

Torah Academy of Brooklyn Designs Unique Dinner

By Yael S. Haber

Since its establishment almost three decades ago, Torah Academy of Brooklyn (TAB) has been at the forefront of addressing important issues in *chinuch* for those students who would not succeed in a mainstream setting. TAB's student body is composed of boys who recognized early in their high-school careers that they needed a more hands-on approach to learning than the average yeshivah offers.

"Over 90 percent of our high-school graduates maintain a *keshar* with their *rebbeim* well after their graduation. A case in point are this year's alumni honorees," says Rabbi Moshe Rubin, the yeshivah's director. "The majority of graduates learn for a year or two in Eretz Yisrael, and continue in full-time learning or part-time learning combined with college upon their return."

The yeshivah is creative not only in its educational approach. This year, due to the difficult economy, its adminis-



(R-L) Rabbi Avi Davidowitz, Alumni Honoree Ohad Badani, Rabbi Moshe Rubin, Alumni Honoree David Edelstein, Rabbi Heshy Augenbaum, Chairman of the Board Elly Kleinman,

trators came up with the concept of an "e-dinner" in place of the standard event. The idea was to enable people to "attend" on their terms — in person at the casual buffet-style dinner at Mendy's of Brooklyn, electronically, or simply by tuning in to AM620.

In an effort to trim the extras, TAB did away with the printed journal in favor of an "e-journal" that enabled supporters to design their own ads and which drew an impressive number of advertisers.

This unique rethinking of classic dinner components,

which included a live broadcast by Nachum Segal and an appearance by Yehudah Green, created a new public awareness of TAB and its work.

"We've been blessed with the support of a very eclectic group of *askanim* — Ashkenaz and Sephardic, business and community leaders, and noted Rabbanim," said Rabbi Rubin.

"It's a mix that's usually more indicative of a regional or global *mossad* than a local yeshivah high school. Because the e-dinner was accessible to the public without having to physically attend, it enabled us to get our message out in a much broader way than a conventional dinner could have."

The conclusion of the evening did not signify an end

but a beginning.

"The messaging from our board members, honorees, parents and supporters has given the public a compelling picture of what TAB is all about and the role we play in the world of *chinuch*," Rabbi Rubin continued. "Our yeshivah is for the boy who realizes that his goals in terms of growing as a *ben Torah* will be better served by a smaller yeshivah with a more tailored approach... Our message with the e-dinner was that if this is what we do to get the public engaged, imagine what we do to get our students engaged."

For more information or to arrange for an interview for your son, please call (718) 339-8844.

COJO Hosts Candidates' Forum for Manhattan DA

By Moshe Stern

On Wednesday, June 24, the West Side Council of Orthodox Jewish Organizations hosted a candidates' forum for the Manhattan District Attorney race at The Jewish Center. The event was moderated by Mr. David Schizer, dean of Columbia Law School, and Mr. Zev Brenner, president of Talkline Communications. Rabbi Yossi Levine of The Jewish Center joined COJO Chairman Mr. Michael Landau in hosting the evening.

The forum provided the three leading candidates — Ms. Leslie Crocker Snyder, Mr. Richard Aborn and Mr. Cyrus Vance, Jr. — with a platform to distinguish their respective backgrounds, records and policies from one another, and served as an opportunity for constituents to gain a nuanced impression of the candidates in an open, candid environment. The event also allowed constituents to highlight issues of foremost importance to the Orthodox community, including terrorist funding and quality of life issues.

The candidates' forum represents a continued effort on the part of the West Side COJO to remain socially relevant for its members, while maintaining its reputation as a unified voice for the growing number of Manhattan residents who affiliate themselves with it.

"The COJO is very pleased with the forum," said Mr. Landau. "We appreciate the significant turnout despite the inclement weather, which exemplifies the dedicated political involvement of our community. We are also thankful to the candidates for being so generous with their time and for their

informative and sincere remarks throughout."

The candidates uniformly lauded the tenure of departing District Attorney Mr. Robert M. Morgenthau, who announced recently that he would not seek re-election after 35 years in the office. However, they each pointed to areas where they would seek improvement. Ms. Snyder cited her record of prosecuting those preying on women and children, and emphasized the need for an anti-terror bureau in the DA's office.

Mr. Aborn noted that the office can pursue non-violent crime in an unprecedented way, and spoke about breaking up the pathway to violence.

Mr. Vance stressed the over-burdened criminal courts, which constitute 90 percent of the DA's cases, as well as the need to work towards preventing recidivism.

Each of the candidates expressed his/her commitment to an engaging and receptive approach to the sensitivities and uniqueness of the Orthodox community. In response to a question about alternatives to incarceration for young people, for example, the candidates pledged to take into account the unique needs of a religious, faith-based community in structuring such rehabilitation programs.

The event drew over 100 people, including New York City Councilwoman Ms. Gale Brewer and community leaders and rabbis from the Upper West Side, Upper East Side, Lower East Side and Washington Heights, including Yeshiva University.

The forum will be rebroadcast in its entirety at a later date by Talkline Communications Network.

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