

Flatbush Focus

BY RAYLE RUBENSTEIN

Strong Show of Support at Our Place Barbecue

The Our Place BBQ at T-Fusion Steakhouse held this past Wednesday, July 6, was a smashing success as hundreds of community activists, lay leaders, Rabbanim and prominent politicians gathered to show their overwhelming support.

Our Place provides a safe haven along with rehabilitation, counseling and social care to teenagers at risk who are grappling with addiction and substance abuse. The approach of Our Place in assisting these teens is multifold. A family-like structure with caring volunteers and counselors has enabled Our Place to contribute to the therapy and recovery of children who have spiraled beyond the control of their families and educators. Our Place fills a dire need in the community for teens who simply have nowhere else to go.

All the components of a beautifully arranged and elegant affair were present and the stage was set for all to enjoy. The excitement reverberated in the air as the overflowing crowd eagerly participated in all aspects of the program, enjoying the delicious food and music on this special evening.



L-R: Chaim Deutsch, president of Flatbush Shomrim; Councilman Michael Nelson; Assemblyman Steven Cymbrowitz; Yoni Rhodes, who coordinated the entire event, and Avi Fishof, director of Our Place.

The camaraderie of the huge crowd dedicated to keeping this vital and unique organization alive was a pleasure and privilege to behold. Without exception, anyone who was approached personally knew of teens who have strayed from the path and at this point are being lovingly guided back to a healthy and productive life by the devoted staff of Our Place.

The evening was chaired by director Avi Fishof who passionately read a letter from a proud and thankful grandmother relat-

ing the saga of her grandson who left yeshivah and joined his friends for years in a life of drug addiction and substance abuse. After five years, he is now learning in Israel and that morning had become engaged to a *frum* girl from a very prominent family.

"How can we forsake Our Place?" she writes. "We must support them because teens will turn out to build beautiful *Yiddische doros*. ... If, G-d forbid, we let Our Place close its doors due to its terrible financial straits, the boys will end up on the streets..."



Part of the crowd at VIP

Zvi Gluck, community activist and *askan* for many years, and Rabbi Yakov Horowitz of Project Yes, spoke passionately from their hearts as well.

As the event came to a close, the level of caring and feeling for our fellow Jews in need was still palpable. Special thanks to all the sponsors and especially to Allison, the owner of T-Fusion, who once again displayed her finesse and elegance in catering and hosting the event. Though the beautiful event was deemed a success, the threat of closing Our Place doors

still looms, as hundreds of thousands of dollars are needed to pay off old debts and keep Our Place functioning. Together, as a *Klal*, we can hopefully accomplish that!

Rabbi Bald, Rabbi Rietti to Speak at Flatbush Shivah Asar B'Tammuz Program at Merkaz Hasimcha

Rabbi Mordechai Shlomo Bald and Rabbi Jonathan Rietti will be speaking on the fast day of Shivah Asar B'Tammuz, Tuesday, July 19 at Merkaz Hasimcha, 1898 Bay Avenue (near Avenue

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