



# Community Currents



## Upcoming events...

**Yeshiva University's Zahava and Moshael Straus Center for Torah and Western Thought** will host a conversation with United States Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia and renowned attorney and Yeshiva College graduate Nathan Lewin on "Synagogue and State In America: The Landmark First Amendment Cases of our Age" on Wednesday, November 6, in its Lamport Auditorium (Zysman Hall, 2540 Amsterdam Ave. in Manhattan).

The discussion, part of YU's "Great Conversations on Religion and Democracy" series, begins at 7 p.m. and will be moderated by Rabbi Dr. Meir Soloveichik, director of the Straus Center.

The event is free and open to the public. To RSVP, e-mail [strauscenter@yu.edu](mailto:strauscenter@yu.edu).

## In recent news...

### Emergency Fund Set Up For Boulder, CO

It was just before the High Holy Days when a flood of biblical proportions struck the Boulder, Colorado area. In the neighboring community of Lyons, for example, 17 inches of rain – half the year's annual rainfall – came down in two days.

In response, Achiezer, the Orthodox Union, Agudath Israel of America, and the National Council of Young Israel, have come together to announce an emergency fund to assist people whose homes have been obliterated and whose lives have been disrupted.

"Pictures that I have seen of the destruction are catastrophic, reminiscent of a deluge," said OU President Martin Nachimson. "While we were safe and warm in our synagogues and at home at the High Holy Days, thousands of people, Jews and non-Jews alike, were inundated. We think of the Rockies as being the site of heavy blizzards and other snowstorms. The rains came too early in the season for snow, but the effect was perhaps even more damaging."

According to Rabbi Boruch Ber Bender, president of Achiezer, which is based in Far Rockaway, NY, "the needs range from temporary housing, replacing damaged appliances, home repairs, boilers, and mold remediation to basic items such as furniture and beds. Pictures have shown us homes that have

been completely obliterated. We know of families that have not been able to return to their homes as their entire neighborhoods have been damaged and it has not yet been declared safe to do so."

The four organizations hope to provide affected families with at least several thousand dollars. "We know we cannot make these families whole," Rabbi Bender said. "However, a few thousand dollars will allow them to do basic mold remediation, sheetrock repairs, put boilers in place...and allow them to perhaps make their homes somewhat livable. Bear in mind that winter is fast approaching and without these basic repairs done immediately, there can be devastating consequences."

Meanwhile, volunteer work goes on. A group of teenage boys from New Jersey NCSY is now returning from the Boulder area after performing relief work. Rabbi Rael Blumenthal, who led the NCSY group to the area, wrote on Sunday, "Our work site is a small house that has already been gutted to the extent that it is only a shell. Our job was to remove mud from under the floor beams (there is no floor) in order to recreate the crawl space needed to install new plumbing and electricity. The boys did an excellent job, and bucket after bucket of mud and debris were wheeled out onto the side of the road for collection." While the boys were working, Rabbi Blumenthal added, it rained and then snowed.

Contributions can be made to the OU Emergency Fund at [www.ou.org](http://www.ou.org).

### Teens Walk For Breast Cancer

The Young Israel of Plainview teens participated in the Making Strides of Jones Beach, an event to honor survivors of breast cancer and to raise money to help the American Cancer Society fight this terrible disease. The team was organized by Max Kahn of Plainview who said, "It was inspiring to look around me and see all my friends from our shul walking together as a team to raise money to fight cancer." The teens raised over \$1,000 from sponsors in their synagogue.

When reached later, Jordana Rothschild, a representative of the synagogue, expressed how uplifting the whole event was. "Seeing both the passion and dedication of the teen participants showed today's youth to be tomorrow's leaders. Unfortunately, breast cancer is an illness that will not be cured

overnight. That being said, raising awareness by taking part in events such as these is, indeed, a great way to put our best foot forward."

### White House Meets With Social Work Leaders

Approximately 160 leaders in social work education gathered recently in the nation's capital for a White House briefing from senior executives in the Obama administration to discuss the future of healthcare and identify a path forward for social work education in the new era.

