

CHABAD OF FAIRFIELD
Appreciation Report
SUMMER 2018



The difference you are making in the Jewish community



**Find out how you answered
Coco's prayers**



David Herbst



Jessica Ayseh

The difference you are making

I was drawn to Chabad by the idea that within every Jew is a spark. Every Jew has something special to offer; it just needs to be drawn out. While often I encounter divisiveness, Chabad has been a unifying force for me, dedicated to the Jewish community as a whole.

I began to take the Jewish Learning Institute classes offered by Chabad, and joining some of the men's social events. I had never studied in a way that allowed me to conceptualize what is G-d; to explore my spirituality. I'm a pretty rational person; I hadn't done much exploring of bigger-picture issues. The classes provided me with a framework to explore my own spirituality in a more meaningful way.

I now have two children in Camp Gan Israel. The culture of enthusiasm and spirit is incredible, and I love that my boys are coming home each day singing Jewish songs.

When I go to social events at Chabad, I often meet people I haven't met before. I find that we share an instant connection; a sense of commonality. It's a commonality that stems from Chabad's philosophy of meeting every Jew where they are, not with judgement or bias, but with love and joy.



"Just because I cannot speak doesn't mean I have nothing to say."

- Coco Aysseh

The gift you have given my daughter

My daughter Coco (pictured above) is a girl who spent her first 11 years locked in the silence of nonverbal autism. She had a breakthrough in the summer of 2015, using a unique teaching methodology that resulted in an ability to spell by touching letters on an alphabet board. Coco now communicates by touching letter by letter, expressing feelings, thoughts, and insights we never knew she had inside.

Coco loves to learn and longs to be respected for her intelligent mind. She longs for justice for all disabled people. But most of all, she longs for friends. Right in the midst of all of Coco's amazing breakthroughs, Chabad's Friendship Circle came into our lives. Finally, Coco had a place to go. Friendship Circle is a place just for her. Where she is among people of like minds who share her values. Friendship Circle was honestly the answer to Coco's prayers.

After her first time at Children's Circle, Coco came home and spelled on her board, "At Friendship Circle I had the best time of my life. I made all new friends and they seem to like me just the way I am. I can't wait for next week and a lot changed for me today. With good friends I can be stronger and braver. Everyone at Friendship Circle cares."

Friendship Circle has not just changed Coco's life, it has brought so much to our whole family. Aside from holiday celebrations, Judaism was not playing a central role in our lives before Friendship Circle came along. Rabbi Shlame visited us. He put a mezuzah on our door. We began to be more involved. For me, the best part was the friendship and connections made with other Jewish moms, and in a real way, a re-connection to my own Jewishness.

Why I Support Chabad



Mark Zuckerman

I grew up in Jackson Heights, Queens during the 1950s and 60s. It was a great place to live; everyone looked out for one another. Mom took care of the family while Dad worked 6 days a week, earning a modest living. My Mother was a passionate volunteer, knocking on neighbors' doors in the building to raise money for the the Jewish National Fund, the Workman's Circle and Hadassah, to name just a few. I had no idea of the level of my parents' commitment to Tikkun Olam until after their passing. While going through their checkbooks, I saw records of ongoing small contributions to a multitude of Jewish causes. I am proud of my parents' generosity and the sacrifices they surely made to help others less fortunate than our family.

My wife Juliette is equally committed to strengthening our Jewish community. Together, we believe that our small but vibrant community should be united, regardless of the path each individual may choose to take, and we've taken action to help realize that goal.

When Shlame and Miriam moved here, they were a natural fit. They focus on the individual, and make personal connections a priority. Even as they open a path for all those who wish to be more involved in Judaism, they connect with Jews from all walks of life; non-observant, Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox.

Juliette and I are thrilled to be able to open our home and help strengthen our Jewish community. We feel that by supporting Shlame and Miriam and Chabad of Fairfield, we are promoting unity and acceptance of Jews of every stripe.



Kenneth Gruder

There's a lot to like about Chabad.

There's the welcoming nature and inclusiveness. There's the lack of bureaucracy or pre-printed High Holidays tickets. There's the good food and libations at the kiddush each week.

My wife, Alison, enjoys the JLI classes. My children love the teen programs, and had a great time in Camp Gan Izzy. We all appreciate the inclusive services and warm dinners with the rabbi and Miriam.

My parents raised me with a strong belief in giving back, and in the more than 15 years I've been involved with Chabad, I've had the opportunity to impact many people positively. Aside from being a supporter, contributor, and regular attendee at religious, social, and educational events, I've been able to see to the physical and spiritual expansion of local Chabad centers. As a real estate counsel, I worked towards the creation of several Chabad centers, including Chabad of Fairfield, and the impact this has made is evident.

I trust Chabad because it's inspiring to see Chabad's unique outreach to people of all levels; making sure everyone is included. I'm proud to support Chabad and do my part in making a difference.

THE SMILES YOU BRING



My dear friends,

The story continues and you are the main character!

Miriam and I are here to serve. As is everyone on the Chabad team.

And so are you.

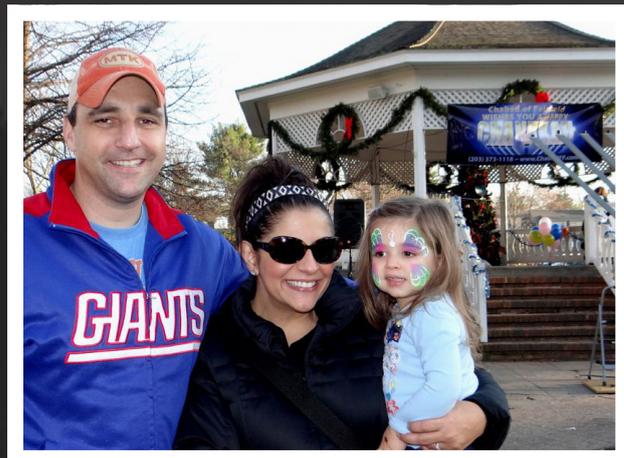
We do this together. Beautifully!

Advancement is in our immediate field of vision. **L'chaim!** to a year full of growth, expansion and redefining the future.

All to your credit! Thank you!

Enjoy the rest of the summer,

Rabbi Shlame Landa



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