

Spotlight / By Devorah Klein

# A Community Grows in West Bloomfield, Michigan

West Bloomfield, Michigan, a suburb of Detroit, is located about 12 miles from the Detroit's frum communities in Oak Park and Southfield, Michigan. For over 30 years it has been attracting Jews of many affiliations as an alternative neighborhood, featuring affordable housing in a more suburban atmosphere. Since that time, several frum organizations have established shuls there in an attempt to assure an Orthodox presence in the area.

This past year, the Mesivta of Toledo, formerly of Toledo, Ohio, relocated to West Bloomfield, opening up promise for this suburb to develop into a large Torah community. Let's take a look at these exciting developments.



Bachurim and rebbeim of Mesivta of Toledo



Rabbi Shneur Silberberg teaching teens at "Torah and BBQ"

Congregation Keter Torah was originally established in Oak Park in the early 1900s by a group of Turkish immigrants. In 2001, it relocated to West Bloomfield and built a beautiful new building. Today, the *kehillah* has about 50 member families both Ashkenazic and Sephardic backgrounds.

### Mesivta of Toledo

The Mesivta of Toledo was established in Toledo, Ohio, four and a half years ago by Rabbi Menachem Freedman and Rabbi Pinchus Neuberger, who recognized the need for a high-caliber out-of-town dormitory yeshivah in the Midwest region. The *mesivta* provides a vibrant environment where *bachurim* are guided toward excellence in Torah learning and living by warm, dedicated *rebbeim*; they also enjoy a serious secular studies program. There are 28 *bachurim* in the yeshivah; 10 are from Oak Park and Southfield, the rest from Cleveland, Chicago, Baltimore, and N.J.

The yeshivah thrived in Toledo for four years; however, it became difficult for the *rebbeim* and their wives to transport their children every day to schools in Detroit, a drive of close to one and a half hours. Consequently, Rabbis Freedman and Neuberger began to search for a new home for the yeshivah in the region.

In August 2010, the Mesivta of Toledo relocated to West Bloomfield. This community was close enough to Detroit to provide the *rebbeim* with the amenities of a *frum* community but removed enough to allow for a dormitory yeshivah environment.

With great *siyatta diShmaya* and assistance from members of the West Bloomfield community, especially Mr. Hartley Harris and Mr. Don Scharg, the yeshivah acquired a building that had belonged to a Conservative congregation. It was perfect for the yeshivah and included classrooms, space for a *beis medrash*, a large social hall which will be converted into a gym, and *milchig* and *fleishig* kitchens.

Four classrooms were to be converted into dormitory rooms; due to complications with permits, the renovations haven't yet been completed, and many *bachurim* have been boarding with local families. Currently, renovations are under way and the dormitory should be ready next year.

The West Bloomfield community has welcomed the yeshivah, whose *beis medrash* is open to residents, with *chavrusas* available for people of all ages. Early *Minchah* and late *Maariv minyanim* also accommodate residents. Shortly after the yeshivah settled in West Bloomfield, the *bachurim* participated in a *hachnassas sefer Torah* at Ohel Moed, adding tremendous warmth and enthusiasm to the event and endearing the yeshivah to the community.

On June 29, the yeshivah will hold its second annual banquet, honoring Mr. Hartley Harris of West Bloomfield and Rabbi Moshe Rose of Southfield.

Mr. Harris commented on the growth of the neighborhood, "There are forty thousand Jews in West Bloomfield and the connecting neighborhoods of Bloomfield Hills, Farmington Hills, West Bloomfield, and Birmingham. Shouldn't there be an Orthodox presence as well?"

"I always had a goal of bringing the community together, and with the presence of

the yeshivah, it can only grow. When I was first contacted to help the yeshivah, I thought it would be a great *zechus* for my parents. I can say that it has been quite an experience; ... I am a better person for having met these people. I am just a *shaliach*, but I am glad that I heard and answered when Hashem knocked. Hashem is always knocking; we just don't always answer."

### The Shuls of West Bloomfield

West Bloomfield has four Orthodox shuls: the Sarah and Morris Tugman Bais Chabad Torah Center of West Bloomfield, Ohel Moed of Shomrey Emunah, The Shul, and a Sephardic *kehillah*, Congregation Keter Torah.

The Sarah and Morris Tugman Bais Chabad Torah Center of West Bloomfield was started in 1973 by Rabbi Elimelech Silverberg. In 1982, the center built a building that houses a Torah school, *mikveh*, library, and daily learning programs.

Rabbi Shneur Silverberg now assists his father and oversees a staff of night-time *kollel* members who live in West Bloomfield and learn with *baalei batim*. Mrs. Zissie Silverberg heads an active women's circle that features many programs.

About 20 years ago, Rabbi Silverberg built an *eruv*, which is now connected to another *eruv* built by Ohel Moed of Shomrey Emunah. The combined *eruvim* cover an area of about five square miles.

