you sometimes Hyper-focus for hours on interesting projects, and Hypo focus meaning jump from task to task without focusing and completing the task? This could happen when you are faced with a boring task or find it difficult to break down a task.

Are you able to stay focused on tasks you don't like as well as tasks you do like?

Response Inhibition/Self-Control is another way of saying controlling impulsive behaviour. Blurting, reacting, spending, eating. This is connected to being easily distracted by your environment and not having the metacognitive ability to tell yourself “No not now” or “This is not a good thing to do.”

Are you able to stop yourself from blurting out in social settings?

Do you make a lot of impulse buys?

Working Memory is another critical executive function skill that directly impacts the effectiveness and efficiency of the other skills. Working memory is the part of your thinking process where you keep track of the information to use, like a notepad. An example is being able to multiply 45 and 29 in your head. Another example is being able to remember directions to somewhere you have never been to. If you have trouble doing these things without writing it down, you have challenges with working memory.

Most people can keep track of about 7 chunks of information at a time. Working memory is also described as being the junction in a road system. All of the other executive function skills (roads) converge and have to pass through working memory.

If you have a weaker working memory you will have many more challenges with organisation and time management.

Are you able to remember all the directions a teacher tells you without forgetting a step and without writing them down?

Part Two and details of how to get help to follow in the next issue.

To get in touch with Faigy

Email: focuswithfaigy@gmail.com

Phone/text: 07805 159 803

Website: www.focuswithfaigy.com

Support for staff working with children and young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) & their families in Hackney

We are pleased to introduce **Emma Davies** and **Lizzie Hampson** (ASD Assistant Psychologists), who have joined the CAMHS Disability Team at the Hackney Ark to offer school staff and families support to complement and collaborate with existing ASD services in the borough.

- ⇒ Emma and Lizzie are able to offer **short-term, focussed support** to families of children/young people with an ASD diagnosis (with or without Learning Difficulties), aged up to 19 years across both mainstream & specialist school settings:
 - * **This short-term work (up to 6 sessions) aims to help families directly with difficulties (for example, issues with communication, behaviour, eating, or sleep).** The work includes implementing behavioural interventions; developing individualised support plans; encouraging more socially appropriate behaviour; increasing day-to-day skills; developing emotional understanding; advising on adjustments to the home and/or school environment.
 - * This work can also be provided to families, where appropriate, of children currently **waiting for an ASD assessment** through the Hackney ARK. This short-term work would continue to aim to support families with understanding and managing behaviour.
- ⇒ Emma and Lizzie are able to organise and run **ASD specific workshops** and to provide **consultation, teaching and training to schools, other staff and parents/carers**, to develop an understanding of ASD by offering practical advice and signposting to local resources.
- ⇒ In the future, Emma and Lizzie hope to organise and support **drop-in sessions** for staff and families in specialist and mainstream schools where staff and families can be provided with practical information and signposted to local resources.

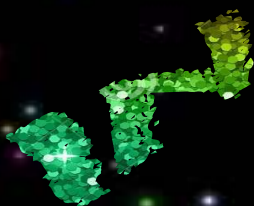
An important part of the work is bridging the gap between home and school and working collaboratively with families and carers, professionals and the wider network around the child/young person.

How can I access this support for children and young people with ASD? By completing the ASD Assistant CAMHS Disability Team referral form with as much relevant information as possible. Please note that referrals cannot be accepted for families where there are current safeguarding concerns or complex issues. If you would like to know more or if you have any questions about what Emma and Lizzie can offer, please contact Emma Davies or Lizzie Hampson on 0207 014 7071.

PAR-PESACH PAINTING

Our evening began by welcoming the ladies to join us in a painting contest followed by a milky dessert buffet, led by Mrs Esty Shushitski. The ladies were divided into 4 teams and were each given a canvas and a picture. 2 team members from each team were shown the picture, one of whom had their hands tied behind their back, and one their eyes blindfolded. They then had to give instructions to the rest of the team as to how to paint the picture. Together with true spirit and teamwork they recreated the picture to the best of their abilities.

