

HAMASPIK GAZETTE



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News of Hamaspik Agencies and General Health

More Doors Open at Hamaspik in Hudson Valley

DDSO Leadership Hosted at New Center in Orange County

By MENDY HECHT
Editor

Three grown adults enjoying a kiddie train, fresh popcorn and ice-cold lemonade and cheering packs of exhilarated kids: a Little League championship? The county fair? A school outing?

If you guessed any of those three, you guessed partially right. After all, the atmosphere of the DDSO's recent visit to Hamaspik of Orange County fairly matched any baseball game, carnival or kids' trip.

But the visit to Hamaspik this past Wednesday, August 19 by the Hudson Valley DDSO's three top officials was far more than fun and games: it gave Director Jill Gentile,

Deputy Director Jackie Spring and Team Leader Eileen Wood a front-line tour of Hamaspik's Dinev Inzerheim ICF residential facility, Day Hab adult program and School Respite children's program.

It also gave them a first-hand look at One Hamaspik Way, a three-story, 45,000-square-foot complex that is Hamaspik's under-construction Orange County headquarters—and it left them with critical familiarity with Hamaspik services both current and planned.

An "official" welcome

The event began at approximately 1:00 p.m. as the trio was greeted

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^ The New Admin/Day Hab/Respite Building at Hamaspik of Orange County



v The Brand New Wannamaker Briderheim IRA in Rockland County



Rockland Grand Opening Honors Team Leader Street

The brand-new Wannamaker Briderheim celebrated its Grand Opening this past Wednesday, September 9, as over 100 Hamaspik staff members and 40 consumers joined numerous officials in a Chestnut Ridge, New York cul-de-sac for an official ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Vivian Street, the DDSO's Rockland Community Support Services Team Leader, was honored by Hamaspik at the official dedication of the Wannamaker Briderheim men's residence, which will give eight young consumers the desperately sought-after home so long awaited by their families.

The event began at 11:00 a.m. Overcast skies and a brisk breeze

couldn't dampen the upbeat spirit as excited consumers and appreciative staff parked their vehicles and marched up the hill towards the new home.

To the front and sides of the home, staffers and officials mingled on impeccably manicured lawns. Officials then assembled in front of the home for a group photo.

Officials present included Hudson Valley Deputy Director Jackie Spring, Team Leader Eileen Wood, Regional SSI Office Supervisor William Gonzalez and, of course, Team Leader Street.

After brief opening remarks by Executive Director Meyer

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New York Judge Rules Against Restrictive Adult Homes

Five-year lawsuit declares community-based "supported housing" ideal for the disabled

A United States District Judge has found New York State to be in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act, or ADA, according to a verdict issued this past Tuesday, September 8.

The years-long court case was originally brought against the state in 2003 by Disability Advocates,

Inc., or DAI, a Manhattan-based non-profit group for adults with special needs.

Disability Advocates had argued that several state-funded, privately-owned adult homes throughout Manhattan were effectively blocking 4,300 mentally-ill adult residents from fully integrating with local

communities and society at large—in violation of the ADA.

In a 210-page decision, Judge Nicholas G. Garaufis of the Eastern District of New York sided with DAI.

"DAI has established that the adult homes at issue are not the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of DAI's constituents: the adult homes do not 'enable interactions with nondisabled persons to the fullest extent possible,' especially compared to supported housing, a far more integrated setting," wrote Judge Garaufis. "DAI has established that virtually all its constituents are qualified to move to supported housing and are not opposed to receiving services in more integrated settings."

Most significantly, however, the

decision may require New York State to significantly overhaul its entire approach and philosophy towards adults with special needs for the first time since the late 1960s and early 1970s, when it phased out traditional large institutions in favor of smaller group homes, and the adoption of national ADA standards in the early 1990s.

Judge Garaufis' argument revolves around the federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, whose "integration mandate" require mental-health services provided by states to persons with special needs to be "in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs."

The decision was also based upon Section 504 of the

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Hamaspik Mails Handy New Year Magnets to Consumers, Staff

If there's one thing that can be said about Hamaspik, it's that Hamaspik sticks by its consumers through thick and thin—and now, literally.

In appreciation of all its wonderful consumers and staff, Hamaspik is sending out a L'shana Tovah message with a twist to each: a handy "to-do" refrigerator magnet.

Why a fridge magnet? "Every year it's something else," explains the affable Mrs. Brenda Katina, Hamaspik's devoted Project Coordinator and the driving force behind Hamaspik's annual pre-Rosh Hashanah mailing. "I try to think of

something I personally use—to-do lists for the fridge are one of my favorites."

Thanks to the handy magnet, Hamaspik's consumers, staff and extended family can stick to their tasks, chores and errands at hand as surely as Hamaspik sticks to them like, well, a refrigerator magnet.

The 6" x 9" magnetic sheet features 20 blank lines that can be filled by erasable marker with just about as many errands and small jobs around the house that you can handle. Of course, it also features handy contact information for all four Hamaspik offices in Rockland, Orange and Kings Counties—plus prominently-featured Rosh Hashanah greetings and wishes.

It's just one small way Hamaspik is getting into the New Year spirit. Come the High Holidays, the shofar will be heard by Hamaspik's beloved consumers at all our group homes, and with the following holiday of Sukkos, festive sukkah shelters will be standing on the premises of all 12 residences.

In life, and in everything Hamaspik does, it's the little details that count. Whether the sound of the ram's horn at Rosh Hashanah, a colorfully decorated sukkah at Sukkos, or a cute little gift before the New Year, they all make a difference.

And making a difference is what Hamaspik is all about in the first place. ■



A "sticky" gift

Family Care Home Liaison Moshe Sabel Promoted to MSC Supervisor at Hamaspik of Orange County

Hamaspik of Orange County's Medicaid Service Coordination Division, perhaps best described as "Advocacy Central" for consumers and families, took another step up as a knowledgeable staffer was promoted to become our newest Medicaid Service Coordination Supervisor.

Under New York State law, Hamaspik Medicaid Service Coordinators are limited to various maximum numbers of consumers and families with whom they may work. They are also legally required to work under a properly trained supervisor.

With growing numbers of Orange County families qualifying for Hamaspik of Orange County's services, and the corresponding growing ranks of Hamaspik Service Coordinators, Executive Director Meyer Wertheimer supported those ranks by adding another MSC Supervisor in early September.

Assuming the important and responsible duties of Medicaid Service Coordination Supervisor is our very own Mr. Moshe Sabel, a veteran Family Home Care Liaison with Hamaspik of Orange County's Family Care Program.

Medicaid Service Coordination constitutes Hamaspik's flagship service for consumers and their families. Understandably, it's also Hamaspik's largest department—functioning as it does as the consumer's portal to all other Hamaspik services, with Service Coordinators toiling daily to provide the best and most up-to-date resources.

Most importantly, the Hamaspik MSC provides every consumer,

young and old alike, an experienced advocate who fights for his or her optimal wellbeing and maximum results. The Service Coordinator's typical duties include:

- * Harvesting and communicating information on pertinent medical-care and financial-assistance programs;

- * Arranging necessary medical equipment and services; coordinating and communicating with medical and Special Ed staff;

- * Walking consumers and their families through important meetings that address actual scenarios or possible future developments; and

- * Providing all-around references to appropriate government programs, social services or agencies that help consumers and improve his or her quality of life.

Mr. Sabel's experienced supervision and leadership is expected to empower Hamaspik of Orange County's Service Coordinators to

continue their blessed work.

Additionally, Mr. Sabel will also provide administrative assistance to Hamaspik of Orange County's At Home Respite and Res Hab programs, joining forces with veteran Hamaspik staffer Joel Berkowitz.

But Hamaspik of Orange County's newest MSC Supervisor isn't expected to have much of a hard time. After all, he can always consult with his older brother, our very own Mr. Arthur Sabel, who has served as Hamaspik of Rockland County's MSC Supervisor for the past two years after his own lengthy career as a Hamaspik of Rockland County Medicaid Service Coordinator.

As for the Orange and Rockland MSC's themselves, those stalwart champions of our consumers of all ages and needs, they couldn't ask for a better Supervisor—whichever Sabel that may be. ■

A normal and healthy eating program for the whole family

ruchy lebowitz

Brooklyn
718.302.5622

Monsey
845.352.2082

Hamaspik of Orange County Streamlines Efficiency with New Full-Time Human Resources Departments

Few things indicate an organization's robust health and growth more than a Human Resources Department—if you're big enough to need your own HR, you must be doing pretty well.

Naturally, then, with its approximately 500 employees and ongoing growth, Hamaspik has its own Human Resources Department at its Rockland County branch—and, as of the beginning of August 2009, a dedicated HR staffer at its Orange County branch too.

Hamaspik has been experiencing a robust growth spurt in recent months, with dozens of new hires (including this writer) coming on board. "I just did payroll, and there were 70 names that I didn't recognize," a secretary at Hamaspik of Rockland County tells the Gazette.

