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# PaLs

The Newsletter for Friends of Phone and Learn

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

## MEETING OUR TUTORS: Mrs Roslyn Teller, London

### How did it all begin?

It all started when my nephew Yehuda Wittenberg encouraged me to join PaL. Yehuda is one of the founding group of PaL, a Trustee and was a great friend of Mr Sammy Homburger ז'ל in whose memory PaL was founded.

### How did you feel about joining PaL?

Although I was raised in a religious home, I was concerned whether I would have the knowledge to teach someone else and have the answers to my partner's questions. Initially I didn't appreciate the amount of Jewish Education that I had received. Now with the wisdom of years, I wish I had listened to all my teachers a little bit more!

### How did you fit PaL into your schedule?

Being a busy mother, working part-time and having family commitments in the evenings and at weekends, I chose timings during the day that worked for me. Not long after, the call came from PaL saying, "We have a partner for you and we think you'd be a fantastic tutor for her."

In March 2014 I started learning with Sophia. Initially I was slightly anxious before our first session. Then, after a few weeks, I found myself relaxing. We seemed to click and Sophia seemed so happy.

### How did you decide what to learn?

Together Sophia and I agreed that we would like to study the Book of Esther. We began to

go through the book each week, translating, learning and understanding using the beautiful explanation of Yalkut Me'am Loez. That was a springboard for our further in-depth discussions. Sophia at the other end of the line was busy checking all the references, researching further online and joining different Jewish education forums.

### How have things developed over time?

The learning partnership with Sophia has developed into a firm friendship. We are flexible so at times we change the times or postpone a session. We always enjoy a good session together and as each Yom Tov comes around, we dip into PaL's Yom Tov material. We discuss the different customs people have, swap recipes, and look at the translation of some of the seasonal prayers. We often discuss and debate many other issues such as Israel, education methods in schools, yeshivos and seminaries, different Jewish communities around the world, women's issues as well as current events.

### How has the tutoring enhanced your life?

When it came to Purim, I felt empowered as the Megilla was read in Shul. I understood so much more than I had ever done. I kept on thanking Sophia for giving me the opportunity as I would never have sat down and open the commentaries on my own. In fact it's thanks to PaL that I get time to peruse some of the Rosh

Hashana and Yom Kippur prayers before the actual Yom Tov or go through the Hagaddah. Sitting down for an hour a few days before Pesach is a rare treat - I felt so accomplished.

### What are you the most proud of?

As the summer drew to a close, I realised that we would probably be finishing the Book of Esther about the same time as Rabbi Paysach Krohn would be giving his pre Rosh Hashana lecture. Amazingly, we completed it on the Wednesday before! We met up before the lecture at Novellino's in Golders Green for a mini celebration together with my own mother and daughter. Both Sophia and I said a small Torah thought from what we had learnt about Esther. It was a very special moment for us both. At Kinloss we received warm wishes from Rivka and my nephew Yehuda at the PaL desk and then, to our great surprise, a public Mazal Tov at the start of the lecture – in front of 1,100 people!

### So what's next?

We agreed after our celebration that we would both like to start learning the Book of Ruth which is going really well. We also share a small Torah thought about the weekly parsha. I can truly say that both of us have improved our reading skills, and have learnt and achieved so much together. Thinking back to Yehuda's invitation – he was right! I could and can do it and if I can do it, so can so many others. 🙏

## Another PaL Simcha!

We always love receiving good news and especially so when we hear of a simcha for a **PaL** partner or tutor. It was therefore great when we received an email from Robert Mitchell, a **PaL** partner of seven years who was delighted to share the news of his recent engagement to Sarah Samuel and wanted to invite the **PaL** team to their engagement party.

We always love being part of any **PaL** simcha and this was no exception. A couple of weeks later on a Sunday afternoon at Chabad in Ilford, Rabbi Aryeh Sufrin officiated at the very emotional and enjoyable event. He warmly spoke of Robert and his growth in his Judaism over the years and then introduced Robert who took the some 150 guests on a trip of his past and present. Robert recounted how his life had changed seven years ago when he was searching for greater meaning in his life and a closer connection with his heritage. A friend introduced Robert to **PaL** whereupon he was matched with his **PaL** tutor, Dov Philips with whom he has been learning each week since that time. There were not many dry eyes in the room as Robert genuinely thanked Dov for all that he has done over the years to engender and create such a relationship between them and inspiring him to be in the position he is at this time, ready to build a Jewish home together with Sarah.

Robert and Sarah are due to be married this month and we look forward to their special wedding day and wish them the very best in their lives together which we hope will bring them good health and happiness always. 🕎

## PaL and ShabbatUK together once again

Last year Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis introduced "ShabbatUK". It was a fantastic success that saw a wave of communal events uniting Jewish people throughout the UK and inspiring them to join in keeping and experiencing Shabbat. After its unbelievable success ShabbatUK 2015 was launched, this time to be bigger and better than the last. This year over 100,000 people took part in a wide range of events across the country, there were 900 events in over 50 communities countrywide.

Here at **PaL** we encouraged tutors and partners to join in the excitement by taking time in the run up to ShabbatUK to learn more about Shabbat observance – its laws, customs and history.

In addition **PaL** hosted a table at The Great Challah Make 2015 and we invited **PaL** Tutors and Partners to come together and join in this fantastic opportunity, truly one of the highlights of ShabbatUK 2015. Challah Make events were held in numerous places around the country; Manchester, Leeds, Essex and more. The London event was held in an enormous marquee near Brent Cross and brought together 5,000 women, men and children from across the spectrum of Anglo-Jewry to make Challah together. The atmosphere was electric and there was a strong feeling of unity amongst everyone there.

**PaL** partner Chantal Young commented about the Challah Make: "It was an amazing feeling to make a bracha with over 5,000 people; may all our prayers be heard. It was also wonderful to meet face to face the **PaL** team."

The inspiration of ShabbatUK lives on: post ShabbatUK, **PaL** received many new partner sign-ups from across the world through the international "Shabbos Project". Additionally **PaL** launched a new Shabbat learning initiative asking the question "Did you have a great time at ShabbatUK? Want to learn more about Shabbat?" Emails and posters have featured across to over 50 shuls throughout the UK encouraging communities to continue developing their Shabbat experience and learning more about Shabbat through **PaL**.

Beth Franks, **PaL** Follow up Coordinatiour commented, "It has been wonderful to see the real excitement of ShabbatUK through the **PaL** participants. The highlight for me was the **PaL** table at the Challah Make. Overall ShabbatUK generated so much positive energy towards Judaism and we hope that this will inspire people to learn more about their heritage. Come and be part of the many who are continuing the buzz of ShabbatUK through **PaL!**" 🕎



**PaL** Table – tutors and partners enjoying the fantastic Challah Make together.



Left to right: Hayley Phillips, Sarah Samuel (bride) Dov Phillips (tutor), Robert Mitchell (Partner/groom).



**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 up to an hour a week of Jewish study and discussion, over the phone.

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