

► SHEMA KOLI

Shema Koli has appointed Eli Spitzer as its Executive Director. The Headmaster at Talmud Torah London, in Stamford Hill, he has more than ten years' experience as an educator in both Kodesh and secular studies departments of Chareidi schools in Golders Green and Stamford Hill. He has developed a strong track record for driving institutional change and improving the quality of education in Chareidi schools while maintaining and protecting their religious and cultural ethos. His experience in delivering safeguarding training and advice in Stamford Hill chadorim and schools will allow Shema Koli to expand its provision and reach more schools and institutions.



Established in 2013, Shema Koli remains dedicated to its founding mission of tackling abuse in the Orthodox Jewish community. Its helpline offers expert, professional and caring support, in a Torah hashkofoh manner, to silent and silenced victims of, and witnesses to, abuse. Shema Koli is actively working on expanding its core role of abuse prevention - and boosting its educational programmes, with Rabbinically-approved safeguarding courses, to all chadorim and schools - boys and girls, primary, secondary - as well as to the kehilla at large.

With this new focus and plans, Shema Koli trustees said they are delighted with the appointment of Mr Spitzer to work with schools and kehillahs from across the UK Jewish community to strengthen its prevention efforts and significantly reduce the incidents of abuse.

► JTEEN

JTeen is celebrating its second anniversary. The organisation was established with the aim of providing support and resources for all teens encountering any emotional challenges and struggles. Since its inception, the charity has continued to grow and expand its reach to better serve the needs of teens across the UK and Belgium.

Over the past year, the charity has made significant strides in increasing access to mental health support for teens, including expanding the popular helpline support service by adding a phone option besides the text facility. JTeen support is now accessible for teens who either don't have a text option or who prefer to talk to a counsellor. JTeen has also established partnerships with several schools to provide mental health education and support to students and staff as

well as launching several new programmes, including the school programme which has engaging workshops to help promote teen resilience.

With stigma still a strong factor within the community, JTeen has continued to raise public awareness about the importance of mental health through parent events and effective marketing campaigns. With the support of generous donors, JTeen has also been able to have a team of qualified therapists ready to engage with teens who contact the helpline with signs of early onset mental health disorders.

"We are proud of the progress we have made over the past two years, and we are grateful to our supporters and the unbelievable volunteers who have made it possible," said JTeen trustee Avi Barr. "We are committed to continuing our work to support teens and improve mental health outcomes for this vulnerable



Avi Barr with John Cameron

population."

Former head of Childline/NSPCC, John Cameron, who is now JTeen's safeguarding consultant, reflected on how empowering it is for young people to see how many adults in the community are volunteering their time to help support them in their times of need.

► AJEX

Hundreds of thousands of Jewish people have served in the British armed forces throughout our community's history. Risking all for our country's freedom and security.

AJEX - The Jewish Military Association are excited to invite you this weekend (26th/27th February) to watch two exclusive interviews. In the first, Edgar Santos, a JFS pupil and Cadet, had the opportunity of a lifetime interviewing 98 year old D Day veteran Mervyn Kersh. This poignant interview highlights why Remembrance and AJEX's work is so important.

In addition to the moving veteran interview, on Sunday 26th February AJEX will host an exclusive interview with Rachel Riley MBE. AJEX National Chair, Dan Fox, will discuss with Rachel her thoughts on combatting antisemitism and what she has faced in the public eye. The interview will be broadcast from www.charityextra.com/ajex at 6pm on Sunday.

These two interviews are part of an urgent fundraising campaign to raise £150,000. Funds raised will ensure the charity can continue its vital work in Remembrance, in Welfare Services for veterans and their families, as well as its education and outreach work.

18 year old, Edgar and 98 year old veteran Mervyn met at House of Life, Willesden Jewish Cemetery and discussed Mervyn's time as a soldier. He was called up to serve at the same age Edgar is now. They spoke about the importance of keeping remembrance alive through the annual AJEX Parade & Ceremony and education in schools. Mervyn stressed how it is vital that today's young people continue



Edgar Santos with Mervyn Kersh

the legacy of so many Jewish servicemen and women who fought for our freedom.

Mervyn said: "Connecting the older generation with the newer generation is very important. In ten years' time there will be nobody who is left who was in the War [Second World War]. It is important education is passed onto a younger generation, so it can be continued. It mustn't be allowed to disappear".

The fundraising campaign - themed on "Our Duty is to Care" - illustrates the importance of Remembrance, Education, Welfare and combatting antisemitism. The cost of living is a huge burden to so many and the AJEX Welfare fund will be needed more than ever this forthcoming year.

Edgar shared: "Meeting Mervyn was an experience of a lifetime. Not only to hear his fascinating stories but to recall the once again precious value of memory and remembrance moved me and made me feel proud

to be the continuation of this memory. Mervyn's indisputable Jewish pride made me feel invincible in light of today's challenges - his courage and determination throughout the war years are true witnesses to this pride. To interview someone who has exactly 80 years of life between us both feeling such a poignant sense of pride was indeed something I will remember forever."

AJEX JMA Chief Executive, Fiona Palmer, said, "Our duty at AJEX is to care and we are immensely proud of our work. People rely on our help and we can't do all of this without the care and help of people from across the community. We hope many will support us this weekend."

The target for AJEX is to raise £150,000 in 36 hours during which all donations will be doubled through generous match funding. Make a difference and support AJEX this weekend and watch the interviews at: www.charityextra.com/AJEX

► CAMP SIMCHA

Camp Simcha's first Shabbos residential retreat since Covid brought vital respite and a sense of kehilla for families with seriously ill children.

Over 160 family members from London, Manchester and Gateshead, join Camp Simcha staff, volunteers, carers and a medical team for the four-day retreat in Daventry, Northamptonshire - enjoying a range of bespoke activities, as well as chizuk from Rabbi Shraga Feivel Zimmerman, the Av Beis Din of the Federation.

Singer Buchi Glick entertained families during a concert Motzoei Shabbos, while activities on Thursday and before Shabbos included roller-skating, climbing, painting workshops and inflatables. The weekend ended with a New York-themed breakfast.

Hayley Phillips, Camp Simcha retreats co-ordinator, said the retreat had an incredible atmosphere.

"About a third of the family members were on their first ever retreat and to some extent it felt like everyone experienced it through their eyes.

"For the last few years our families have felt really isolated. What they experience being part of the Camp Simcha kehilla - as well as all the activities and chizuk helps families leave with renewed strength to face their challenges."