Hamaspik of Rockland County responded to the explosive growth in October of 2007 by dedicating one secretary to full-time human resources work. In hindsight, the

need was critical: nearly two years later, Hamaspik is wondering how it ever managed without the efficiency and organization of Mrs. Glanz, Hamaspik of Rockland County's in-house HR professional.

"Everything is on one system," Mrs. Glanz notes, pointing out the wonders of computerized personnel data management.

And today, Hamaspik of Orange County is following suit. And not a moment too soon.

Employment questions. Employee health insurance. Vacation and all other benefits. Documentation and background checks. Employee guidelines and responsibilities. And new hires. Someone's got to handle it all. Enter the Human Resources Department.

Hamaspik of Orange County's new Coordinator of Human Resources is our very own Mrs. Weissman, a veteran Hamaspik secretary and administrator. Mrs. Weissman brings years of devotion,

involvement and experience to her new promotion.

Much of the daily work at both HR Departments consists of handling employment applications. "It's very important to screen all applicants to make sure they're qualified and have no criminal background," comments Mrs. Weissman on her work. "We want to provide the best for our consumers."

Under Mrs. Weissman's capable direction, the Hamaspik of Orange County HR Dept. (like its Rockland County counterpart) will handle all the following paperwork for its still-growing number of employees:

- * Job applications and resumes
- * Employment paperwork
- * Pre-employment medical and physical tests
- * Job orientation
- * Training and certification
- * Payroll administration
- * Health and dental insurance
- * Passover financial assistance
- * Vacation and off days

- * Tax paperwork
- * Retirement plans
- * FSA cards
- * Additional benefits and work-related matters

Hamaspik is also state-certified to operate an official fingerprinting center at its Rockland County facility. Applicants for employment at Hamaspik of Orange County visit the Rockland offices for fingerprinting—and should the background check turn up no criminal behavior on state record, the applicant may begin work.

At the same time, Hamaspik is getting in gear for the newly-implemented Corporate Compliance Law, New York State's expansion upon the federal Deficit Reduction Act of 2005. The law finally takes effect in October of 2009.

This past July, Hamaspik's Board of Directors responded to the new law by tapping Mrs. Reich, a veteran Hamaspik quality assurance auditor, to become Hamaspik's

Corporate Compliance Officer. Mrs. Reich is currently working on implementing the Board's recommended policies and procedures, as well as planning employee compliance training sessions.

The Corporate Compliance Law legally requires employees of Medicaid providers such as Hamaspik to be fully versed in New York State's new Corporate Compliance Rules, which are designed to reduce wasteful Medicaid fraud and abuse.

With Hamaspik of Orange and Rockland Counties both now boasting their own in-house HR Departments, only time will tell when Hamaspik of Kings County will reach the critical stage of needing their own as well.

So if you work at Hamaspik and you've got a benefits question, or if you'd like to work at Hamaspik, look no further than Hamaspik's capable HR staff—they've got the "personnel" touch.

Hamaspik of Orange County's HR Dept. may be reached at 845-774-8400, extension 303. Hamaspik of Rockland County's HR Dept. may be reached at 845-503-0203. ■

Hamaspik's TBI Program Helps "Waive" Off Brain-Injury Suffering

Among catastrophic medical crises, traumatic brain injury, or TBI, can be the most devastating—and not just to victims. Family members suffer terribly too.

When a loved one suffers a TBI incident, life frequently becomes overwhelming for spouses, children and extended family. The victim's medical care is almost always intensive and extended, disrupting family routines, causing loss of income and taking a heavy emotional toll. On top of all that, there are steep medical expenses to contend with too.

That's why Medicaid offers the TBI Waiver Program, a program for Medicaid recipients who suffer TBI incidents. Under the TBI Waiver Program, state governments may waive certain federal Medicaid rules. Waiving these rules allows states to provide TBI Medicaid recipients with specialized care and services not provided to standard Medicaid recipients.

Since late 2002, Hamaspik has been a TBI Waiver provider.

Hamaspik's TBI program kicked off when Hamaspik of Orange County MSC Supervisor Mrs. Zelik, then a Medicaid Service Coordinator, successfully secured TBI Waiver Program benefits for the first of several TBI consumers to come. It was the beginning of Hamaspik's response to the small but significant number of TBI consumers within its serviced communities.

"It was very rewarding to see that someone with a brain injury was able, with help, to function in mainstream society," recalls Mrs. Zelik, who has been with Hamaspik for close to 10 years.

For the past six-and-a-half years, Hamaspik has diligently tended to the specialized needs of this often-overlooked population—and to the rigorous paperwork required for each individual participant, Hamaspik's preferred phrase for our TBI consumers.

What is TBI, and what is TBI Waiver?

Traumatic brain injury, or TBI, generally refers to damage to the brain caused by auto accidents, strokes, aneurysms, oxygen deprivation incidents and brain infections (such as encephalitis), as well as by falls, attacks or other incidents involving trauma (as opposed to illness or disease).

Where TBI incidents can be medically proven in Medicaid recipients, the Medicaid TBI Waiver Program will cover a wide range of services for recipients and their immediate family members.

Such services include psychological counseling, life skills training, medical equipment and supplies, customization of homes and automobiles for accessibility, med-

ical and recreational transportation, family-member respite programs, and even partial assistance with rent and utility payments.

The Medicaid TBI Waiver Program also provides Home and Community Support Services, or HCSS, in-house aides who assist TBI consumers with daily needs.

Who qualifies, and how?

The Medicaid TBI Waiver Program is limited to Medicaid recipients between 18 and 65 who have suffered a medically provable TBI incident. (Brain-trauma sufferers under 18 may qualify for OMRDD assistance, also provided by Hamaspik. Brain-trauma patients over 65 may benefit from Medicare combined with other resources such as home care and so on.)

To qualify for TBI Waiver, consumers first provide Hamaspik's Central Intake with basic information on themselves and their TBI

incidents. Consumers are then referred to the New York State Dept. of Health, which in turn begins a very lengthy and thorough evaluation process of the TBI Waiver candidate.

Should he or she qualify for TBI Waiver, the consumer then may choose whichever provider he or she wants. And if the consumer selects Hamaspik, the DOH notifies Hamaspik that the applicant has been accepted.

Hamaspik then begins referring to the applicant as "participant" and provides a Service Coordination Selection Form, which designates Hamaspik as his or her Medicaid Service Coordinator, or MSC.

Hamaspik next drafts an Individual Service Plan, or ISP, a highly detailed 22-page form which allows the participant to choose precisely which TBI Waiver services he or she wants and is eligible for. The ISP "is like a prescription," explains Mr. Arthur Sabel, Hamaspik of

Rockland County's MSC/PACE Supervisor. "If it's not in the ISP, you can't give that service."

Thirdly, Hamaspik sends the highly detailed ISP form back to the DOH upon completion, and the two organizations iron out any problems in the form's detailed information—a process that can take up to several weeks. Finally, once the ISP is satisfactory, the DOH submits its Notice of Decision, or NOD, authorizing Hamaspik to begin providing services to the TBI participant.

What does Hamaspik's TBI Waiver offer?

Generally, the TBI participant's condition must be such that he or she would most benefit from long-term nursing-home care. However, most TBI participants prefer to recover in the familiarity and dignity of their own homes—and studies have shown that home-based TBI patients enjoy faster and more complete recoveries.

That's why Hamaspik gears its Medicaid TBI services towards home-based recovery plans, and why it gently encourages participants to go home as soon as they are medically able. "The best place a [TBI-patient] person could be is at home with spouse and children," says Mr.

Sabel. Through its specially trained TBI MSCs, Hamaspik can provide TBI Waiver participants with any of TBI Waiver's numerous services, most of which bear special state-assigned acronyms, including:

- * HCSS, or Home and Community Support Services, which provides aides for around-the-house and local-travel help

- * Individual and family counseling

- * Housing and rent subsidies to allow TBI participants to remain in their own residences or procure affordable apartments

- * Medical equipment and supplies, even those not covered by standard Medicaid

- * Environmental Modifications Service, or E-mods, which provide renovations and/or automobile modifications to make TBI participant's home or car safer and manageable under the circumstances

- * Medical (and even non-medical) transportation

- * Respite programs for household members

Making a difference

Mrs. Nissenbaum is one of Hamaspik of Rockland County's two Medicaid Service Coordinator (MSC) Supervisors and leader of Hamaspik's TBI program. "The most interesting part of the job is the population itself," Mrs. Nissenbaum tells the Gazette when asked about working with TBI consumers.

Most of Hamaspik's TBI consumers are victims of car accidents or strokes, Mrs. Nissenbaum notes—both of which can trigger profound negative changes in family life and even in individual personality.

