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Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Top Officials to Highlight Autism Legislative Efforts at Shema Kolainu Breakfast Boro Park Shomrim Patrol to be Honored

By: David Lobl

On August 2, 2011 Shema Kolainu-Hear Our Voices: A School and Center for Children with Autism, will host their 9th Annual Legislative Breakfast at the Renaissance Ballroom in Brooklyn, New York. This year's breakfast will celebrate the important milestone of its Bar Mitzvah year, as well as honor members of both the City Council and State Legislature in recognition of their efforts to help children with autism. Additionally, Shema Kolainu-Hear Our Voices will be paying tribute to members of the Boro Park Shomrim Patrol for their heroic and tireless efforts to find Leiby Kletzky.

A primary goal of the annual event is to educate legislators about the urgency of autism care and research, raise support and awareness, and share ideas about working toward combating autism through effective public policy and legislation. In addition, communal leaders, civic and religious leaders, community philanthropists, and elected officials, will be in attendance to pay tribute to several outstanding public officials and community leaders for their dedication in furthering the mission of Shema Kolainu. They include Comptroller John Liu who will be honored with the City Leadership Award and Phil Goldfeder who will be presented the Public Service Award by Assemblyman Dov Hikind.

Words of greeting will be delivered by Congressman Jerry Nadler, NYC Public Advocate Bill de Blasio, Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer and by Ido Aharoni, Consul General of Israel to New York who will be attending as a Special Guest.

A special presentation will be made to select members of the New York City Council in recognition of their hard work and perseverance in having the Autism Initiative funded. Shema Kolainu has been a past recipient of this Initiative which was originally introduced by then City Council Finance Chair, currently Assemblyman David Weprin and his brother, Councilman Mark Weprin. Councilman Weprin continues to lead the legislative battle for this important Council Initiative whose funding have gone a long way in securing additional resources for families with children that are diagnosed with autism. The presentation will be made to Council Members Gentile, Levin, with special emphasis on Councilmembers Greenfield and Lander for providing additional funding to Shema Kolainu in addition to their advocacy to ensure the passage of the Autism Initiative. Shema Kolainu also expresses its appreciation to NYC Council Finance Chair Dominic Recchia for the important role he plays in the allocation of funding to various community based organizations.

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Special tribute will be made to members of the State Legislature who co-sponsored a historic bill, A.6305 and S.4005 respectfully. This landmark legislation mandates that insurance companies pay for autism screenings. This bill will take a tremendous financial burden off the backs of parents, enabling quick testing which in turn will lead to more prompt treatment. Accepting this award are Assembly Members: Benedetto, Heastie, Hevesi, Lavine, Titone, Weprin, Weisenberg. Also being presented will be Senators: Adams, Carlucci, Parker, Golden and Squadron.

In light of the recent tragedy, Shema Kolainu will honor the Boro Park Shomrim Patrol with its Community Protection Award. Throughout the tragic saga that galvanized the entire community, Shomrim became the symbol of Klal Yisroel's unified efforts to search for Leiby Kletzky. Indeed Shomrim and Shema Kolainu share a mission of advocating and protecting our most vulnerable population, our children. It is with this in mind that Shomrim leadership will be accepting this award on behalf of the entire Shomrim Patrol.

Thirteen years ago, Shema Kolainu opened its doors to three school age children -- the first school and center of its kind. Today, over hundreds of children benefit from Shema Kolainu's center and home based services and programs. Said Dr. Joshua Weinstein, founder and president "It is a remarkable feat accomplished with Hashem's help and guidance."

Chairing and acting as Master of Ceremonies for the breakfast will be Menachem Lubinsky, the dynamic President and CEO of Lubicom Marketing Consulting and Kalman Yeger, formally a high ranking government official and currently a senior advisor to a number of elected officials.

The breakfast will be coordinated by The Friedlander Group. For security purposes, RSVP is required for entry and must be made in advance by calling 212-233-5555 x 108 or via email at ShemaKolainu@TheFriedlanderGroup.com