

# Spotlight

Newsletter  
August 2020  
Issue 6



FOCUS ON

## Com-Hab Program

One of the amazing programs that is offered by the OPWDD is the Community Habilitation Program, otherwise known as Com Hab. The goal of Com Hab is to increase the person's independence as much as possible, and to improve his/her quality of life by teaching important life skills. An experienced worker works with the person on goals such as social skills, money management, community skills and daily living skills. The goals and activities are developed based on the needs of the person, the family dynamics, and the home environment.

Com Hab transforms the individual's unstructured time into a positive, educational and productive experience. Using an appropriate combination of home and community settings, the Com Hab Department strives to maximize the overall experience that the person and family get from this program.

Com Hab provides opportunities for going on community outings and engaging in other recreational activities that may otherwise be difficult to access. For example, staff can accompany people to the gym, the grocery, or to the bank, and use those experiences to help the person work towards his/her goals..

Yedei Chesed's Com Hab Program is highly adaptable. Everything is determined based on the person's preferences. The Coordinators endeavor to match up each person with a staff that will best suit the person's personality and skill set.

Staff are encouraged to develop a relationship with the person, and to act as the person's mentor. In addition to the regular one-on-one sessions, participants are invited to very exciting Com Hab Shabbatons and trips. The group setting helps individuals develop communication and socialization skills and gives them the opportunity to model the successful behaviors of others.

*“The goal of Com Hab is to increase the person's independence as much as possible*

There are funds available to purchase any tools or equipment that are necessary in order to reach the assigned goals. This can include exercise equipment, kitchen utensils, outdoor toys and games. Prior approval is necessary for such purchases.

Yedei Chesed is excited to announce that we have begun using a new software called eVero. Families who use Com Hab will receive special eVero tablets, and workers will document the

work that they do directly on the app. This will avoid all the hassle involved in paperwork processes and will allow staff to be paid on time. Furthermore, the eVero app will enable each person's progress to be closely monitored, since the workers will be documenting their work in real time. This will assist the coordinators ensure that every person is maximizing their potential.

To find out more about Yedei Chesed Community Habilitation programs, please reach out to Mr. Shlomo Szydlow at 845-425-0887, ext. 217.



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Camp Mommy is a beautiful getaway for Yedei Chesed mothers. It gives them the opportunity to step away from their hectic daily schedules and enjoy the company of their Yedei Chesed friends. The ladies were treated to gourmet meals, comfortable accommodations and a fantastic program!

Camp Mommy took place on August 11-13 in the luxurious King David Mansion, conveniently located in Monroe NY. The

ladies enjoyed the gorgeous outdoor pool, crafts, massages, Zumba dancing, and many other activities.

The ladies were fortunate to hear from an inspiring guest speaker, Mrs. Brenda Katina, a mother of six children with Down's Syndrome. With a good deal of humor and wit, she described her experiences raising children with medical and developmental disabilities. Mrs. Katina empowered the ladies to focus on the positive side of things, and to keep an upbeat attitude throughout the day. Yitty Knoblach was also invited to entertain the ladies with her fantastic comedies.

Thank you, Mrs. Suzanne Fishman for a beautiful program!



The girls are having a great time at the fabulous monthly Sibshops! On Sunday, July 5th, they got together outdoors for a fun jewelry making party. Each girl received a jewelry kit, and crafted her own stunning necklace! There were several designs to choose from, and each girl created her own unique masterpiece. The girls were also treated to delicious ice cream.

On Sunday, August 2, Sibshops girls were invited to enjoy a refreshing summer swim in a lovely heated outdoor pool.

This past Sunday, the girls went on a major trip to Six Flags Great Adventure! Over 30 girls joined on this fantastic trip, where they enjoyed the thrilling roller coasters and other attractions.



"Empower Your Chodesh" events take place every Rosh Chodesh. Ladies get a chance to take a break, reconnect with themselves and recharge for the coming month.

The ladies joined together for a beautiful "Empower Your Chodesh" event on Rosh Chodesh Av. Rabbi Rabinowitz spoke about how we can keep our balance and stay objective, letting go of the things that hold us back from giving to ourselves. The ladies also enjoyed light refreshments and created a lovely craft.

On Rosh Chodesh Elul, a beautiful pool was rented for a refreshing swim.