Sometimes TBI victims don't even realize there is a problem, never mind that they qualify for the Medicaid TBI Waiver Program, Mrs. Nissenbaum points out. This excerpt from the March 2003 edition of the Hamaspik Gazette is a typical example:

"A short while ago, for example, a young man (under 40 years of age) suffered from a very mild stroke, which did not leave any long-term physical symptoms. The only lingering condition affected him approximately once a day, when his brain would become befuddled and confused for several moments. Although it did not greatly affect his daily functioning, this short-term memory loss create[d] some stress and strain in his life. Hamaspik stepped in and arranged for much-needed therapy and assistance, free of charge."

It may all be a bit tedious. But once the copious amounts of paperwork are processed and qualification is secured, agonized consumers can begin the healing process with peace of mind—and their families can finally breathe free. Says Mrs. Nissenbaum: "It's an amazing feeling when you get them the service that you're advocating for."

For more information or to apply for Hamaspik's TBI Waiver Program, please contact Central Intake at 845-503-0200.

Hamaspik's Gala Annual Sukkos Concert Coming Up

Consumers and their families throughout Orange, Rockland and Kings Counties are tapping their toes in anticipation—Hamaspik's fourth annual gala Chol Hamoad Sukkos concert is coming!

The high-energy, exciting annual family event lets Hamaspik's thousands of consumers and their families to enjoy the therapeutic, uplifting power of music, meet their peers, and, most of all, feel part of the greater community.

To accommodate a rainbow of musical tastes among consumers and their families, Hamaspik recruits a range of performers one otherwise wouldn't see on one stage at the same event.

Recording artists at past concerts have included Uncle Moishy and the Mitzvah Men, the Yeshiva

Boys, Temimim and Shira Choirs, Yeedle Werdyger, Yehudah Green, Shua Kessin, Dedi, Yisroel Williger, the Chevra, and Mordechai Ben David.

Hamaspik has traditionally gone all-out to make the event as interactive as possible for the concert-goers with special needs, providing ample wheelchair space for non-mobile consumers and, most importantly, bringing consumers onto the stage, toy microphones in hand, to perform for family and friends along with singers.

A representation of Hamaspik staffers and their families has always rounded out crowds at the exclusive private concert, enhancing the sense of community and giving Hamaspik providers and consumers alike a morale boost that lingers throughout the year.

Additionally, Hamaspik has traditionally invited the many public officials who assist the organization throughout the year. With an ever-growing number of consumers, employees and public servants becoming part of the Hamaspik family, the concert has grown significantly with each passing year—with this year expected to continue the record-breaking trend.

"We have more families," Mrs. Katina simply explains when asked why the concert has annually grown. Most significantly, however, is the societal shift behind that growth, Mrs. Katina notes. "More people are coming out [to the concert] with their child. They used to send their child with a chaperone. Now they want to come with their kids themselves."

Why is that? "There are more supports; the children are more accepted. The family didn't do anything wrong to have such a child... [it] is nothing to be ashamed about," elaborates Mrs. Katina.

And if the concert's swelling numbers are any indicator, that shame is progressively fading to the light of pride and public comfort—last year, over 1,000 attended, and this year is expected to attract an even higher number.

Date, time and location information will be announced as soon as it becomes available. Stay tuned!

Last year's concert transformed this Brooklyn public school



Hamaspik Residential Consumers Enjoy Major Summer Trips in Tri-State Area

At Hamaspik, giving our beloved consumers as mainstream a life experience as possible is part and parcel of our mission. That's

why the residents of our group homes enjoyed the summer much as anyone else would—with delightful, reinvigorating outings and day trips

to popular destinations throughout the Tri-State Area. Here's a brief rundown of our residents' recreational peregrinations:

Dinev Inzerheim

The 12 residents of Dinev enjoyed regular swimming throughout the season, as well as visits throughout August to such popular venues as the Six Flags Great Adventure Safari, Rye Playland, Westchester Mall and the beautiful beach in Deal, New Jersey—all topped off by a Sept. 2 visit to the Dorney Park amusement park. "They had a beautiful summer here," says Mrs. Weiss, Dinev's Manager.

Acres Briderheim

Acre's eight young men took two summer Shabbosim away, spending the July 4 weekend in a guest apartment in Woodridge, New York and the September 4-6 weekend at the Paradise Hotel in Sharon Springs, New York. The residents enjoyed delicious Shabbos food, a visit to the home of the late Grand Rabbi Joel Teitelbaum (1887-1979), and even a visit to a bee farm, where they purchased fresh honey for Rosh Hashanah. "They enjoyed being out in public, equal with everyone else," says Acres Briderheim Home



At the Great Escape Lodge

Manager Mr. Lipa Laufer.

Seven Springs Shvesterheim

The eight young ladies of Seven Springs visited upstate New York's Lake George for two days of fun. Staying at the Six Flags Great Escape Lodge and Indoor Waterpark, the consumers ventured out to visit Water Slide World and

Prospect Mountain Summit, as well as enjoy barbecue dinners, a boat ride, a horse and buggy ride, and even an unplanned magic show. "They loved everything," says Seven Springs Manager Mrs. Heilbrun. "They had a great time."

Forshay Briderheim

On a Monday in early August, Forshay Briderheim's consumers and staff visited Hershey Park in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The next day saw the boys thrilling to the irresistible Hershey Chocolate Factory, followed by a visit to an equally exciting pretzel producer nearby. Consumers also visited an Amish village for an authentic horse and buggy ride, which they enjoyed immensely—and were astounded by the village menfolk's physical strength as they lifted popular resident Eliezer Friedrich off the ground and onto the buggy, motorized wheelchair and all. The day ended with a barbecue under the skies, and the next day was marked by a long Delaware River boat ride.

Later in the summer, consumers were cordially invited to the Bar Mitzvah of a son of Rabbi Chaim Leibish Rottenberg, spiritual leader of Monsey's Netzach Yisroel synagogue, where the consumers are made to feel they belong—as they are every day.

Concord Briderheim

While the consumers of the Concord Briderheim, with their varying schedule, will embark on their annual constitutional after the Tishrei Jewish holiday season in October, Manager Mrs. Goldberger reports that their summer was no less enjoyable than that of their peers. "They had fun without vaca-

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Hamaspik boys out and about: At the Keansburg amusement park (top left), the Fun Castle in Chester (center left) and Nyack Beach (bottom)



New York Judge Rules Against Restrictive Adult Homes

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Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which likewise contains an "integration mandate."

"DAI has proven by a preponderance of the evidence that its constituents, approximately 4,300 individuals with mental illness, are not receiving services in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs. The adult homes at issue are institutions that segregate residents from the community and impede residents' interactions with people who do not have disabilities," elaborated Garaufis in a key passage of his decision.

In simpler terms, the "integration mandate" requires care facilities to not block or prevent residents from mingling with the public, as was done with the grim, warehouse-like facilities of yesteryear. To the extent residents are not a danger to themselves or the public, the "integration mandate" requires state-funded caregivers to allow residents to live, shop and work within communities instead of being housed in one central location.

"DAI has proven that virtually all of its constituents are qualified to receive services in 'supported housing,' a far more integrated setting in which individuals with mental ill-

ness live in apartments scattered throughout the community and receive flexible support services as needed," continued Garaufis. "DAI has also proven that its constituents are not opposed to receiving services in more integrated settings. Therefore, DAI has established a violation of the integration mandate of the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act."

The decision gives the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) and Department of Health (DOH), whose funding of the homes in question rendered them defendants in the case, 30 days to review their current adult-home policies. ■

Study Shows Children's Milk Allergy Symptoms May Ease With Continued Exposure, Consumption

Children who are allergic to milk may be able to overcome their allergy by drinking increasingly higher doses of milk, a new study finds.

In 2008, researchers from Johns Hopkins Children's Center in Baltimore reported that children with a severe milk allergy could "retrain" their immune systems to tolerate milk and other dairy products by gradually consuming increasingly higher doses.

In the current study, researchers followed up with 18 children aged 6 to 16 whose symptoms had eased or vanished during the previous study.

When 13 of the 18 children returned to the clinic up to 17 months later, six continued to have no reaction after drinking 16 ounces of milk, twice the highest amount tested in the earlier study. Seven children had mild reactions, including itchy mouth, hives, sneezing and stomachache after drinking less than 16 ounces. One child needed medications for a cough, the researchers noted in a news release from Johns Hopkins.

The researchers also followed up with three children who could not drink more than 2.5 ounces at the end of the prior study. All three continued to drink milk daily with only mild reactions, and two were able to drink more than 2.5 ounces with few problems, the study authors found.

One key to keeping the allergy at bay seems to be regular consumption of milk and dairy products, according to the study.

"We now have evidence from other studies that some children once

successfully treated remain allergy-free even without daily exposure, while in others the allergies return once they stop regular daily exposure to milk," said senior author Dr. Robert Wood, director of Allergy & Immunology at Johns Hopkins Children's Center.

