

Assemblyman Cymbrowitz Visits Our Place in Flatbush - Announces \$5,000 Grant



Assemblyman Cymbrowitz with Our Place's (L-R) Chaim Glancz and Yossie Yurowitz during a recent visit to the organization's center.

After visiting Our Place, a program dedicated to providing troubled youth with a positive environment and the counseling and therapy they require, Assemblyman Steven Cymbrowitz said it is important that we determine the true impact of alcohol and drugs on the Jewish community. Since recently being appointed Chairman of the Assembly's Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Committee, Cymbrowitz has been hearing about concerns in the orthodox community involving alcohol and drugs, that previously no one wanted to admit to.

"I have also been told about the use of hard drugs and the abuse of prescription drugs in our community. While we are fortunate in not having a headline making incidence of drug abuse, the presence of this kind of behavior needs to be addressed to benefit both the addict and to prevent others from ruining their lives," Cymbrowitz said.

"It seems excessive drinking has become a well known *secret* in our community, but unless it affects our own family most of us haven't given it serious consideration. Whether it's Kiddush clubs, some of whose members might be enjoying too much alcohol or Kiddush hopping, going from Kiddush to Kiddush drinking at each, this type of behavior cannot continue to be ignored," Cymbrowitz explained.

"It is easy to pretend that there is no alcohol or drug abuse in our community, but that would be wrong, as I am learning from the experts who are out there every day working to reach those who are in denial and assist those who are seeking help," Cymbrowitz continued. "To deny there is abuse of drugs or alcohol in our community is to deny those who are in need the help they deserve."

"Our Place has a remarkably successful record of assisting young people with drug and alcohol prob-

lems, but I believe that it is important to reach our youth before they give in to the temptation of drugs – be it alcohol, prescription drugs or other illegal substances – and need the services of Our Place. Prevention is the key and we have to be more proactive in motivating our young people to be responsible when exposed to the temptation of either alcohol or illegal drugs," Cymbrowitz stated.

"As Chairman of the Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Committee, I want to fully understand the impact of drugs and alcohol on our community so that those who desperately need help may obtain it without shame or obstacles, and those at risk may be reached before it is too late. Just because our neighbors with drug or alcohol problems may not be blatantly obvious is no excuse, for us as a community, to turn a blind eye," Cymbrowitz said.

After visiting Our Place Assemblyman Cymbrowitz announced that he would provide the organization with a \$5,000 grant to help keep it functioning. Located in several locations, including 1815 Avenue M, Our Place provides a non-challenging environment in which young people may play pool, workout with professional instructors, listen to music, socialize with friends and eat a kosher meal while receiving support and help from licensed social workers and therapists.

"We can't afford to let Our Place close. We must make sure that Our Place is able to continue to meet the needs of the troubled young people in our community. Of course, the human benefits are incalculable, but this organization is actually saving us money. Each young person who is reached before they get into trouble, or who is rescued from their troubled past, is one less person our criminal justice system must deal with," Cymbrowitz pointed out.