



Wherever you are...
...call home

and connect to your
Jewish heritage
in just one hour a week

IN THIS ISSUE

ת"ב

PaL draws the crowds

Over 1200 people attend PaL pre-Rosh Hashanah lecture

Journey of Discovery

A mother talks about her journey of discovery with PaL

Minding the Gap with PaL!

PaL attends yeshiva and sem fairs in London and Manchester



PaLs

The Newsletter for Friends of Phone and Learn

No 4 | October 2008

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

www.phoneandlearn.org
info@phoneandlearn.org

Registered Charity Number
1110416

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

**PaL Draws the Crowds for
An Evening of Aspiration and Inspiration**

PaL once again attracted a huge crowd - of over 1200 people - to its pre-Rosh Hashanah lecture at the Hasmonean Boys School in September. The enormous number of attendees meant that the audience filled two halls, using a live audio-visual link up provided in the second auditorium. Guest speaker Rabbi Paysach Krohn expounded on the topic of 'Aspire Today, Inspire Tomorrow': taking the message of Ellul, aspiring to achieve one's goals and using that aspiration to become an inspiration to others. The two main strands of Rabbi Krohn's lecture centred around the concepts of understanding that everything is part of the Divine plan; and the fact that we are duty-bound to use our talents and gifts to strengthen and help the communities in which we live.

Everyone who attended the lecture received two gifts from PaL. The first, a wallet-sized card, contained a quote of Rabbi Krohn's from the lecture reflecting

the unlimited potential we can all tap into – "Anyone can count the seeds in one apple, but only Hashem can count the apples in one seed". The second gift, a magnet featuring the prayer to be said before taking medication, was sponsored by an anonymous London businessman who personified the kind of 'giver' Rabbi Krohn was urging us all to emulate – the gentleman in question had had an idea but instead of leaving it to gather dust on the shelf, he actualised it, and now 1200 people were taking the results away with them.

Speaking at the conclusion of the enormously successful evening, PaL trustee Akiva Hackenbroch commented: "Some 300 people are currently learning under the PaL umbrella and many more have signed up to become PaL partners and tutors this



Rabbi Krohn at the PaL public lecture

evening. We are so grateful to Rabbi Krohn for his constant support of PaL, for which he was of course, the original inspiration."

During the course of his visit, PaL also arranged for Rabbi Krohn to speak to upper school students at the JFS school in Kenton – many were visibly moved by his words, and several were inspired to attend the public lecture as a result. 🕊

Minding the Gap with PaL!



PaL was invited to take a stall at the 2008 Yeshiva and Sem fairs in London and Manchester in October. Organised by the UJIA, hundreds of Jewish Year 13 students attend the fairs to find out about potential gap year learning programmes. The 2008 fair was a little different in that it also featured several extra stalls with something cutting edge to offer today's sixthformer, **PaL**'s included.

Many students contemplating the prospect of a gap year in Israel are nervous that their text skills and knowledge will not be on a par with those of their American and European counterparts. **PaL** was able to reassure many of them by offering them the chance to study over the phone with a personal learning tutor, completely free of charge, in whichever areas they feel improvement is necessary.

In addition to those students who registered to learn with **PaL**, several parents also took the opportunity to sign up for a free telephone tutor in the Jewish subject of their choice.

By joining **PaL** while still at school and before beginning their gap year experiences, students are able to begin creating learning relationships that will last them for life. Previous **PaL** partners who began learning in year 13 have returned from sem and yeshiva to continue where they left off, as well as signing up to become tutors. 🕍

Ask the Rabbi!

It's been just over seven months since **PaL** established its 'Ask the Rabbi' facility, whereby Rabbi Harvey Belovski of the Golders Green Synagogue answers questions from tutors that have arisen during the course of their **PaL** learning partnerships.

A quick peek into the 'Ask the Rabbi' mailbox reveals a diverse selection of questions, ranging from those with a relatively straightforward answer ("Can one daven with bare feet?") to far-reaching and complicated philosophical issues ("Why do we need an Oral Law?"). It is safe to say that the 'Ask the Rabbi' facility has played a vital role in enhancing the learning relationship between **PaL** partners and tutors. It has also had an impact on the day to day lives of **PaL** partners - Rabbi Belovski recently helped one gentleman to select an appropriate Jewish name on the eve of his bris!