The researchers also tested for milk allergy using skin-prick testing, a standard food allergy test. Between eight and 15 months post-study, seven children had no reactions. Blood levels of milk IgE antibodies, which indicate allergy, slowly decreased, while IgG4, an antibody that indicates immunity to an allergen, rose.

The study authors also found that the prevalence of reactions continued to decline over time.

As part of the study, children and their parents kept daily logs of milk and dairy consumption and recorded symptoms, such as hives, abdominal pain, sneezing and cough. For the first three months, drinking milk triggered reactions nearly half of the time. During the next three months, milk triggered reactions 23 percent of the time, while some children reported no reactions.

Milk allergy is the most common food allergy. In those who are allergic, milk proteins cause the immune system to overreact, bringing a cascade of symptoms that can range from hives, itching, swelling and vomiting to anaphylaxis in the most severe cases.

Three million U.S. children have at least one food allergy, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. ■

Hamaspik Residential Consumers Enjoy Major Summer Trips in Tri-State Area

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tion," Mrs. Goldberger explains, highlighting the private outings individual consumers took with family members—as well as the small weekly trips enjoyed by all consumers. Those included visits to a sheep-shearing farm, the Aladdin bungalow colony in the Catskills, and a trip to witness first-hand the vast goings-on of a typical day at Newark Airport.

Fosse Shvesterheim

The eight Fosse girls embarked on several Sunday outings throughout the summer, including several visits to leafy regional parks in Monsey and Nyack, where they enjoyed picnics on the grassy fields. Other outings included an early July visit to the Deal, New Jersey shore, where they providentially met a former Hamaspik staff member, and a grand trip to Six Flags Great Adventure Safari. "They loved the rides and the shows, but when the staff gives them a great time, they really enjoy it," said a Fosse staff member of her young charges.

Grandview Broiderheim

Like their Acres brethren, Grandview consumers were thrilled to get out and about this summer, with smaller outings at least twice a week culminating with a grand trip to the prestigious West Point Military Academy on Thursday, August 20, followed by a stay the next week at the Hyatt in Princeton, New Jersey, a day trip to exciting Philadelphia and visits to the historic Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. "They felt like adults going away on vacation," says Mr. Joel Rubin, Grandview's Home Manager—a critically important component of their

ongoing care.

Arcadian Broiderheim

The eight Arcadian boys had a busy summer too, visiting a wide range of venues throughout Long Island, upstate New York and even Pennsylvania. These included White Post Farm, Longwood Gardens and the New Rock indoor arcade, as well as the Rye Playland, Keansburg, Fun Castle, Jenkinsons and Bowcraft amusement parks. "They went everywhere!" jokes Manager Mr. Lebovitz, citing additional outings as far as New Jersey and Pennsylvania. "We kept them busy."

South 9th Shvesterheim

Cooped up in the city? Anything but! The six girls of South 9th enjoyed the countryside and the region's attractions as much as their peers throughout Hamaspik's group residences. Throughout the summer, they reveled in outings to Hershey Park and other high-energy trips, even spending two fun-filled weeks at their own private rented home in upstate Tannersville—which not only had its own pool but even a full-time Hamaspik lifeguard too. Local excursions from Tannersville included the Six Flags Great Escape Lodge and Indoor Waterpark, horseback riding and even a visit to a summer camp, whose campers surprised our girls with a group birthday party for two of them. "They had what to do 24/7," says South 9th Manager Mrs. Cziment. "It's wasn't just a trip."

61st St. Broiderheim

The consumers of the 61st St. residence spent four fun-filled vacation days in the waning days of August at Der Derfil, a boutique bungalow colony in upstate Ellenville, New York. The boys

imbibed the fresh country air and rustic open spaces as they played under close supervision on the colony's trampoline and swings, punctuated by a local outing to a kosher pizza shop and bowling alley and even a day trip to Holiday Mountain Ski and Fun Park, where "they had a blast" with that venue's go-karts, arcade games, bumper boats and batting cages, according to Direct Care staffer Mr. Yossie Moskowitz. The vacation closed with a private concert for the boys at the colony by community-minded singer Berry Weber accompanied by



Spanning spiritual miles: The boys of Acres Broiderheim visit the Sharon Springs, New York summertime guest house frequented in the 1960s by the Satmar Rebbe, Rabbi Joel Teitelbaum, of righteous memory (1886-1979).

DDSO Leadership Hosted at New Center in Orange County

Continued from Page 1

in the Dinev Inzerheim parking lot by a miniature fair put on by Camp Neshoma. This day camping program serves Hamasplik's young Kiryat Joel School Respite Program consumers currently on summer vacation.

Trained staffers tended to over 50 consumers ages 3 through 12 as they sang songs, waved flags, relaxed on the grass, rode a carnival train and manned three professionally decorated stands offering neatly packaged cookies, fresh popcorn and frosty lemonade.

In the first of many heartwarming moments to come, little riders smiled and waved at their visitors as the train completed its rounds of the

parking lot. The officials and their entourage of Hamasplik leaders waved back.

The group then made its way to the stands, where the threesome, and Hamasplik Executive Director Meyer Wertheimer, reviewed the adorable arrangements and collected their fair share of treats.

"This is my most favorite food!" Jackie Spring sagely nodded to a young popcorn purveyor. "The lemonade is delicious," she casually noted to her colleagues.

"Welcome to Hamasplik! We are all so happy to see you!" a young Respite Program consumer sang out to the visitors (with a little coaching from her counselor!). "Thank you! We hope we go into the new building very, very soon!" Staffers look-

ing on heartily cheered.

Clearly enjoying the crowd and the carnival-like atmosphere, another camper took a picture of her friend as everyone cheered again.

The officials then moved into the adjacent Dinev Inzerheim residence.

Inside, residents were gathered around the large polished table in their home's elegant dining room. Direct care staffers hovered about as their charges variously played the guitar, keyboard and other musical instruments on hand, pausing to greet their visitors.

Moving down the tidy hall, the entourage popped into the Inzerheim's streamlined office. The officials noted the shelves of folders on individual consumers, with the 23

folders labeled only by consumer photos for privacy purposes.

"A few consumers have exceeded their life expectancy," Mr. Shaya Werberger, Hamasplik of Rockland County's Director of Residential Services, pointed out to the visitors. The comment highlighted the critical difference made by a loving and meticulously attentive residential setting as opposed to the indifferent institutions of old.

Further down the hall, the group visited the residence's recreation room, decorated with a blend of casual and formal that conforms to the home's overall decor. a staffer pointed out the couches gracing the walls and the state-of-art stereo system in one corner-complete with a custom-programmed and easy-to-use music selection system that allows consumers to select their favorite songs by merely entering a two-digit number on the handy remote control.

A list of several dozen numbered selections by such popular Jewish singers as Mordechai Ben David, Shloime Dachs and Yaakov Shwekey was taped to the inside of the stereo cabinet. Upbeat music poured from speakers placed around the room.

The visitors were then given first-hand looks at the heart of Dinev Inzerheim: the private residential rooms.

The residential rooms at Dinev were constructed to allow the optimal blend of medical care, disabled accessibility and cozy creature comforts. Doors are extra-wide to allow easy entry and exit of wheelchairs

and entire beds if need be, and ample floor space easily accommodates medical equipment with no sense of crowding.

Most importantly, the visitors noted the tastefully selected interior decorations and trimmings. "You make it look like a home-you don't see that [elsewhere]," one commented.

Said appointments include genuine store-bought home linens, bedspreads, pillows and quilts, complemented by charming wallpaper and coordinated curtains and blinds.

As the group marveled at one such room, Mr. Werberger related how a Dinev staffer on her first day on the job once commented, "Wow! I have the same linen at home!"—which is precisely the idea, he pointed out to the impressed officials.

The threesome then segued to Dinev's state-of-the-art kitchen, where our very own Mrs. Friedman, Dinev's proficient part-time chef, produces dozens of nutritious meals a day. Most of Mrs. Friedman's culinary creations are actually custom-tailored to individual consumers' unique dietary needs—high protein content for one, salt-free fare for another, and so on.

While one official chatted with Mr. Joel Friedman, Hamasplik of Orange County's Day Services, in the hallway, the other two peeked into the second of Dinev's two rec rooms.

"Do the kids always get along?" one official casually asked a staff member, who was tagging along. "They always get along," the staff member smiled back.

Having completed their rounds of the residence, the group was then escorted outside, where they circled the building to enter a colorfully decorated basement currently housing the School Respite Program (now running its Camp Neshoma program).

As at the carnival earlier, the little tykes of Camp Neshoma again sang songs for the visiting officials and even blew kisses. Perhaps expectedly, the officials were seen blowing kisses right back.

After bidding farewell to the diminutive consumers, the officials joined close to two dozen Hamasplik staffers outside the residence's front walkway for a group photo of their visit.

"How do you work with these beautiful kids every day?!" Eileen Wood asked Mrs. Freund, Hamasplik of Orange County's Respite Coordinator, as the crowd broke up from the photo shoot, grinning with mock incredulity.

