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PaLs

The Newsletter for Friends of Phone and Learn

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PaL Recruitment Success in Israel

Nearly 80 British students, enrolled on a wide range of Israel gap year programmes, registered their interest to learn via **PaL** when they return to the UK later this year. The new partners and tutors, studying on youth movement year courses, and in yeshivos and seminaries across the country, signed up to **PaL** during Programme Coordinator Judy Silkoff's whirlwind trip to Israel in May.

Mrs Silkoff gave a presentation about **PaL**'s work at the Tribe (Young United Synagogue) 'Closing the Gap Dinner', held at the Reich



Hotel in Jerusalem. The trademark **PaL** inflatable phone box put in an appearance of course, and the organisation's stall was inundated with students intrigued by the concept of continuing their Jewish learning over the phone on their return to the UK. Some 90 percent of those in attendance registered to study with the programme.

Tribe Executive Director Rabbi Andrew Shaw commented: "One of Tribe's primary goals is to ensure that young Jews are educated and inspired about their Judaism and feel proud of being Jewish. To this end, we were delighted to welcome **PaL** to our end of year dinner and look forward to working with the organisation on other projects in the future."

While in Israel, **PaL** was also invited to visit several seminaries to speak to British girls studying there about signing up as both partners and tutors on their return home. From the Neve Yerushalayim campus in Har Nof, to Michlalah college and Darchei Binah in Bayit Vegan, every girl the **PaL** team encountered was more than eager to put her name down to study over the phone.



As the British students fly back to the UK over the course of the summer, **PaL** will be in touch with them to complete their registration to the programme and offer them the resources and support that have become synonymous with its name. Many yeshiva and seminary students worry about the prospect of leaving Israel at the end of their gap year, but thanks to **PaL** are able to feel secure in the knowledge that a variety of learning and teaching opportunities remain fully within their grasp.

Interactive Courses for PaLs!

It's been just over a year since PaL began offering three interactive email courses produced by the Shema Yisrael Torah Network as a resource to partners and tutors. Courses are available in the topics of 'The Kosher Kitchen', 'The Shabbos Kitchen' and 'Roadmap to Prayer'; their concise, practical and easy-to-follow structure makes them perfect for learning over the telephone.

Currently, some 30 PaL partners and tutors are studying the Shema Yisrael courses, with the Shabbos Kitchen track being the most popular. Harvey Sinclair of Finchley, who began learning with Manchester-based tutor Mark Duman in September 2007 and registered for the course in May 2008, commented that "we're not quite Jewish Jamie Olivers yet but are well on the way – so far, I can just about manage a bowl of chips in the microwave – but not on Shabbos of course!"

The Roadmap to Prayer course has also proved popular. Slightly longer and more involved than either of the kashrus courses, it goes through davening in great detail, explaining the meaning behind various prayers. Linda Allen began learning it with her tutor Sara Wittenberg in October 2008, and commented just a few weeks later that 'I have now got to the point where I am able to follow the services in shul and enjoy them'.

PaL is keen to offer as many resources like the Shema Yisrael courses to its participants as possible, and is delighted that so many partners and tutors continue to find them beneficial. For more information about any of the courses, email judy@phoneandlearn.org. ☞



Save the Date!



As in previous years, PaL is delighted to announce that Rabbi Paysach Krohn will be giving a public lecture for Ellul on behalf of the organisation. This year's event will be held at the Hasmonean Boys School in Hendon on 8 September 2009, where Rabbi Krohn will undoubtedly inspire the London community once again. ☞

Keeping it in the Family

With a relatively small pool of surnames within the Jewish community, it's not unusual for several people of the same

moniker to sign up to PaL from time to time. But a closer look at the PaL database reveals that many of the identically-named partners and tutors are in fact closely related to each other! From sister and sister-in-law tutor teams to mothers, sons, daughters and older siblings all picking up the telephone for an hour of learning a week, it seems that PaLs really do like

keeping it in the family! On more

than one occasion a wife has decided that PaL would also be perfect for her husband after she has completed her registration and simply handed the phone over to her other half there and then!

Sometimes, family members even sign up to learn via the programme completely independently of each other. Hampstead-based mother-of-four Jessica* is a case in point – she registered to learn through PaL at her son's high-school graduation in 2007. A year later, her older daughter Tammy*, a student at Nottingham university, signed up via the PaL website and was promptly matched with a tutor as well. When she came home for the holidays and asked to use the house phone for her weekly learning session, her mother was both surprised and delighted to find she and her daughter had had exactly the same idea!

"It turns out we're both learning the Laws of Kashrus with our tutors," laughs Tammy, "we often discuss ideas together and figure out how to implement them at home."

But the award for the most PaL-oriented family should perhaps go the Michaels' of Hendon. Daughter Chana was the first to sign up, after we visited her sem in May 2008. Since returning to London in July last year, she has been learning regularly both with her partner Stephanie and with her own tutor. Three months later in October, at Chana's prompting, mum Ruth and younger sister Dina visited the PaL stall at the yeshiva and sem fair. Dina now learns Chumash with Rashi through PaL and plans to go to sem at the end of next year. Ruth, a teacher, tutors a Paris-based university student on the weekly parsha.

Of course, the main thing to remember is that regardless of blood-ties, anyone signing up to learn through Phone and Learn immediately becomes part of the PaL family! To register either yourself, your mother-in-law or your next-door neighbour, telephone 08000 J-LEARN (553 276) or email info@phoneandlearn.org. ☞

**not her real name*



PaL tutor Chana Michaels (r) with study partner Stephanie



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.

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