"*Baruch Hashem*, we have seen many *baalei teshuvah* over the years," says Rabbi Silverberg. "The community is now home to over one hundred *frum* families."

Ohel Moed of Shomrey Emunah is headed by Rabbi Eli Meyer Jundef, the son-in-law of Rabbi Shaul Zacharish, a long-time Detroit Rav. The *kehillah* was established about 25 years ago at the behest of Rabbi Zacharish, who saw a need for a larger Orthodox presence in the area.

"My father-in-law always had a vision of starting shuls in different communities that did not have them," he said. "He wanted to be able to answer to people who claimed that they drove on Shabbos because there was no shul within walking distance. When I first came, I literally went from door to door trying to convince people to come to shul. *Baruch Hashem*, today we have an active shul with about forty-five member families."

The Lubavitch Campus, or "The Shul," is run by Rabbi Kasriel Shemtov and offers a wide variety of programs on its forty-acre complex. Besides regular *minyanim* and *shiturim*, Rabbi Levi Shemtov has created The Friendship Circle, where special-needs children attend programs every afternoon. Nine hundred volunteers assist with the program on a rotational basis. A small simulated village and a beautiful gym help the children learn life skills. Another program helps those recovering from addictions.

Rabbi Shemtov also set up the Michigan Jewish Institute. This multifaceted organization is an accredited college offering adult education classes and online courses in Jewish studies and job-related studies.

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City	שבועות תשע"א					עשיק פרשת בעליון תשע"א		
	Hadlakas Neros	Light Candles After	Rabbeinu Tam	Motzaei Yom Tov	Rabbeinu Tam	Hadlakas Neros	Motzaei Shabbos	Rabbeinu Tam
Antwerp	9:36	11:07	11:07	11:08	11:08	9:38	11:10	11:10
Atlanta	8:28	9:37	9:59	9:37	9:59	8:30	9:38	10:00
Baltimore	8:13	9:21	9:43	9:22	9:44	8:14	9:23	9:45
Boston	8:01	9:11	9:31	9:12	9:32	8:02	9:13	9:33
Chicago	8:05	9:15	9:36	9:16	9:36	8:07	9:17	9:38
Cincinnati	8:44	9:52	10:14	9:53	10:15	8:45	9:54	10:16
Cleveland	8:40	9:50	10:11	9:50	10:11	8:42	9:52	10:12
Dallas	8:15	9:24	9:46	9:24	9:46	8:17	9:25	9:47
Denver	8:08	9:16	9:38	9:17	9:39	8:09	9:18	9:40
Detroit	8:48	9:59	10:19	10:00	10:20	8:50	10:01	10:21
Edison NJ	8:08	9:16	9:38	9:17	9:39	8:09	9:18	9:40
Haifa	7:16	8:30	9:02	8:30	9:02	7:17	8:31	9:03
Jerusalem	7:07	8:25	9:01	8:26	9:01	7:09	8:27	9:02
Lakewood	8:06	9:14	9:36	9:15	9:37	8:07	9:16	9:38
Liberty	8:13	9:23	9:44	9:24	9:45	8:15	9:25	9:46
London	9:00	10:29	10:29	10:31	10:31	9:03	10:33	10:33
Los Angeles	7:44	8:53	9:15	8:53	9:15	7:46	8:54	9:16
Melbourne	4:49	5:50	6:19	5:50	6:19	4:49	5:50	6:19
Miami	7:53	9:01	9:23	9:02	9:24	7:54	9:02	9:24
Milwaukee	8:10	9:22	9:41	9:23	9:42	8:12	9:24	9:43
Minneapolis	8:39	9:54	10:10	9:55	10:10	8:41	9:56	10:11
Monsey	8:08	9:18	9:39	9:18	9:40	8:10	9:19	9:41
Montreal	8:22	9:38	9:53	9:39	9:54	8:24	9:40	9:55
New York	8:06	9:15	9:37	9:15	9:37	8:08	9:17	9:38
Passaic	8:08	9:17	9:38	9:17	9:39	8:09	9:18	9:40
Philadelphia	8:09	9:18	9:40	9:18	9:40	8:11	9:19	9:41
Pittsburgh	8:30	9:38	10:00	9:39	10:01	8:32	9:40	10:02
Seattle	8:46	10:06	10:17	10:07	10:17	8:48	10:09	10:19
St. Louis	8:05	9:14	9:36	9:14	9:36	8:07	9:15	9:37
Tel Aviv	7:23	8:28	8:58	8:29	8:58	7:24	8:30	8:59
Toronto	8:39	9:52	10:10	9:52	10:10	8:41	9:54	10:11
Waterbury CT	8:06	9:15	9:36	9:16	9:37	8:07	9:17	9:38