At the end of the evening the four teams selected one member to come up and show their picture, which once combined were four parts of one picture. the evening ended with a raffle for a copy of Toby's new book, won by Mrs Surele Konig.



We were delighted once again to share a day out with our In Touch families to the exciting venue of Paradise Wildlife Park, Broxbourne. After a pleasant coach ride we entered a world of animals and fun. This was a truly special way to spend our Chol Hamoed. After a busy Yom Tov of being cooped up we got the opportunity to see something else on the other side of the fence! From the penguin show to the feeding of the big cats, the treetop walk to the monkeys eating bananas. A day enjoyed by all ages!

PARADISE WILDLIFE PARK

RABBI ELIYA STROMBERG



We were honoured and privileged to welcome Rabbi Eliya Stromberg, founder of FathersConnect. Rabbi Stromberg who has a Down syndrome Son himself spoke how we, as special-needs parents, have special needs of our own. We have our own emotional needs. He reminded us that in order to take care of our emotional needs we need to get to a place of "acceptance." He gave us tips and advice on how to reach the point of acceptance.



Rabbi Stromberg reminded us that by achieving acceptance we can experience joy. Hashem gave us these special children and we deserve to be joyous in the experience of being Hashem's shlichim in this monumental task.



We were very excited to honour our ladies with a trip to Canvey Island. After a pleasant coach ride we arrived at the home of Family De Vries, who kindly lent us their house for the day. The theme was beautifully portrayed in an elegant setup, together with a delicious fish and salad lunch, followed by waffles and fresh cream for dessert. We then played a lively game of bingo, followed by some time to relax in the exquisite garden. The coach then arrived to transport us back to the grind of daily life having been treated, refreshed and relaxed!



CANVEY ISLAND

SMILES OF MISFORTUNE

BY: F. STEIN

“L laugh and the world laughs with you,
weep and you weep alone.”

With all due respect to Ella Wheeler
Wilcox, author of this well-known maxim, but she
clearly has never met any In Touch parents.

The theme for the seventeenth annual In
Touch Convention at the Normandie Hotel in
Bournemouth was “smile and the world smiles
with you, cry... and you turn to In Touch.”

Well there were tears aplenty... tears of
laughter, that is.

The opening ice-breaker had us literally
mouth-open with giggles. A hilarious game which
involved spreading our lips with a plastic lip retractor that looks like it was designed in
a medieval torture chamber, or by a sadistic dentist, and trying to mouth obscure and
ridiculous words that seemed to be entirely made up of plosive and sibilant sounds.
Have you ever tried making a “b”, “p”, or “s” sound without being able to move your

lips? Try it, I'll guarantee you'll be giggling
before you can utter the first consonant. So
whilst half of us were trying desperately not
to drool everywhere, the other half of us were
bent over in stitches as they frantically tried
to guess what we were trying to say.
This year we were delighted to have Mrs
Nechama Rechnitzer from Manchester join
us as our Guest of Honour. Her vivacious and
bubbly nature was a pure joy to have around.
Every word she said was infused with
enthusiasm and warmth. It was as if she was
the human embodiment of “smile and the
world smiles with you.”

With happy faces all around, it was time to
make those smiles shine even brighter. A





make-up tutorial by the ever radiant Chaygit really made those faces glow. With laughter, beauty tips, and demonstrations, it was the perfect indulgent evening for a harried mother. After all, when do we have time to relax and play dress up. For one evening we all felt like pampered princesses.

An evening of fun at Laser Quest provided a wealth of merriment. Having been assigned hilarious nicknames by one certain indefatigable sister (you know who you are) it was every man for himself... or should

we say every Chasid for himself? Entering the maze we were suddenly as free as kids in a playground, running around, trying to "shoot" at each other, whilst trying not to fall over in fits of giggles. The flashing lights and the constant bleeping of the laser guns were muted by the pure sounds of glee echoing around the darkened maze.