As a direct result of the success of the 'Ask the Rabbi' facility for **PaL** tutors, its scope has now been widened to include **PaL** partners, so that they too can email questions arising from their learning partnerships directly to Rabbi Belovski. 🕍

The address to use is asktherabbi@phoneandlearn.org

A Mother's Journey of Discovery Through PaL

Helen Phillips* was brought up barely knowing she was Jewish. When she was in her early twenties she met and married a non-Jewish man; they had a son, Josh, who is now 14. After a few fraught years together, Helen's husband abandoned her and her little boy and they now have no contact with him whatsoever.

When Josh was small Helen's life was very difficult – as a single mother she had to be the provider of everything. But after her own disastrous experience she was determined to give Josh more of a Jewish education than she had had, and when he turned 11 she managed to secure him a place in a Jewish high

school. Here Josh thrived and joined a fast-track class for bright students who displayed particular interest and aptitude in Jewish Studies. Helen was delighted but also somewhat daunted.

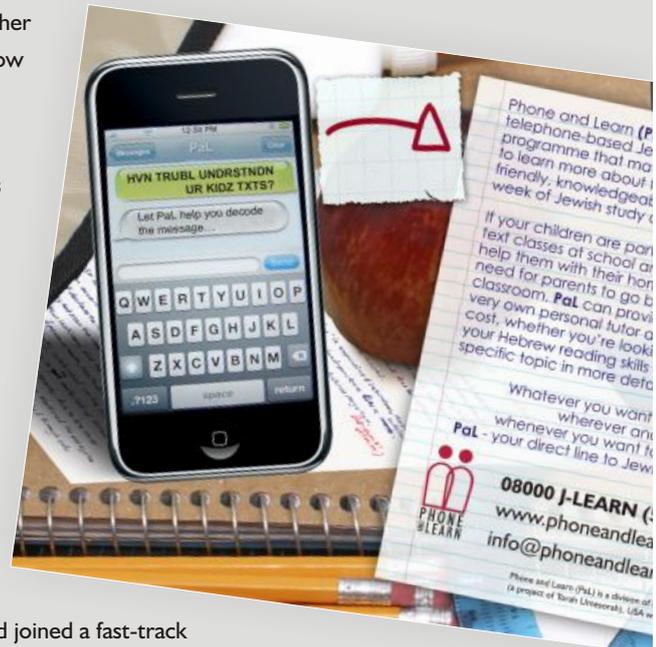
At the end of Josh's first year in high school he brought home a **PaL** flyer explaining how the organisation was able to help parents who were having trouble getting to grips with their children's Jewish studies programmes at school. Helen put in a call to the **PaL** team the following day and within 48 hours **PaL** had contacted her to tell her about a potential tutor for her. Like Helen, Miriam was a mother of high school age children and completely empathised with Helen's feeling of being cast adrift when it came to everything Josh was learning at school!

Helen and Miriam have been learning for nearly two years now. Helen comments that she learnt more about Judaism from the first ten minutes of conversation with Miriam than she had her whole life! Since beginning the partnership, she has begun lighting candles and preparing a proper Friday night meal to share with Josh every week. She is even beginning to think about koshering her kitchen.

Miriam explains that although she felt a little daunted at first at the prospect of learning with Helen, it has been an incredible experience. "I learn just as much from Helen as she does from me. Her fortitude and perseverance is awe-inspiring. Occasionally she does have a question that I simply cannot answer by myself, but I know that the **PaL** team is always ready with advice – they've sent me lists of books, audio classes and articles to help both myself and Helen deal with complicated issues – and I have also contacted the **PaL** Rabbi for guidance on occasion."

If you would like to take this journey of inspiration and discovery through **PaL** and become a **PaL** tutor or partner, please contact our friendly team by telephoning 08000 J-LEARN (553 276) or emailing info@phoneandlearn.org 🕍

*names have been changed



Phone and Learn (PaL) is a division of Partners in Torah*, USA

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.