



# INSPIRATIONS

A PUBLICATION OF WOMEN'S LEAGUE COMMUNITY RESIDENCES, INC.

SUMMER 2010

## Fun Time in the Summer Time


**R**enting a summer bungalow in the Catskills is something of a tradition in our Brooklyn community. The mass exodus begins as soon as schools are out and extends for up to ten weeks, stretching through the city's hot summer season. So why not do the same for the consumers of Women's League? According to Steven Smulowitz, senior residence manager, "We'd been mulling this idea over for a long time. We felt that the fresh air and change of scenery would benefit our consumers. Fortunately, this past year I was able to locate a winterized home that I believed would be wonderfully appropriate for our consumers' diverse needs."

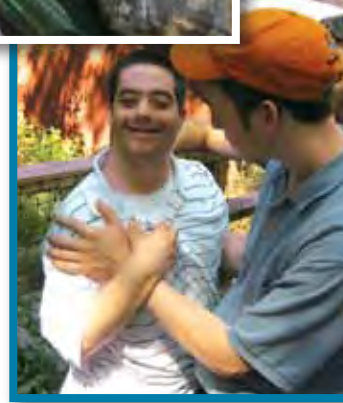
The house had to be modified to meet the physical challenges of the consumers, as well as State safety codes. Wheelchair access had to be created. Fences and safety equipment were installed. A blow-up pool, inflatable water toys and even a full-size camping tent for the backyard were purchased. And when it was ready, excited groups from three separate residences took turns spending a week at a time in this rustic and scenic location. It did wonders for them all!

There were plenty of activities that the residents could enjoy. According to Nechie Katz, assistant manager, "We took day trips to a petting zoo and to Walmart. We visited the local pizza

parlor. We enjoyed a bumpy hayride and some motor boating. And we were entertained by both the Ballooner Rebbe and Morah Music."

But the best moments were unquestionably the quiet moments – sitting on the deck, preparing a barbecue, taking walks around the lake, splashing in the blow-up pool, enjoying a Shabbos seudah together, and breathing in the fresh mountain air. "It was the quintessential country experience," says Steven.

And even though most everyone in the groups had certain behavioral or physical limitations, it didn't really seem to matter much at all. Somehow, all those challenges took a back seat to the overwhelmingly pleasant experience of being surrounded by grass and trees and the great big outdoors. "Each group was able to enjoy its stay in the country," Steven remembers, "just like their friends and neighbors from back home in the city." 





## Publishing a Magazine at Women's League


What's interesting, inspiring, informative, intriguing and is created exclusively at Women's League? Give up? It's an outstanding publication called "Aish" that is published, edited, coordinated, and largely written by one ambitious Women's League consumer named Avraham. Every page of every issue is carefully thought out. Even the title "Aish" holds great significance, being that it is an acronym for Avraham's full name.

Publishing a magazine is no easy feat. There are so many tasks involved. But Avraham is a multi-talented resident of Women's League and for him this is truly a labor of love. Over the past several years, he has managed to overcome his challenges and fulfill his life's dream. At first, Women's League staffers and friends helped him achieve his goals. But as time went on and the magazine gained in popularity as well as in content, Avraham became more proficient and experienced. Today he is able to do most of the work by himself.

According to Meir Heller, Avraham's supervisor at Women's League, "He is busy with Aish for weeks at a time. He does all the artwork and calligraphy. He gathers the articles and *divrei Torah*. Avraham conducts interviews and writes

an editorial. He even includes a *Mazel Tov* page and a Fun page." Once the thirty-page magazine is successfully printed at a local copy center, Avraham distributes some 100 copies to Women's League residents, staff, community leaders and friends. Invariably, his readers are delighted with it.

Avraham's efforts prompted New York State Assemblyman Dov Hikind to write him a letter, praising his publication and encouraging him to keep up the good work. "Your *divrei Torah*," writes the Assemblyman, "will most certainly aid me as I reflect upon the important themes of our times."

We at Women's League are extremely proud of Avraham and are looking forward to upcoming issues of his wonderful publication. 



# CALIFORNIA, HERE WE COME!

**W**omen's League in Disneyland? San Diego? L.A? Why not? The ladies of Women's League knew exactly where they wanted to go on their next vacation, and it wasn't the local park or museum. They dreamed of visiting beautiful sunny southern California. And their dedicated staff made sure that nothing would stand in their way.