Of course, the fun, mirth, and sharing jokes aside,

there is nothing as relaxing as having a few days where responsibility just falls away from your shoulders. A world where food is served and magically cleaned away; when you go to sleep unharried and relaxed cuddling the adorable emoji pillow we all received; when the only reason you need to set your alarm clock is to wake up to enjoy a lavish breakfast; where the pressure of time is non-existent. It's a world where smiles abound and every tear be it one of laughter, or sorrow, gets shared over a cup of coffee, a biscuit, and a

sympathetic ear.

And being that this is Britain... the rain raineth every day, but none of us felt the cloudy misery of the unpredictable British weather. Instead, with In Touch and with Mrs Rechnitzer, we all felt the inner warmth and happiness of the brightest summer day... and there was nothing but smiles all round.



A decorative border surrounds the central text area, featuring a variety of emojis such as smiling faces, thumbs up, crying faces, and faces with different hairstyles and accessories. Interspersed among the emojis are small, colorful confetti dots in shades of red, green, blue, and yellow.

MEMORIES OF IN TOUCH

BY: NAOMI RECHNITZER

*A warm welcome in the lounge, listen to the sound,
Of greeting and meeting and hugs all around.
Spending time relaxing or learning pathways new,
Time set aside especially for you.*

*Who has time to sit through a meal?
Here at In Touch that is the deal.
Nothing to clear, nothing to prepare,
Even go for a swim, if you dare.*

*Cushions to hug and goody bags to savour,
All this adds to the unique InTouch flavour.
Chatting and talking to friends old and new,
Right through the day something special for ladies to do.*

*Laser quest with a particularly mischievous sister,
Trying to hit Tzirele, but we think she missed her.
Make up tips to pamper us galore,
A film, a talk, and so much more.*

*Ladies who cycled. Taking a trip on an open air bus.
Or just relaxing in bed in the afternoon, seriously no fuss.
Time spent crocheting gartels, whilst sharing news,
Exploring ideas and changing views.*

*Toby and Tzirele always there with a smile,
The InTouch team went the extra mile.
Backed up by Leah and babysitting by Lily,
Ablly assisted by the lovely Gitty.*

*My how quickly our time has flown,
Time to pack our bags and head for home.
But the smiles will stay warmly in our hearts,
For friendship, love, and care never depart.*



ONE WITH SKIRT

BY: FEIGI STEIN

*All I needed was a skirt
One a bit more interesting
Not yet another in navy or black,
How about that one in pink?*

*New style, new shade, fantastic price
Right length, right size, fits just there
But now I realise with a sigh
I have no matching top to wear*

*Log in to ebay for a click and scroll
Searching, choosing, choices galore
So many options... this one or that
Bargain sale prices, tough to ignore.*

*A top now chosen, checkout done,
A cute white number with delicate lace
Soft white flowers finely interwoven
Perfect complement for an outfit with grace*

*But wait a moment, we're not quite done
This sheer white fabric hides not much
I have no t-shirt that will fit this look
Pink t-shirt, for that finishing touch.*

*Tops Galore, here I come
Lycra or cotton, a body perhaps
A matching necklace, and earrings of course,
All the best quality... no fashion mishaps.*

*Top and bottom, we've got that covered
I try on the ensemble, a satisfied smile
Pink skirt, white top, I'm suitably clad
This is beginning to look just right.*

I twirl in the mirror, checking this way and that

A smile on my lips as my outfit's complete

*But something is off... I cannot quite say
That is until I look down at my feet.*

Of course, there is always that one final step

*The one vital detail I always enthuse
A mental admonishment, I almost forgot
The all important finish... the high heeled shoes.*

I look through my collection... all 50 pairs

Discarding stilettos, pumps and wedges aside

I have no pair to match this pretty ensemble

Any excuse for a trip to Stride

Out comes the wallet as the credit card groans

I pay for my purchases with a wink and a smirk

A week's worth of wages, strewn over my bed

And all for the sake of one little skirt.

intouch

with kids

D
i
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STANDING MISS

Misunderstanding

c i i i

See eye to eye

FUN FACTS

- ⇒ Rubber bands last longer when refrigerated
- ⇒ A shark is the only known fish that can blink with both eyes
- ⇒ A crocodile cannot stick its tongue out

