



Partially funded by the Chicago Department of Family and Social Services, Senior Division

THE MITZVAH GRAM

The Monthly Publication of The Chicago Mitzvah Campaign
1-866-MY-RABBI

www.chicagomitzvahcampaign.com

CMC Chaplaincy and Senior Services Division

- Hospital visitations
- Weekly "Shabbos packages" delivered to hospital patients
- "Senior Friendship" (home outreach for isolated seniors)
- Monthly Jewish discussion at dozens of retirement and nursing facilities
- Subsidized emergency response systems
- Free kosher guest meals in hospitals
- Free medicar transportation for the elderly and infirm
- Delivering shabbos and holiday meals to patients
- Holiday awareness and celebrations at retirement and nursing homes
- Patient and family support
- Telephone reassurance program
- Promoting traditional Jewish funeral practices
- Musical rendition for Hospice Patients
- Family "Hospitality Suites"

Blowing Shofar Ultimately Saves a Life

According to the theory of the "butterfly effect", a small change instigated at a certain point can result in much larger differences to a later state. In the realm of human interaction too, it is common to find that as a result of a single experience - and especially in a situation whereby a kind deed is performed or a helping hand is extended - the positive ramifications on a person's life may be far-reaching indeed. In hindsight, we can often look back and appreciate the Divine Providence inherent in such developments, as the following story demonstrates.

One Rosh Hashanah several years ago, Rabbi Aron Wolf of the CMC crossed paths with a fellow Jew, "MM", in the street, and offered to blow the shofar for him. After performing the mitzvah, the two struck up a conversation, and it emerged that the MM lived alone and did not have any family around.

When the rabbi suggested that MM keep a medical emergency button on him at all times, the elderly gentleman reluctantly demurred. "I have no money at all," he explained. "But if you want to pay for me to have one, I'll gladly take it." So Rabbi Wolf made the necessary arrangements, helped connect the emergency alert system to MM's home telephone, and showed him how to use it.

In the ensuing time, the two have spoken perhaps once or twice a year. Recently however, Rabbi Wolf was informed that MM had suffered an emergency and used the medical alert system to call the paramedics. The quick response time surely saved his life, for when MM arrived at the hospital the doctors checked his condition

and expressed astonishment that he had even made it to the hospital at all!

Rabbi Wolf continued to visit MM and encourage him in his recuperation, but the eighty-five year-old patient, a military veteran who had demonstrated great bravery and courage during world war two, was now feeling quite disheartened. "I'm an old man with no family and no reason to live," he said. Why should I make the effort to go through the treatment program?"

Nevertheless, Rabbi Wolf kept in touch with MM. The CMC helped him with food and transportation, and Rabbi Wolf was constantly available with counsel and a supportive ear. And as time progressed, MM began to realize that his life was not so bleak after all, for he was connected to a community and a group of people to whom he could turn in times of crisis. He began approaching his treatment plan with a renewed sense of spirit and purposefulness, and to appreciate each day as an opportunity to live life to the fullest capacity that he has been granted.

"It's all thanks to the caring approach of Rabbi Wolf and the CMC," MM gratefully explains. "Without them I would not have been able to appreciate whatever remaining time I have left in this world at all."

Thus, thanks to Divine Providence an apparently random Rosh Hashanah meeting gave rise to a relationship that ended up causing a man's life to be saved and a new approach to life regenerated. And the lesson? Never underestimate the power of a single good deed, no matter how isolated and insignificant it may seem.

Frozen Senior Warmed Again

A short while into the winter season, the CMC was alerted to the case of an impoverished 90 year-old woman, “TG”, who was without proper heat in her home, because the furnace that powered the house’s central air system had stopped functioning.

TG’s two children had both passed away years ago, and her remaining relatives were two distant to be of much help to her. She lived alone and only very rarely left her house, for she felt that she had nowhere else to be and no reason to go out. TG’s needs were not extravagant, and for years she had managed to get by on the monthly social security check that she received.

*Cold, alone and desperate,
TG reached out for help.*

During the last few weeks since her furnace had broken down however, TG had basically confined herself to her bedroom, where she at least had the benefit of an electric space heater. But the heat was still inadequate, and she had been compelled to spend almost all of her time snuggled under her heavy bedcovers in the bedroom in an effort to stay warm. Moreover, keeping the space heater working twenty-four hours a day had sent TG’s electric bill through the roof. On her meager income she couldn’t dream of having her furnace repaired, but keeping the space heater on all the time wasn’t an option either. Cold, alone and desperate, TG reached out for help.

