

Wherever you are...  
 ...call home  
 and connect to your Jewish heritage  
 in just one hour a week



IN THIS ISSUE

**Learners Without Borders**

PaL goes international with partners signing up all over the European continent

**Networking over Breakfast**

PaL's chairman Dov Harris explains the organisation's goals to Golders Green members of the Business Networking Initiative

**Cheesecake Recipe Cards**

First they baked the cheesecake, then they made the call to PaL!

**PaL Partner Survey**

Overwhelmingly positive feedback received from our partners

PO Box 48547  
 London NW4 9AF  
 08000 J-LEARN (553 276)

[www.phoneandlearn.org](http://www.phoneandlearn.org)  
[info@phoneandlearn.org](mailto:info@phoneandlearn.org)

Registered Charity Number  
 1110416

PaL is dedicated in lasting memory  
 of Sammy Homburger ז"ל



**PaLs**

The Newsletter for Friends of Phone and Learn

No 8 | July 2010

Learners Without Borders -  
**PaL**, Where No Passport Is Necessary!

The volcanic ash fiasco and resultant airport closures in early Spring proved without a doubt that we really do now live in a global village. Hundreds of miles away from the scene of the Icelandic eruption, yeshiva bochurim en route from New York to Bnei Brak found themselves stranded in London airports unable to reach their destinations or return home and parents who'd left their kids with friends and family for a weekend getaway found their vacations lasting a lot longer than anticipated!

PaL of course has long understood the benefits (as opposed to the inconveniences!) of the global village. In recent months we have gone somewhat international, with many London, Manchester and Gateshead-based tutors making weekly calls to learning partners in places as far flung as the Netherlands, Switzerland and even South Africa (at no extra cost to themselves of course). As Programme Coordinator Judy Silkoff puts it: "As long as the time difference is not too prohibitive and their spoken English is reasonably fluent, we are thrilled to be able to help those in places without many Jewish learning opportunities increase their Jewish knowledge via our friendly, flexible and enjoyable system!"

South African father-of-two Peter W\*, who started learning with his tutor Rabbi D\* nearly a year ago, is keen to extol the benefits of 'PaL International'!

"I get on really well with Rabbi D – we learn the weekly Torah portion together for an hour every Tuesday morning – sometimes over regular phone lines and sometimes via Skype. It works brilliantly, despite the physical distance."

Closer to home, Irish student Neil O\* is learning Gemorah Megilla with his London-based tutor Joshua S\*. They too learn via Skype wherever possible but in their case the smaller geographical gap means they hope to schedule in some face to face learning sessions in the not-too-distant future as well.

Neil comments: "Ever since I visited Israel on an organised 'Birthright' trip three years ago I knew I wanted to learn more and also eventually become more observant. But where I live there aren't too many opportunities and it was getting difficult to learn on my own. PaL has been amazing for me and I'm so happy to be matched with Joshua, we really get along well."



PaL partner Alan Shorrick, learning on the phone!

France, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Gibraltar, Turkey, Poland – not all of these European countries have membership status of the EU yet, but they do all have citizens learning weekly through PaL. When it comes to Torah learning, borders melt away, cultural differences become irrelevant and connection becomes something far more long-lasting than anything BT can provide with a telephone line! ☺

\*Names have been changed

## The PaL Partner Survey

Last month PaL conducted a survey of all its learning partners to find out precisely what users of the programme think of it and what they feel the organisation's strong points are.

The feedback from the survey was overwhelmingly positive, with 88 percent of respondents rating the service 'very good' to 'excellent'. The pre-yom tov packs and monthly e-newsletter were particularly singled out for praise, with comments including "So good – I keep them for guidance" and "Inspirational just when you need it the most".

Many respondents also commented favourably on the 'shidduch service' offered by PaL when it comes to matching partners with tutors! "The pairing is done really well", said one partner, who has been learning halacha with her tutor for nearly two years. "I feel that the way you have matched the partners is great," elaborated another. "I like the fact that I would never have learnt with my partner if not for PaL!"

Several ideas for future PaL initiatives came to light as a result of the survey, with 70 percent of people requesting more public events or more frequent distribution of resource packs. But the final word goes to a fifty-something, semi-retired learning partner from London, who commented: "That you have set up this learning over the telephone is a brilliant idea! It has given adults like me who are thirsty for Torah the opportunity to learn together that we might never otherwise have had." 🕊



**Mind The Gap:** PaL was once again invited to attend the Tribe Closing the Gap dinner in Jerusalem in May 2010. Over 80 students signed up to learn via the organisation on their return to the UK.

## Save the Date!



As in previous years PaL is delighted to announce that Rabbi Paysach Krohn will be giving the annual Pre-Rosh Hashanah lecture. This year's event will be held at Finchley United Synagogue, Kinloss Gardens N2 on 5th September 2010. The lecture will begin at 8pm prompt, with doors opening at 7.15pm. 🕊

## Networking over Breakfast

PaL chairman Dov Harris was invited to participate in a business breakfast organised by the Temple Fortune chapter of the BNI (Business Network Initiative). Rob Harris, Chapter Director (and no relation!) asked PaL to present the charity slot at the meeting, where BNI members have the opportunity to share ideas, contacts and business referrals with one another.



BNI Chapter Director Rob Harris, far left and Dov Harris, centre

The breakfast was held at the Novellino restaurant in Golders Green – Dov outlined the PaL concept to the 30 chapter members in attendance and his presentation was extremely well received.

Rob Harris commented: "Belonging to the BNI is like having dozens of sales people working for you – when members meet someone who could benefit from another member's product or service they are happy to make recommendations. Everyone at the breakfast was very interested in the PaL concept and will be delighted to pass on information about the organisation to those who would like to learn more about their Jewish heritage in the future." 🕊

## Cheesecake at the Table, Torah on the Phone!



This past Shavuot, the cheesecake of choice all over the UK was undoubtedly cheesecake brownies, thanks to the hundreds of beautifully designed recipe cards PaL distributed to kosher stores the length and breadth of the UK.

Customers in Glasgow, Birmingham, Bournemouth, Manchester, Leeds and London were able to pick up the cards for free in the run-up to Shavuot – and the flavour of the food inspired many of them to take a taste of Torah learning as well!

Programme Coordinator Mrs Judy Silkoff explained: "The cheesecake brownies were really delicious – I made them myself for my family and they were certainly appreciated! But more importantly, they helped to remind people that Shavuot has far greater significance than tasty cheesecake. Thanks to PaL's initiative, this special Yom Tov became the perfect springboard for them to decide to delve further into their Jewish heritage. We're delighted with the interest that our recipe cards generated in the community."



**Phone and Learn (PaL) is a division of Partners in Torah\*, USA** [www.partnersintorah.org](http://www.partnersintorah.org), a unique Jewish identity-building initiative committed to fostering unity among Jews of all backgrounds. PaL matches Jews who want to know more about their heritage with a friendly, knowledgeable tutor for an hour a week of Jewish study and discussion, over the phone.

\*Partners in Torah is a project of Torah Umesorah.

PARTNERS IN TORAH is a trademark of Partners in Torah, a division of Torah Umesorah, the National Society for Hebrew Day Schools, and is being used under licence.