When downhill is good

The festive spirit rose as a smiling Mr. Moshe Nochum Kraus, Hamasplik of Orange County's Day Hab Manager, invited the trio to board the carnival train, which had been on the premises all morning shuttling its precious "packages" back and forth.

Hamasplik of Orange County's future home and offices for its exten-



**Top: Popcorn doesn't mix with wind, but our consumers loved their fair's spirit!
Bottom: Hamasplik of Orange County's new center hopes for new heights**



sive services sits down the hill from Dinev Inzerheim, and to get there, one could use a little transportation.

Gentile, Spring and Wood chuckled as they crammed onto the rear car of the segmented vehicle, amused by their momentary regression to a carefree time long gone. The driver gamely sounded the whistle and the train sallied forth to Hamaspik's looming new HQ building over the sounds of laughs and cheers.

From that point, it was all downhill. But in a good way.

The three "brave adventurers" disembarked at the new building's main entrance, where Mr. Wertheimer and staff awaited them. Together, the crowd ascended the imposing front steps and entered the lobby through several sets of glass double doors.

Upon arriving at the first-floor lobby, the group entered the first of several rooms used by the Hamaspik Day Habilitation program. At the moment, the activity room was occupied by the girls' program—and the consumers were excited about their visitors' expected arrival.

"Welcome home! It is our pleasure to welcome you to our new Day Hab," said one thrilled consumer as staff and visitors gathered around to listen. She thanked the officials for "providing" for her over the past seven years, concluding: "We thank you for the past, we thank you for the present, and we thank you for the future!" The crowd burst into genuine applause.

The visitors were next treated to a "special surprise," as a Direct Care staffer on hand described it. "They were baked in our very own kitchen!" she modestly boasted, pointing to a table stocked with packaged trays of fresh pastries.

The guests at first demurred and then relented to accept their own servings of baked goodies. The consumers called out, "Thank you!" in unison and the group departed.

Next stop? A second group of Day Hab girls in an activity room of their own. This function-delineated group also greeted the visitors with the warmth that is the Hamaspik consumer's trademark. Hamaspik Projects Coordinator Mrs. Brenda Katina, who played a vital role in planning the day's events, also offered a few words of welcome.

After checking out the floor's

kitchen, the group moved on to the men's Day Hab Division, which occupies the second half of the floor.

Hamaspik's male consumers matched their counterparts' enthusiasm as the entourage entered their activity room. Two of the dozen or so consumers seated around a large table rose individually to deliver welcoming remarks filled with wit and personality.

"It is our great honor to meet and greet the distinguished Mrs. Jill Gentile along with Jackie Spring and Eileen Wood," consumer Eluzer Feldman first proudly called out. "We thank you tremendously for your constant support to our beloved agency, Hamaspik. May G-d bless you and may G-d bless America. Dear friends: let's applaud!"

His buddy Volvie Glickman next took the floor. "From the depths of my heart I thank you for helping me achieve my daily living skills and beyond," he exulted, his face wreathed in a huge grin. "I can now read and write, dance and exercise," he listed, eliciting chuckles as he made mock motions for each. "I learned proper manners and how to socialize. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!"

Having completed the first floor, Mr. Wertheimer led the visitors and several Hamaspik leaders to the extra-wide elevators, which they rode to the second floor.

Currently still under construction, the second floor is a den of empty rooms filled with nothing but random construction materials and raw ambition.

As he showed the officials around the cavernous chambers, Mr. Wertheimer discussed Hamaspik's plans to relocate the Orange County Respite Program, whose cramped existing quarters had been inspected first-hand just minutes earlier by the DDSO officials, to the building's second floor upon completion.

The group then rode the elevator to the third and highest floor, which will house Hamaspik of Orange County's reception area, administration and program offices, and a spacious Intake area for new Hamaspik services applicants.

The entourage came to appreciate the scope of the new building as they entered an ample corner office room with picture windows. "We're higher than the telephone poles!" quipped one official. "I'm scared of



Above, fair-going consumers "undergo a training session"; below, a well-deserved greeting

heights," she jokingly confessed.

As they enjoyed the scenic views, the group continued discussing the planned move of Hamaspik services to the new facility pending government approval.

Concluding their rounds of the third floor, the group stopped in on the building's planned conference room, a spacious chamber featuring sweeping views of the natural rural greenery surrounding Kiryas Joel. "Just imagine what this will look like in the fall!" an awe-struck official commented.

Indeed, with changing natural foliage complementing a hoped-for certificate of occupancy, it will be beautiful in more ways than one.

Doing lunch

The group proceeded downstairs to the airy social hall, which occupies the center of the first floor.

A sumptuous buffet lunch laid out in steaming chafing dishes awaited the guests and their guides, who by now were probably sufficiently hungry and ready for a break.

After a half-hour of restorative table talk over delicious fare, participants were greeted by emcee Mrs. Brenda Katina, who opened the formal part of the luncheon with welcoming remarks.

"You all have heart," said Mrs. Katina, "a heart full of caring for special children." She then thanked Mrs. Freund and staff for coordinating the "beautiful" visit.

Mrs. Katina next shared a little joke to make a point.

A concerned husband complained to a doctor about his wife's apparent deafness. "She never hears me the first time and always asks me to repeat things," he lamented. The physician advised him to repeat himself at various distances from his wife to determine the extent of any problem.

Upon coming home, he entered the kitchen and asked, "What's for dinner?" His wife, working at the counter, didn't reply. The husband moved progressively closer and repeated himself several times, with no success, until he found himself asking the question standing directly behind his wife. "For the fourth time," the exasperated wife blurted out, "it's vegetable stew!"



"I have a feeling that you already said we could move in," said a smiling Mrs. Katina to DDSO officials as the crowd laughed, "but maybe I was standing a little too far away. Or maybe Mr. Wertheimer was standing too far away. But I have a feeling you already approved it."

Mrs. Katina then summoned to the podium a Hamaspik parent, a mother of two young Hamaspik consumers with FD, or familial disautonomia, a rare genetic disorder that leaves sufferers with an inability to feel physical pain or form tears, unstable blood pressure and heart rate, and other medical problems.

The grateful mother shared how Hamaspik helped her sons—and her family.

She related how in 1996, when her first son with FD was born, neither she nor her husband knew anything about the disorder. The resulting constant returns to doctors and hospitals turned her life into a terrible burden, a burden that only doubled with the birth of a second boy with FD.

Thanks to Hamaspik, the mother went on, her sons were able to qualify for the round-the-clock nursing care they so desperately need. "I don't know what I would have done without Hamaspik," she concluded to applause.

Mrs. Katina next briefly introduced Hamaspik's Executive Director, Mr. Meyer Wertheimer.

The official welcome

"Welcome, Director of DDSO!" Mr. Wertheimer said, smiling as he formally welcomed Director Gentile from the podium. "It's better late than never." Mr. Wertheimer also formally welcomed Jackie Spring, congratulating her on the higher post she assumed relatively recently, and also formally welcoming "Team Leader of Orange County, Eileen Wood."

"This endeavor took a decade," Mr. Wertheimer went on. He contin-

ued with a brief overview of Hamaspik's mission.

When one member of a family experiences pain, Mr. Wertheimer explained, other family members will not be motivated to effectively fight that pain unless they too feel that pain.

"There are providers, there are advocates, and so on," said Mr. Wertheimer. "We are none of them. We are family."

What makes Hamaspik unique, said the organization's founder, "is that we deal with the situation. The [Hamaspik staff] person must feel the pain of the person we're trying to serve, the person in pain."

Mr. Wertheimer concluded by inviting the director to "become part of our family."

Back at the podium, Mrs. Katina then invited Director Gentile to share a few words.

"I am totally overwhelmed and impressed," said Mrs. Gentile in her brief observations. "We're family. I agree. We're in sync. We are here for same reason."

Capping the spoken presentations, Mrs. Katina shared the poignant true story of a mother who berated her child for giving her a highly decorated empty box—only to wrap the child in a fierce, tearful embrace upon being told, "But, Mommy—I filled it with kisses!"

Against that background, Mrs. Katina then presented each of the three officials with small, elegant and handsomely wrapped wooden chests, each inscribed with their names and symbolically filled with nothing but "the love and appreciation of all our consumers and their families."

The guests posed for several group photos with participants, and the event formally concluded three hours after it began.

For Hamaspik's esteemed visitors, it was a long but rewarding visit. But for Hamaspik's beloved consumers, it was just another satisfying day.



Care for a drink?

Hamaspik Respite Consumers Enjoy Soulful Summer at Camp Neshoma

What do kids do come summer when they don't have school? Why, they go to summer camp, of course.

That's why our precious consumers also went to "camp": Camp Neshoma (Hebrew for "soul"), our

summertime After School Respite Program, where staff members give "campers" their very souls. In four age-delineated group programs across the summer, two in Orange County and two in Rockland, our

precious boys and girls enjoyed therapeutic programming, games, sports, trips, and activities that left them exhilarated, educated and spiritually stimulated.