It wasn't easy. First of all, the trip would be expensive. Also, there was lots of advance planning, shopping, packing, and arranging that had to be




**They dreamed of visiting beautiful sunny southern California. And their dedicated staff made sure that nothing would stand in their way.**

done. But, according to Esther Silver, assistant manager at the women's residence, "It became a year-long project. The ladies budgeted carefully. They planned for weeks, shopped for new outfits and sneakers, purchased luggage, and arranged an itinerary. They voted on which attractions they would

visit. In four days, they toured as many places as they could. By eight o'clock in the morning, they were out the door with sandwiches packed. They had a real goal to accomplish and they worked hard to achieve their goal."

All in all, eleven women from four Women's League residences traveled together (yet separated into two groups for diversified local trips). "The camaraderie between the ladies," says Esther, "was amazing. People responded to them so well. Even the stewardess on the airplane said to me, 'We thought we were going to have a hard time, but your ladies behaved beautifully during the entire flight.'"

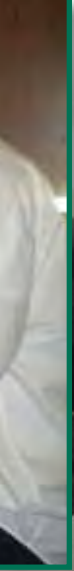
Much of the credit is due to the tireless staff who accompanied the ladies on the trip. "We worked around the clock," Esther remembers, "preparing meals and medication, and working out the many details such as wheelchair accessibility at all the sites. Some of our ladies are medically frail, but thank G-d we had no emergencies during our stay. The ladies looked so beautiful and so happy that it was completely worthwhile."

Best of all, the ladies felt good about themselves. They were on vacation with their friends, enjoying a tour of America. "Look at us!" they said to each other. "Our dream of so long has come true!" 



# GETTING READY FOR SHABBOS





# Hydrotherapy's Making a BIG SPLASH!

**W**hether it will be scorching hot this summer or snowing heavily next winter won't matter as much to the twelve teen boys who live at the Women's League residence on E. 7<sup>th</sup> Street in Brooklyn. You see, these boys with developmental disabilities and various emotional or medical issues have a state-of-the-art hydrotherapy pool in their basement. And their favorite activity is spending time unwinding in the warm and invigorating water.


Chana Silverman, residence social worker, describes the pool and its surroundings as aesthetically beautiful. "The pool is built in a basement extension," says Chana, "with tiles, skylights and spacious bathroom facilities." It's not only pretty. It also meets the highest safety standards, with special door and pool alarms that ring loudly when activated.

A continuous motion machine is adjusted by staff to reflect each resident's needs. Those more physically agile can learn how to swim against the steady current. Those physically challenged enjoy the soothing motion of the gentle waves on their bodies. Every child is accompanied by both a staff member in the water and a trained lifeguard.

The hydrotherapy pool is probably the best thing that ever happened at this residence. There are countless benefits for the

boys, both physically and emotionally. "Boys who are autistic or are dealing with emotional issues calm down when they are in the water," Chana explains. "Those with tightened muscles are able to relax. We have boys who require sensory input and are totally transformed by feeling the motion in the water. And the actual exercise, no matter what level the child is functioning on, helps achieve cardiovascular fitness."

The children eagerly anticipate their time in the pool. "Even those boys who are non-verbal," says Chana, "will proudly stop by my office wearing their robe and swimsuit just to show me that they are going swimming." Chana describes Isaac who is so challenged that it's almost impossible to recognize his feelings. Except when he's in the pool. "We clearly see the way Isaac's face lights up when he's there," says Chana. The happiness and serenity created usually lasts all evening. Staff reports that boys who receive physical therapy or speech therapy are much more receptive to it after spending time at the pool.

The pool was a costly investment, Chana says, both in terms of its initial construction and in continuous maintenance. Nevertheless, according to everyone at the E. 7<sup>th</sup> Street residence, it's an investment that is reaping tremendous rewards. 



# Happy 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Tova & Mordechai!

**T**ova is a Women's League consumer who attends a day habilitation program at Chayeinu. Mordechai has a job as a messenger for Yachad, a division of the Orthodox Union. The two of them live in their own apartment and are happily married for just over a decade, having celebrated their tenth anniversary this past April. This is thanks to the guidance and supervision of the staff at Women's League.

