


**Baltimore News**

# Baltimore Community Kollel Prepares For Twelfth Successful Year

It's a place where young boys can find a *chavrusa* to help them with their homework; where retirees can go to learn at any time of the day; where anyone can find a *minyan*, a coffee, a Danish, and a sympathetic person's listening ear. It's a place filled with the *kol Torah* day and night. It's the Baltimore Community Kollel.

The Baltimore Community Kollel was founded eleven years ago by Rabbi Mordechai Bamberger. "I saw *frum* kids, 13 and 14 years old, who were going off the *derech*," explains Rabbi Bamberger. "I believed that these kids were just frustrated in school and looking for different avenues for satisfaction in their lives. I felt that if I could make them feel successful, there would be a better outcome. So I created the *kollel*, a place where these kids could go not only to find a *chavrusa* who could help them succeed in school, but to feel comfortable, noticed and appreciated."

As the *kollel* developed, it became much more than just a place to learn and *daven*. It became a community resource where people at various stages of life can go and feel noticed and appreciated.

Today the Baltimore Community Kollel is under the leadership of Harav Nesanel Kostelitz, *shlita*, Rosh Kollel, the Rav of Congregation Machzikei Torah. It comprises seven *yungeleit* who learn morning and afternoon *seder* together, and with children and *baalei batim* in the evenings.

There is always something going on at the *kollel*, beginning with *Shacharis* at 6:50 or 7:00, followed by learning and *shiurim* through the day. A *shiur* on *parashas hashava* for retirees, a midday *Daf Yomi shiur* given by Harav Kostelitz, a *tefillah shiur* on Sunday evenings given by Rabbi Yerachmiel Goldman, a night



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Learning in the Baltimore Community Kollel *beis medrash*.



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L-R: Reb Aron Gerstein learning with Rabbi Moshe Schuchman in the Baltimore Community Kollel *beis medrash*.

*chaburah* attended by former *kollel yungeleit*, and a *chaburah* that learns *hilchos bein adam l'chavero* with Rabbi Mordechai Weiskopf on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, are just a few of the learning opportunities at the *kollel*.

Many school-age children come to the *kollel* every evening, where *yungeleit* and *baalei batim* help them with their homework or learn the subject of their choice with them, helping them feel a stronger

connection to *Yiddishkeit*. This is all done free of charge.

Harav Kostelitz is present most of the day and evening to answer *she'eilos*, learn with *baalei batim*, and connect with anyone who comes in.

For the new Elul *zman*, the *kollel* welcomes two new *yungeleit*, Rabbi Zechariah Tokar and Rabbi Yehuda Finkel. Rabbi Tokar and Rabbi Finkel will be leading various evening *chaburos*, including a *chaburah* for former *kollel yungeleit* who are



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L-R: Shlomo Zalman Shapiro and Rabbi Yaakov Yosef Shapiro learning in the Baltimore Community Kollel *beis medrash*.

now working, with whom they will learn *halachah b'iyun* on an advanced level.

In addition, beginning this Elul, Harav Laib Taub, *shlita*, formerly a *maggid shiur* at the Yeshiva of Philadelphia, will be leading a *chaburah* of retirees who are *talmidei chachamim*, learning on a high level.

In any given week, a few hundred people come to the *kollel*; the *Rosh Kollel*, the *yungeleit*, and Rabbi Bamberger make it a point to notice them and attend to them. Not only do they try to help them find a *chavrusa*, but they connect with them personally, find out about their situation, and see what can be done to help where necessary.

In fact, the *kollel* has provided job placement services, *shadchanus*, general counseling and mentoring, and much more.

As Rabbi Shmuel Friedman, one of the *yungeleit*, explained, "The *kollel* is a central place where anyone can come anytime. Sure, people can go to any shul and learn; but at the *kollel* they feel a connection. For ourselves, the *kollel yungeleit*, we see how our learning is *mashpia* on the *tzibbur*. In addition, Harav Kostelitz is a big asset to

the *kollel*, providing wonderful *shimmush* in many aspects of *rabbanus*."

Many people help make the *kollel* what it is. Rabbi Moshe Shuchman runs the Shabbos *minyanim*. Rabbi Rafael Cohen and Rabbi Yudi Brody serve as *roshei chaburah*. Rabbi Shmuel Friedman helps encourage teenagers to come and learn. And there are many more.

"The *kollel* is a genuine *makom Torah*. *Davening* at our *minyanim* is serious, not rushed," emphasizes Rabbi Bamberger. "Nevertheless, we also strive to make it a warm place, a place where we care about people and take an interest in their welfare. We serve cake and coffee all the time, and sometimes cholent. We try to make people feel at home, feel that someone cares about them. This was the dimension that was missing, and this is what I wanted to create when I started the *kollel*. We are always trying to make it better, but *baruch Hashem* we have accomplished a lot for the Baltimore community."

For more information about the Baltimore Community Kollel, please contact Rabbi Bamberger at 443-527-4622.

## Children Hold Yard Sale to Raise Funds for Chai Lifeline



On Sunday, Aug. 17, Avigayil Zelinger, who just turned 10, together with her siblings, organized and ran a successful yard sale to benefit Chai Lifeline. To advertise the event they hung up posters and distributed flyers. They baked cookies and collected from generous friends and neighbors a large variety of gently used items to sell. Others helped set up, sell and clean up. Avigayil plans to donate the entire proceeds — \$370! — to the Baltimore chapter of Chai Lifeline.