Small wonder it's called Camp Neshoma.

Camp Neshoma of Orange County

Hamaspik of Orange County staged Camp Neshoma once again this year, giving consumers a total of 17 days of programming: three days from June 30 through July 2, and a 14-day streak from August 19 through September 1.

Throughout the summer, the older and younger girls and younger boys group benefited from a color-themed session entitled "A Summer Colored with Fun!"

"Every day we focused on another color," enhancing consumers' basic life skills, explains Mrs. Freund, Hamaspik of Orange County's School Respite Coordinator. "The decorations on the walls, tables, ceiling were all according to the color of the day. The cutlery and plates we ate with, the activities we did, the games that we played, and the food that we baked were all in the 'color' of that day."

The group's "base of operations" was the basement-level floor of Hamaspik's very own Dinev Inzerheim in Kiryas Joel.

Colors covered with corresponding remedial activities and handmade crafts were: brown, blue, pink, orange, purple, yellow, white and black—and even a vivid rainbow! The children's colored-coded creations included brown paper bag puppets, blue and pink balloons, orange sun visors, yellow school bus picture frames, black-and-white cookies, and multi-hued placemats and sand-filled necklaces.

Associative activities ranged from chocolate marshmallow dunking and Velcro "orange picking" to fishing yellow ducks from the blue "sea" (Camp Neshoma's wading pool) and a two-team "Color War" multi-activity competition. There were even color-coded snacks and foods such as bright yellow bananas, iridescent orange baby carrots and chocolate milk and brownies.

In Mrs. Freund's opinion, the consumers' highlights were the two Carnival Days and the grand Mock Wedding Day, held Wednesday, August 25 (and whose color theme, appropriately, was white). "This cannot be described, only pictures can do [it] justice!!" wrote Mrs. Freund in an in-house memo. "All kids were dressed up soooooo cute, and played their part (almost) like the real thing..."

"The inspiration is how much the kids care for each other, they always think about each other," Mrs. Freund tells the Gazette. "What's also inspirational is how my staff [members] really feel that they helped a child-[with] just a little bit of care and devotion and love, [they see] how happy they can make another people. They thrive on the care they get from the staff... they really build up a relationship. It's really nice to see."

The older boys of Hamaspik of Orange County's Respite Program also benefited from a therapeutic Camp Neshoma program, one that maintained their year-round regimen of care.

"I trust my staff very much," said Hamaspik of Orange County Director of Day Services Mr. Joel Friedman. "They are experienced."

Part and parcel of that experience included the staff accommodating the daily religious needs of the consumers, ensuring that the typically more relaxed "summer mode" would not in any way diminish their year-round spiritual routines.

Naturally, the consumers were treated to the delights of summer too—including local outings to malls, shops and parks and even an exciting grand trip to Rye Playland, where the boys had a blast. "We went out on a trip every day," says Mr. Friedman.

The boys Camp Neshoma program, which ran concurrently with the girls program, was diligently tended to by Direct Care Staff Members Mr. Yossi Hoffer and Mr. Hershel Lauffer. "They worked really hard," says Mr. Friedman. The Day Services Director also credits Messrs. Moshe Friedman and Joel Wieder, the remaining two Direct Care staffers, for rounding out a great team.

Camp Neshoma of Rockland County

Hamaspik of Rockland County offered Camp Neshoma, its popular summertime Respite Program iteration, to its young charges as well, with the youths of the girls/younger boys group and the young men of the older boys group delighting to 18 days of therapeutic games and outings.

In Rockland, Camp Neshoma 2009 ran in two sessions: June 29 through July 5 and August 16 through September 3.

For the girls and younger boys, Hamaspik of Rockland County's experienced Respite Coordinator Ms. Weissmandl commanded a



Top: a consumer squeezes the most out of the orange-themed day.

Left: Fun is therapeutic too! A young Respite consumer works those leg muscles at a Camp Neshoma carnival

Right: on Wedding Day, Camp Neshoma's "wedding hall"



Immersive decorations round out Water Day's theme at Camp Neshoma of Rockland County

small army of staff to ensure maximum execution of a summer meticulously planned since April.

"Planning an exciting schedule is very hard," Ms. Weissmandl tells the Gazette, adding, "It's very gratifying to see the kids come off the bus. The mothers tell me how they wake up every day and ask, 'Camp Neshoma?'"

That "exciting schedule" began each day at 10:00 a.m. in the spacious basement-level recreational rooms of the Fosse Shvesterheim in Airmont, as the girls head counselor and staffers rolled out yet another sunny day of activities.

Like their Orange County counterparts, Camp Neshoma Rockland's girls and younger boys enjoyed a themed summer program, with each day expressing the phrase "Savor the Flavor" with a different food item. Campers quickly caught on to each day's theme by merely looking at the

themed decorations.

The theme of cheese marked one such day, during which campers prepared and baked their own pizzas using real mozzarella, snapped photographs of each other (and said, "Cheese!"), and sprinkled delicious cheese flakes on homemade cookies.

Other such theme-related activities included a visiting petting zoo on "Animal Cracker Day," making frozen popsicles and running under an outdoor sprinkler on "Water Day," and even popping into Monsey's Zishe's Bakery and baking cookies bearing Camp Neshoma's logo on "Cookie Day."

In addition to the daily theme, campers enjoyed standard "Snack Time" and swimming on a daily basis. And like their Orange County peers, the children enjoyed a Mock Wedding Day of their own, reveling in the make-believe roles of bride, groom and guests-and, of course,

tons of "family portraits."

Consumers also learned valuable lessons about fire safety from an on-site visit by a fire truck and crew of the Monsey Fire Department. They likewise honed coordination skills by hand-painting and then hosing down one of Hamaspiik's transportation vans on "Water Day."

A special treat came in the form of popular Chassidic singer Lipa Schmelzter delivering a mini-concert to consumers, with the kids repeating the lyrics to his popular hit "Poshiter Yid" throughout the rest of the

week.

Towards the end of the summer season, the children fashioned their own "L'shanah Tovah" Jewish New Year greeting cards for their own parents, which they gleefully decorated and even mailed off using real stamps.

But the most exciting part of the summer was Camp Neshoma's annual Grand Carnival, featuring a day-long colorful variety of inflatable rides on site including a giant slide, as well as fresh cotton candy and other festive delights.

Consumers expressed sadness as the summer came to a close—but were reassured by their loving counselors that they would be in touch throughout the year, as typically happens.

"It was an exciting atmosphere and everyone liked coming to 'camp' every day," says Ms. Weissmandl.

The older boys of Camp Neshoma likewise had a great time throughout their summer Respite Program.

Their Respite Program began every day at 9:00 a.m. as Hamaspiik's diligent staff members picked up participating consumers from their homes with Hamaspiik's state-of-the-art, prominently marked transport vans. The varying needs and challenges of individual consumers made for a challenging pickup schedule, explains Hamaspiik of Rockland County's innovative Respite Coordinator Mr. Eli

Neuwirth, "but we're here for everyone," he tells the Gazette.



*Rockland's boys row the Baker's Camp lake at Harriman State Park
Inset: hand-made Camp Neshoma cookies*



Consumers converged on the Respite Program's Arcadian Briderheim headquarters in Wesley Hills at about 10:15 a.m. to dig into days filled with stimulation both in-house and out in the field.

Such hands-on daily activities included plenty of sports and physical activity. "I'm very into exercise," says Mr. Neuwirth. "They should have at least 30 minutes engaging in physical activity every day." Towards that end, consumers made liberal use of Arcadian's trampoline, swing set, balls and other outdoor sports equipment.

Afternoons were marked by restorative lunch outings to regional parks, including a few rounds of ball throwing and other sports.

The Respite Program arranged numerous day trips for consumers too, with the summer marked by the boys' visits to such venues as Space Farms in New Jersey, the Staten Island Ferry, and the Fun Castle in Chester, New York.

New for this year at Camp Neshoma were joint activities with Camp Yachad, a mainstream summer camp, whose campers joined Camp Neshoma's consumers for sports games and arts-and-crafts projects, with both benefiting from the other's friendship.

Furthering that sense of acceptance was a private Bar Mitzvah celebration for one of our Respite Program consumers at Hamaspiik Terrace, the elegant on-site social hall at 58 Rt. 59, Hamaspiik of Rockland County's headquarters facility. Hamaspiik organized a full-fledged standard communal party, complete with live band and a fully catered sit-down meal. Naturally, the young consumer was thrilled at the respect given him—which is the idea of Hamaspiik Terrace (and the entire organization) in the first place.

Of greatest significance are the Program's staff members, according to Mr. Neuwirth. "They are the ones who really made this thing happen." He goes on to cite Mr. Ally Steinmetz and Mr. Asher Ehrman, both of Monsey, and Mr. Lazer Gertner, of Kiryas Joel. "They worked very hard."