A very exciting Com Hab Shabbaton will be taking place September 10-12, at the Holiday Inn in Mt. Kisco! Covid precautions, according to the regulations, will be taken.

To find out more about the Shabbaton, please contact Mrs. Suri Spielman at 845.425.0887 ext 249.

# Day Services

The Day Services Department now offers a complete gym, fully equipped with the best machines! The gym includes treadmills, elliptical trainers, bicycles and many other sports equipment. The men will be able to use these machines to exercise regularly.

Exercising can lead to significant improvements in cognitive health, self-esteem, social skills and many other areas. Exercise is also effective in dealing with depression, stress, anxiety, ADHD and more. Research indicates that even a moderate amount of exercise can really make a difference. No matter the age or fitness level, anyone can learn to use exercise as a powerful tool. We look forward to using the new gym to further improve the lives of our program participants.



We are pleased to announce the grand re-opening of the Women's Day Program's newly renovated location! The renovated facility includes many wonderful amenities that will greatly enhance the program. These include activity rooms which are designed to improve cognitive, social, and emotional development, and a state-of-the-art kitchen, which will enable the ladies to cook and bake their own meals.

The Women's Day Programs are run by Mrs. Miriam Leah Schmeltzer, in conjunction with Mrs. Suri Spielman. A seamless program of educational, social and vocational opportunities which are coordinated with the person's home environment is provided. There is also an emphasis on community inclusion. Small groups take short trips into the community each day, which include volunteering at local businesses, shopping, and recreational activities at local parks. Life has its challenges and opportunities and for each person they are unique. For some, the availability of the right tools, guidance and support brings about the opportunity to meet these challenges in the best way possible. With this strong foundation, each day brings a chance to celebrate accomplishments, discover individuality and understand what brings happiness. At Yedei Chesed, people are presented with a wide array of skill-building opportunities that foster individual independence and productivity, greatly enhancing each person's quality of life.

To find out more about these fantastic programs, please contact Mrs. Miriam Leah Schmeltzer at 845.425.0887 ext. 218.

✓ Cooking Classes

✓ ABA Methodology

✓ Social Skills

✓ Job Coaching

✓ Academic Program

✓ Recreational Activities

# THANK YOU, RAMAPO POLICE

Aba Moshe Baruchov and Arie Kandel visited the Ramapo Police Department! They expressed their appreciation for the service that the Ramapo Police officers perform for the community. They brought cookies with them as a gesture of support to the officers and presented the officers with beautiful posters, praising the Police Department for their heroic actions. Arie also read a poem that he wrote, thanking the Police Department for keeping us safe. The Ramapo Police Department greatly appreciated their visit.



## ASK THE THERAPIST

**Q: As the summer draws to a close, we are all left wondering what will be with the school year. We don't know whether schools will remain open, or if we will be forced to quarantine once more. How do we deal with all this uncertainty? And how can we grow from it?**

We are living in times that are uncertain. We are living in unprecedented times. We have never before lived through a global pandemic. How do we respond, how do we react? Uncertainty means that in these days, life feels tentative; our old normal, a previous typical day, has been replaced with uncertainty. All of our schedules have been thrown into confusion. We are enveloped in doubt.

In his recent presentation, Making Tisha B'av Meaningful Today, Dr. David Pelcovitz presented a study that gives us an idea of how to center ourselves. Dr. Pelcovitz described the study: A person was taken to the bottom of a hill and was asked to estimate the steepness of the hill. If the person was there alone, then the hill would look very steep to him. If the person was standing together with someone at his side, the hill would look less steep. The closer he is to the person by his side, the less steep the hill looks and the less tired he gets walking up the hill. This study drives home the message that connection to others creates calmness. It helps us see the world around us as a quieter, less 'steep,' less dangerous place. Notice that this does not in any way change the hill, of course; what changes is our perceptions, our experience of it.

So, while maintaining the necessary safety guidelines, let us connect in a deep way with others: with our parents, our children, our neighbors, our friends. Let's try to notice and recognize the needs of others and connect to them. If we can work on feeling connected to our brothers and sisters, then the hill of fear, confusion, and uncertainty will appear achievable, and we shall persevere.

*--Eliezer Schwadron, LCSW*