Dr. Jennifer R. Zelnick, associate professor and social welfare policy sequence chair at the Touro College Graduate School of Social Work, represented Touro at the event. The occasion was hosted by the White House Office of Public Engagement in the Dwight D. Eisenhower executive office building and organized and sponsored by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the national accrediting body for social work education.

"As we enter a new era with the Affordable Care Act, it is important that social work be at the table," said Dr. Zelnick. "Given our experience working with those who bear the brunt of social problems, and our rich understanding of how social circumstances shape health and well-being, social workers are natural leaders in integrated health care teams."

Titled "Addressing the Social Determinants of Health in a New Era: The Role of Social Work Education," the briefing was conducted by representatives from a variety of federal agencies within the Department of Health and Human Services and the National Institutes of Health. The speakers touched on emerging needs in behavioral health in the United States, new expectations under the Affordable Care Act, and social work's role in building capacity to meet U.S. needs for mental health, substance abuse, aging, and disability in an increasingly diverse context.

Participants, including deans, directors, and social work faculty from across the country, learned about federal campaigns to reduce stigma in mental health and increase the quality of long-term care and disability services. Attendees also heard about less-discussed portions of the new federal health care bill that make substantial investments in public health and fund integrated health care teams that include social workers.

## Boro Park JCC Breakfast

An overflow crowd of communal figures, elected officials, and organizational leaders gathered at the Lipschitz Halls on Sunday, October 20, for the annual Boro Park Jewish Community Council (BPJCC) Legislative and Community Tribute Breakfast.

The Boro Park JCC has emerged as a "one stop shop" for all the social service needs of the Greater Boro Park community, providing over 20,000 client services yearly with access to government benefits, career counseling, crisis assistance, immigration, Holocaust survivor services, and much more.

A special focus at the breakfast was the federal Head Start program. Ann Linehan, the deputy director of the office of Head Start at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, received the Community Appreciation Award for her tremen-

dous support of local Head Start programs.

The morning's highlight was the keynote speech of New York City Police Commissioner Ray Kelly who, in a poignant address, hearkened back to the dark days after 9/11 when the city was gripped by fear. The fact that we have not been attacked since that day is no accident, he said, but rather due to the vigilant efforts of the NYPD, especially the counterterrorism unit.

The commissioner also highlighted the importance of police and community cooperation. That type of cooperation, he said, is embodied by people like Rabbi Berish Freilich to whom the commissioner presented the "Distinguished Service to Boro Park" award, commemorating his 40 years of leadership and service to the Boro Park community.



Rabbi Yeruchim Silber, JCC executive director; MC Menachem Lubinsky; Isaac Stern, president, Boro Park JCC; Assemblyman Dov Hikind; Rabbi Aron Wajsfeld, Rabbinic leadership Award recipient; and Ezra Friedlander, CEO The Friedlander Group.

## When Medicine Meets Halacha

As Americans across the country debate the ethical, legal and practical ramifications of Obamacare, Yeshiva University's Student Medical Ethics Society (MES) recently looked at the Israeli medical system as the framework for a very different kind of conversation: What does universal health care look like in a country bound by Jewish law?

That question was at the heart of MES's eighth annual Fuld Family Conference, titled "Prescribing for a Nation: Examining the Interplay of Jewish Law and Israeli Health Care." The October 20 event explored the ways in which Israeli medical institutions utilize Jewish law to form national policy as well as important ethical and halachic questions related to practicing medicine in Israel.

Dr. Jonathan Halevy, director general of Shaare

Zedek Medical Center and a key figure in the formation of Israel's national medical policy, delivered the keynote address, "Jewish Values in the Israeli Health Care System." His remarks focused on the singular nature of Israel as a Jewish democratic state and the debate over whether these two identities can truly coexist. He focused particularly on several recently-enacted laws based on Jewish values and *halacha* – such as The Dying Patient Law, The Good Samaritan Law, and The Brain/Respiration Death Law.

Halevy's talk was followed by a discussion between himself; Rabbi Mordechai Willig, *rosh yeshiva* at YU; and Rabbi Kenneth Brander, dean of YU's Center of the Jewish Future, about the unique medical questions that arise in a mostly Jewish country like Israel.



A plenary discussion featured Rabbi Mordechai Willig, Rabbi Kenneth Brander, and Dr. Jonathan Halevy.