"I've been doing it for 12 years," Mr. Neuwirth concludes. "But every day is a new experience."

The success of Camp Neshoma of Rockland County was especially significant in light of the last-minute addition of a third week to the Respite Program due to the local school district opening school one week later than originally planned—leaving Hamaspiik's capable Respite Coordinators scrambling to create a week-long curriculum, a test they passed with flying colors.

According to Mr. Zishe Lowy, Hamaspiik of Rockland County's Director of Day Services, this is because of the Respite Program's importance to that most important of all demographics: Hamaspiik's young consumers.

"These kids live with Camp Neshoma," he tells the Gazette. "They wake up on Sunday knowing that they're going to Hamaspiik." ■

AT ROSH HASHANAH, BEST WISHES



to our dearest

Consumers

who soar to new heights from the springboard of our services;

to our loving

Parents and Providers

who discharge their sacred duties with
unflagging passion, compassion and forbearance;

to our stalwart

Public Servants and Government Officials

who stand by Hamaspiik and its mission
every step of the way;

and last but not least, to our steadfast, superlative

Staff

who contribute talent, professionalism and proficiency,
above and beyond the call of duty, time and again:

May G-d bless you with goodness and light,
happiness and life, health, success and joy;
let none this year know of anguish or woe,
loss or misfortune, indisposition or disability.

May year 5770 herald infinite new blessings:
Recovery for the ailing, the height of pride
from children and grandchildren
and the merit of the coming of Moshiach, amen!

Kesivah va'chasimah tovah; l'shanah tovah u'mesukah —
may you be inscribed and sealed for a good and sweet year.

MEYER WERTHEIMER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, HAMASPIK

Rockland Grand Opening Honors Team Leader Street

Continued from Page 1

Wertheimer, Team Leader Street, joined by Deputy Director Spring, was invited to formally open the home by cutting the bright red ribbon strung across the front entrance. The gathered crowd clapped heartily as Street, String and other officials gripped the ceremonial giant scissors provided to sever the crimson strip. "Thank you for doing this!" Street grinned and exulted as the ribbon fell to the sides. The oversized shears, complete with their own wood and Lucite mount, have been used at official Hamaspik ribbon-cutting events over the past several years.

The group was then escorted through the front door for a thorough tour of the residence, a semi-converted private home (unlike several other Hamaspik homes which were built from scratch).

Architect Tim Ryan of contracting firm Habig & Cirillo, P.C. was on hand as well. Asked by the Gazette what he liked most about working with Hamaspik, he replied, "Honestly, working with Moses," referring to Hamaspik Director of Development Moses Wertheimer.

Officials and staff socialized for about 20 minutes before heading out to the home's spacious backyard, where round tables covered in blue and decorated with yellow flowers were to host a sit-down luncheon event. A podium backed by the American, New York State and Hamaspik flags stood at the head of the outdoor "room."

Hamaspik's very own event emcee, the experienced Brenda Katina, took the podium to greet the crowd. "Being here is like throwing out the first pitch of the baseball season," she quipped. "I appreciate the honor, but I know that the real stars are the ones who will stand up when I sit down."

Mrs. Katina then welcomed the numerous officials present: Jackie Spring; Eileen Wood; Community Development Coordinator Larry Warshauer; Caroline Butler, Vivian Street's secretary; Rockland County Dept. of Social Services

Commissioner Susan Sherwood; Orange Community Support Team member Melissa Marcone; Rockland County Coordinator of Long Term Care Susan Lettre; Family Support Coordinator Donna DuBreuil; Quality Assurance Inspectors Beverly Bowen and Larry Buckley; Incident Coordinator Elaine Zoldan; East Ramapo School Board VP Aron Wieder and members Moshe Hapstein and Eli Solomon; and Hamaspik of Rockland County Board Member Peretz Klein.

"If you Google the words 'new ribbon cutting,' you won't find much," continued Mrs. Katina. Still, Mrs. Katina reported that she had learned about something else—the much-vaunted, historic golden spikes used to mark the completion of North America's first trans-continental railroad over one century ago. Just like the railroad opened new possibilities, Mrs. Katina explained, so too have the assistance of the officials present allowed children "the opportunity to go far."

Acres Briderheim resident Volvy Glickman was then called upon to sing "G-d Bless America" in tribute to the upcoming somber day of September 11. The crowd rose for the rendition, following which Mr. Glickman prolonged the patriotic moment by distributing chocolates bearing little American flags. "Some good things over Hamaspik!" he announced as he worked the crowd bearing the treat-laden tray.

Mrs. Katina then resumed her post at the podium to explain the

Yiddish phrases "briderheim" and "shvesterheim," words in a language presumably not spoken by most of the guests on hand (or Gazette readers, for that matter).

A mother of one of Wannamaker's residents was then called upon to share personal words of appreciation.

The devoted mother first briefly described her son's current residence, praising the state-funded center near Albany where the lad is treated with outstanding accommodations for his religious faith, including regular kosher meals.

"Special children always remain children," emotionally pointed out Mrs. Ratinov from the podium. "I didn't want to send our son away to Albany, but we had no choice. Now he can come home to his community," where Hamaspik can finish the fabulous job the state began.

Mrs. Ratinov went on to thank Mr. Wertheimer, Hamaspik and the DDSO for their assistance. "G-d should help you all," she concluded.

The podium proceedings then paused for an intermission, as uniformed waiters passed among the tables to serve lunch.

Following the lunch break, Mr. Wertheimer acknowledged several individuals both inside and outside Hamaspik for their contributions, conveying personalized words of thanks to each. They were: Tim Ryan of Habig & Cirillo, P.C.; Mr. Moses Wertheimer, Hamaspik's Director of Development; Mr. Shaya Werberger, Hamaspik of Rockland



Volvy Glickman gets SSI's Supervisor William Gonzalez into the spirit after his patriotic rendition

County's Director of Residential Services; Mr. Yoel Bernath, Hamaspik of Rockland County's Director of Operations; Mrs. Tress, Hamaspik's Intake Coordinator; Mr. Moshe Tomber, Wannamaker Briderheim's Home Manager; Dr. Alan Blau, Ph.D., Hamaspik's staff psychologist; Mrs. Naiman, Hamaspik of Rockland County's Residential Nurse; and Development and maintenance staff Mr. Yaakov Yisroel Katina, Mr. Joseph Meisels and Mr. Aaron Rubinstein.

"Today we are gathered to celebrate another group home," continued Mr. Wertheimer. He pointed out that while it was only a ribbon-cutting—"if the scissors are good," he joked—the work that led up to the ribbon cutting was eminently worthy of consideration, especially the hard work of all the individuals involved.

Comparing the entire Hamaspik family to a single organic whole, Mr. Wertheimer then conveyed how deeply felt is its existence and continued success.

Mr. Wertheimer then praised the DDSO's "backbone," Mrs. Jackie Spring, for being not just a member of the greater Hamaspik family but an integral part of that organic whole. "We go back almost two decades," said Mr. Wertheimer of the career DDSO leader. "She really knows the needs of our consumers."

Larry Warshauer was then singled out for praise, with Mr. Wertheimer laughingly recalling last-minute phone calls late Friday afternoons before the onset of Shabbos, the Jewish Sabbath, which begins at sundown.

The Briderheim's neighbors on Wannamaker Court, particularly Mrs. Klatzko, who was personally present at the luncheon, were then acknowledged.

Finally, Mr. Wertheimer turned his attention to Vivian Street, the honoree of the hour.

The upbeat mood of the event reached a peak as Mr. Wertheimer presented the DDSO Rockland Community Support Services Team Leader with an elegantly worded plaque communicating Hamaspik's profound and sincerely felt appreciation for all her assistance and involvement. Ms. Street stepped up

to accept her gift.

Rockland Community Support Services team member Mr. Biju Abraham was also thanked by Mr. Wertheimer "for the great work you've done for our home."

Ms. Street was then called upon to speak by Mrs. Katina—preceded by the surprise presentation of a New York State Citation crafted exclusively by State Assemblyman Kenneth Zebrowski in tribute to the honoree. Mrs. Katina read the politician's letter of regret at being unable to attend the luncheon—and then recited the citation.

Assemblyman Zebrowski and Hamaspik have shared a mutually beneficial relationship over the past several years, with the Assemblyman delivering on several pledges to help the Hamaspik organization and Hamaspik helping realize the Assemblyman's vision of strong faith-based communities supporting their own.

The emcee then handed the podium over to the Team Leader.

"I'm actually speechless," Street smiled as she began her brief remarks. "I've worked here for ten years, but we're still a team," she pointed out. "It's only by the grace of G-d that we do what we do."

The formal event concluded as Mrs. Katina presented Jackie Spring with a special gift that she had found in a quaint, out-of-the-way gift shop that "was just perfect for who Jackie is."