Although relatively uncommon to have married couples at Women's League, there are indeed a few who are living together in harmony and functioning well with some support. These consumers are able to navigate the routines of daily life with just a little bit of extra help.

Cindy Levy is the apartment supervisor working with Tova and Mordechai. She stops by five days a week to ensure that things are running smoothly. "Our staff helps with the shopping and cooking, financial instruction and overseeing medical care. We help them plan their vacations and Sunday outings. But most of all, we are on call always in case they need our help."

On Shabbos, Tova and Mordechai are invited out to family or stay home and host friends. On Sundays, they




go bowling or to the zoo, or just spend a leisurely afternoon at home. They are happy with married life, and have carved out a routine that works well for both of them. "Sometimes," says Tova, "we go out to lunch together. We order vegetable cutlets or potato knishes with soup. And when the weather is nice we like to go for walks."

Tova is clearly proud of her independence. "I do a lot of the cooking myself," she says. "I can make chicken, flounder and sweet potato.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼  
**It takes a lot of staff time and effort to ensure that a Women's League couple stays happily married. But when the relationship blossoms, it's all worth it.**

I also do the laundry." Mordechai does his share of the chores as well. He helps clean for Shabbos and takes out the garbage. But when they need to tackle more complicated tasks, they are grateful to have Cindy's guidance and assistance. "If the oven isn't working or if they're not feeling well, they know whom to call for help," says Cindy. "We call a repairman or schedule a doctor's appointment. These things are a big deal for them. It's very reassuring for them to know that they're not alone."

It takes a lot of staff time and effort to ensure that a Women's League couple stays happily married. But when the relationship blossoms, it's all worth it. "Married life is good," says Tova. "It's nice to be a couple." 





**WOMEN'S LEAGUE  
COMMUNITY RESIDENCES, INC.**

1556 38th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11218

a tradition  
of caring,  
in our homes  
and yours

Tel: 718-853-0900  
Fax: 718-853-0818  
www.womensleague.org

**RESIDENTIAL SERVICES**

- ▶ Group homes for babies, children, and teens with disabilities
- ▶ Group homes for adults and seniors with disabilities
- ▶ Supportive apts. for men, women, and married couples with disabilities

**AT HOME COMMUNITY SERVICES**

- ▶ JUMPSTART Early Intervention
- ▶ Service Coordination
- ▶ HCBS Waiver Services
- ▶ CBR Supported Employment

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Jeanne Warman

**PROGRAM DIRECTOR**

Elliot Brownstein

**BOARD MEMBERS**

- Mrs. Esther Fruchthandler
- Mr. Victor Gluck
- Rabbi Ronald Greenwald
- Mrs. Faigie Horowitz
- Rabbi Burton Jaffa
- Mrs. Shoshana Lefkowitz
- Mrs. Betty Pollack
- Mrs. Rivka Rabinowitz
- Mr. Efraim Reich
- Mrs. Shayve Zucker

**RABBINIC ADVISORY BOARD**

- Rabbi Dovid Feinstein
- Rabbi Yaakov Perlow
- Rabbi Aaron Schechter
- Rabbi E.B. Wachtfogel

Design and Production:  
Bottom Line Marketing Group  
718.377.4567

Editing & Coordination:  
Shaindy Gurwitz

# WLCR HAPPENINGS



Women's League consumers jump at any opportunity to get a bracha from a tzaddik. Shown here, is Yossie M. shaking Rabbi Shmuel Kamenetsky's hand after receiving his blessing for a good year.



David B., a resident of Women's League and long-time classical music lover, is a regular season subscriber of the New York Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra. David is shown here after an inspiring concert at Avery Fisher Hall in Lincoln Center, Manhattan.



Residents of the 12th Avenue group home eagerly anticipate the weekly shiur (class) presented by their beloved and multi-talented teacher, Tzvi Raxenberg. In turn, they often share their own divrei Torah and insights with the group.

Above:  
Whether it's motor boating, pedal boating, banana boating or row boating, you can count on our Women's League consumers to be there enjoying the ride.

Below:  
Women's League residents went to cheer for the baseball teams playing at Keyspan Park in Coney Island – Hatzolah vs NYPD. This annual exciting event took place last July 20th and has already been scheduled for this summer as well.

