

# Officials Voice Commitment to the Special-Needs Community at Shema Kolainu Legislative Breakfast



Dov & Shmuel Lenchevsky

NYC Council Member Andrew Cohen addressing the participants.



Dov & Shmuel Lenchevsky

L-R: Mr. Menachem Lubinsky, Mr. Peter Rebenwuzel, Dr. Joshua Weinstein, Mr. Milton Weinstock, Dr. Alan Kadish, NYC Comptroller Scott Stringer, Mr. Ezra Friedlander.



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NYC Council Member David Greenfield addressing the participants.

**SYDNEY CHANG**

Shema Kolainu-Hear Our Voices, a school serving the needs of autistic children and their families, recently held its annual legislative

breakfast, coordinated by The Friedlander Group. It featured an array of local elected officials and community leaders from across the city who all voiced their commitments to the special-needs community.

Emceed by Mr. Menachem Lubinsky, CEO of LUBICOM Marketing Consulting and noted political and community advocate Mr. Kalman Yeger. Dr. Joshua Weinstein, founder of Shema Kolainu, opened the event by expressing his deep gratitude to the dedicated parents, Shema Kolainu staff, elected officials and management staff that have grown and developed the school into what is it today, proudly declaring that since “day one at Shema Kolainu, we started with miracles, and the miracles have never ceased.”

Also among those in attendance were NYC Public Advocate Letitia James, NYC Comptroller Scott Stringer, N.Y. State Senator Simcha Felder, NYC Council members Andrew Cohen and David Greenfield. The program commenced with a Shema Kolainu parent who described the staff at the Shema Kolainu school as “persistent” and “incredibly brave.”

Dr. Weinstein lauded the extraordinary efforts of Council member Cohen, who chairs the NYC Council Committee on Mental Health, for ensuring that the budget allocates funding for the autism initiative. This sentiment was shared by Councilman Greenfield who announced his and Mr. Cohen’s triumph in increasing funding for autism by \$2 million as part of NYC after-school programs.

Dr. Alan Kadish, president and CEO of the Touro College and University System, was awarded the Excellence in Education Leadership Award and was given some artwork of Shema Kolainu students. Touro College’s Autism Center and Dr. Kadish’s contributions to educating healthcare professionals to serve the

needs of those with autism were also recognized.

Mr. Milton Weinstock, board member, introduced Public Advocate Tish James, who emphasized the symbolism of the art presented to Dr. Kadish as it is “the best ... and most effective way [the students] can communicate ... this is artwork of their world that we should enjoy and share with others.”

Shema Kolainu also honored Dr. Herminia Palacio, NYC deputy mayor of Health and Human Services, with the City Leadership Award. Dr. Weinstein, in presenting her with a painting by the children of Shema Kolainu, said to her, “I’m presenting you this humble award to a humble person.”

Comptroller Stringer, who was introduced by Shema Kolainu’s vice president Mr. Peter Rebenwuzel, commended the hard work of the honorees and others, delivering a heartfelt message that as “parents and grandparents and guardians ... We always believe that they can aspire to be anything they want ... and Shema Kolainu levels the playing field for all of our children.”

The genuine and candid atmosphere of this year’s event continues to exemplify the obstacles overcome and progress made when there is collaboration among various communities. The fight to raise awareness of autism and provide quality education to children with autism is greatly furthered by Shema Kolainu and all of the dedicated people who come together each year at these breakfasts.

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