The gift, a simple wooden plaque, bore the words, "Live simply so that others may simply live."

As the crowd slowly dispersed, Ms. Street shared a few thoughts with the Gazette. Asked what makes Hamaspik distinct among the many social-services agencies she works with, Street said, "I would say, their advocacy for more difficult cases and individuals."

Thanks to years of strenuous efforts, with oft-anguished pleas of parents ringing in their ears, Hamaspik's staff now finally can open the front door of Wannamaker Briderheim to eight of those same "difficult cases and individuals" and say: "Welcome home." ■



Thanks where thanks are due: Mr. Wertheimer recognizes contributions of officials, staff



Moses Wertheimer, Tim Ryan, Aron Wieder, Peretz Klein, Larry Warshauer, Moshe Hapstein, Eli Solomon, Mr. Wertheimer and Biju Abraham celebrate the Wannamaker IRA



So, What's Happening in Your Health Today...?



Fragile X researchers discover protein connection

Fragile X syndrome researchers at the University of Arizona discovered that the absence of certain proteins in fruit flies caused less severe symptoms of the fragile X protein in the fruit flies.

In the research, the fragile X protein would cause the fruit flies' eyes to develop deformities—but other fruit flies without some of those certain proteins would develop less noticeable deformities.

The research demonstrates a cause-and-effect connection between the proteins and the fragile X protein.

New report shows highest-ever life expectancy, lowest-ever death rates

U.S. life expectancy reached nearly 78 years (77.9), and the age-adjusted death rate dropped to 760.3 deaths per 100,000 population, both records, according to the latest mortality statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The report, "Deaths: Preliminary Data for 2007," was issued today by CDC's National Center for Health Statistics. The data are based on nearly 90 percent of death certificates in the United States.

The 2007 increase in life expectancy—up from 77.7 in 2006—represents a continuation of a trend: Life expectancy has increased 1.4 years from 76.5 years in 1997 to 77.9 in 2007.

Other findings:

The U.S. mortality rate fell for the eighth straight year to an all-time low of 760.3 deaths per 100,000 in 2007—2.1 percent lower than the 2006 rate of 776.5. The 2007 mortality rate is half of what it was 60 years ago (1532 per 100,000 in 1947.)

Heart disease and cancer, the two leading causes of death, accounted for nearly half (48.5 percent) of all deaths in 2007.

Between 2006 and 2007, mortality rates declined significantly for eight of the 15 leading causes of death. Declines were observed for influenza and pneumonia (8.4 percent), homicide (6.5 percent), accidents (5 percent), heart disease (4.7 percent), stroke (4.6 percent), diabetes (3.9 percent), hypertension (2.7 percent), and cancer (1.8 percent).

The preliminary infant mortality rate for 2007 was 6.77 infant deaths per 1,000 live births, a 1.2 percent increase from the 2006 rate of 6.69, though not considered statistically significant. Birth defects were the leading cause of infant death in 2007, followed by disorders related to preterm birth and low birth

weight. Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) was the third leading cause of infant death in the United States.

Sudden infant deaths "tumbling"

In contrast to the aforementioned miniscule rise in American infant mortality rates for year 2007, including sudden infant death syndrome, or SIDS, British government data actually indicates a 7% drop of SIDS throughout England and Wales in 2007.

There were 264 such deaths in 2007 across England and Wales, down 7% from the year before, which itself saw a significant fall in numbers.

What causes the deaths is unclear, but there are measures to reduce the risk.

These include putting a baby on its back to sleep, not smoking in the vicinity of the baby and not sharing a bed if the parent is very tired or has been drinking.

The majority of deaths were among babies of a normal birth weight, 5.5 lbs and above, and occurred between 28 days and one year of age.

Age was also a factor: rates were highest in mothers under 20, and fell the older she became.

There is now suggestion that bacteria may have a role in sudden infant death, although the precise nature of any such relationship is unclear.

Sebelius: Swine flu shots may start early October

The nation's first round of swine flu shots could begin sooner than expected, with some vaccine available as early as the first week of October, Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius recently announced.

Sebelius said she is confident the vaccine will be available early enough to beat the peak of the expected flu season this fall and that early doses are intended for health care workers and other high-priority

groups.

"We're on track to have an ample supply rolling by the middle of October. But we may have some early vaccine as early as the first full week in October. We'll get the vaccine out the door as fast as it rolls off the production line," she said.

The possibility of early shots follows encouraging news about the swine flu vaccine. Researchers have discovered that one dose instead of two could be enough for healthy adults, and protection could begin once vaccinated within 10 days instead of three weeks.

"That's great, which means we'll have a lot more vaccine," Sebelius said. "We also have seen a robust immune response within 10 days, instead of three weeks as was feared."

Sebelius said the vaccine doses will be distributed immediately to designated locations across the country once they are available: "Every state has a plan saying these are the sites to get the vaccine as quickly as possible into people's arms. That's where the distribution will go."

The winter flu vaccine is widely available now, and health authorities urged people to get shots now before swine flu shots start arriving.

In addition to concerns about swine flu, doctors also expect some garden-variety flu this fall as well, an illness that typically kills 36,000 Americans and hospitalizes 200,000 each year.

Therapy in preschools: can it have lasting benefits?

When a 4-year-old preschooler in New Haven, Connecticut recently gave a classmate a playful push to communicate "I want to be your friend"—the boy lacked the standard social skills needed to reach out to other kids—the other boy hurt him in response.

Instead of treating him as a troublemaker as might have been done elsewhere, staff mental-health therapist Barbara Giangreco understood that he was just trying to be friendly, and worked with his mother and

teacher on helping him use words to reach out to other kids. All adults involved now agree that his social skills have significantly improved.

Parents may be skeptical when first hearing that children so small need mental-health help: There is the perceived risk of stigmatization by labels or interference with the innocence of childhood.

However, a growing body of research shows that early-childhood therapy programs in schools are benefiting entire classrooms of children by reducing behavior problems and supporting overburdened teachers.

At least 29 states and a handful of cities are offering such services to preschools and child-care centers on a part-time or temporary basis, according to a recent survey of 35 states by Georgetown University's Center for Child and Human Development. Among them are Connecticut, Ohio, Kentucky, Louisiana and Michigan. Also, MDRC, a nonprofit research concern, is testing mental-health consultation and other services in 26 New Jersey and 20 Chicago preschools.

Some states offer mental-health services to both public and private facilities. At the Beary Cherry Tree Children's Daycare, Metairie, La., which is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, a professional group, a mental-health consultant recently helped teachers figure out how to calm a child who was disrupting group lessons by using more eye contact, praise and encouragement, and giving the child regular "jobs" such as holding the door for others.

The trend comes amid growing awareness of mental-health problems in small children. From 9.5% to 14.2% of children under 6 have emotional problems serious enough to hurt their ability to function, including anxiety or behavior disorders, according to a 2006 research survey in the journal Public Health Reports. Another study, published last month in the Archives of General Psychiatry, found depression in children as young as 3.

"Children in preschool struggle with their feelings, and the only way they can communicate is often through behavior," says Ms. Giangreco, whose services are funded by the state of Connecticut. "It's our job to be able to help them find a way to communicate that is safe and appropriate," just as therapists do for adults. "If we can get to these kids at 3 and 4, they stand a much better chance of navigating through the rest of their lives."

Ms. Giangreco showed the aforementioned boy's mother how to use a cardboard "feelings wheel" at home to get her son to talk about his feelings; he spins a pointer among faces portraying various emotions, from happiness or sadness to loneliness or boredom, to help him name his mood and start a conversation about it.

Advocates say that mental-health help in preschools is an efficient way to help small children learn lifelong social and emotional skills they need. At a Branford, Conn., child-care center, a 4-year-old boy, whose family was remodeling their home and facing other stresses, began throwing tantrums when he lost games with other children, yelling and throwing toys, says mental-health consultant Eileen Fregeau. To help him control his emotions, she encouraged one of the room's two teachers to anticipate his outbreaks, take him aside and sit with him in a quiet corner, before his frustrations got out of control, she says. As the teacher urged the boy to express his feelings verbally, he gradually learned to calm himself even when losing.

Target sued by EEOC for violating employee's ADA, civil rights

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission sued national retail superstore chain Target this past August on behalf of Jeremy Schott, a Target employee who has cerebral palsy.

The suit alleges that Target denied Schott "reasonable accommodation," an Americans with Disabilities Act legal requirement, by not allowing his parents or job coach to attend his in-person work meetings and performance reviews; Schott has difficulty communicating due to his CP.

Schott began part-time work in 2002 at an Orange County, Calif. Target store; the suit also alleges that Schott's hours were cut permanently to less than half the hours of less-senior, non-disabled co-workers after he took an unpaid medical leave in 2004.

The lawsuit, which was filed late August in the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California after a failed out-of-court settlement attempt, also alleges Target violated the Civil Rights Act. ■



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