Upon hearing of TG’s plight, Rabbi Wolf immediately contacted

her and reassured her that everything would be okay. He then turned to Mr. Howard Kaplan, CEO of Skokie’s “Precision Heating and



Air Conditioning” company, to repair TG’s furnace. Although by now it was well into the evening, “Precision’s” repairman was at TG’s house within the hour. Unfortunately, the furnace could not be fixed immediately, as it needed a replacement part that could not be procured until the morning.

Bright and early the following day, the CMC’s Rabbi Jaworowski knocked on TG’s door and stayed with her until “Precision’s” repairman returned and finished the task of fixing the furnace. TG and the rabbi connected with each other immediately, and the stories, jokes, and perspectives that they shared with one another helped keep both



of them warm while they waited for the central heating to be restored.

When the repairman had completed his work and the heat was successfully restored, TG’s wizened face excitedly lit up and she fairly bubbled with gratitude and delight. In fact, her happiness was such that had her creaky ninety year-old limbs allowed, it would not have surprised to see her breaking into a celebratory jig.

“Rabbi, I cannot emphasize enough how much this means to me,” she later gushed to Rabbi Wolf. “Thanks to you and the

*“Thanks to you and the
Chicago Mitzvah
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in weeks I can comfortably
leave my bed and move
around in my own house...”*

Chicago Mitzvah Campaign, for the first time in weeks I can comfortably leave my bed and move around in my own house. Until you came along I was just a poor elderly lady all alone, without any avenue of help or anyone to turn to. I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart, which is now warm again.”

The CMC would like to gratefully acknowledge the great courtesy, professionalism and efficiency of the Precision Heating and Air Conditioning team. We much appreciated your quick response time, terrific customer service, and preparedness to “go the extra mile” on behalf of the customer.

Notes From The CMC Diary

Open House for New Hospitality Suite



The CMC is holding an “open house” event to mark its new hospitality suite’s fully operational status. The community is invited to come and view the suite at 9631 Gross Point Road (suite 8 in lower level) on Sunday January 15, 12-4pm.

Refreshments will be served.

Hospital patients, visitors, physicians and staff members are encouraged to make use of this free and very welcoming facility. Advance arrangements are necessary to book the guest rooms for sleeping accommodation, but the kitchen/dinette area is available around the clock. For more information, please call the CMC office.

Electric Shabbat Candles Donated

The CMC has recently donated a large number of electric Shabbat candles to a dozen area hospitals. The candles enable patients, who are restricted by hospitals’ fire safety regulations, to nevertheless partake of the traditional candle-lighting ceremony to usher in the Shabbat and festivals.



This donation of electric candles was generously sponsored by

Abba and Surie Osina, for a “Refuah Shlaima” and speedy recovery for Miriam Orit bat Devorah.

Citywide Chanukah Celebrations

The 2011 annual CMC Chanukah campaign was another wonderful success. Over 100 volunteers visited more than 90 nursing homes and other residences to light the menorah, distribute special gift packages, sing songs and spread the holiday spirit. **A l t o g e t h e r**, approximately 1500 senior citizens and patients were visited.



2011 In Review

The year of 2011 has been a time of expansion and growth for the social services and pastoral care provided by the CMC to individuals in the community. At the CMC our work is permeated with a sense that we are privileged to be able to serve the community. And while we may look back at the accomplishments of 2011 with some pride, we are not resting on our laurels. We look forward to 2012 as a year of even greater growth for CMC as we continue to serve the material and spiritual needs of our community’s most vulnerable and isolated members.

We wish a speedy recovery and good health to:

- Shoshana bas Sara
- Shlomo Zundel bas Chinkel
- Rivka bas Leba
- Leah bas Chana
- Miriam Raizel bas Chana Kaila
- Faiga bas Tzila
- Gittel bas Kreindel
- Yehudit bas Sara
- Yehuda Dovid ben Rochel Sima
- Chava Ronya bas Chadvera
- Gitel bas Kreindel
- Yitzchok ben Sara
- Bluma bas Rosa Chaya
- Baruch Berl ben Liba Leah
- Yisrael Mazal ben Raizel Miriam
- Henry ben Herta
- Amir ben Molouk
- Chana bas Yulia
- Sheina bas Madeline
- Tzivia Leeba bas Hoshe
- Yehudit Rachil bas Hinda Miriam
- Rachel bat Gohar
- Aidel bas Faige
- Dov ben Rus
- Pesa Leah bas Rivka
- Aharon HaLevi ben Gittel

A new CMC project!

Skokie Hospitality Suite

**Kosher food and
lodging for patients,
family members and
faculty of Skokie
Hospital & Lieberman
Geriatric Center**

9631 Gross Point Road
Suite 8 (lower level)



**OPEN
24/7**

GRAND

OPENING AND OPEN HOUSE **Sunday, January 15th, Noon – 4pm**
ALL WELCOME!



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