

In the eleven years since the Chanukat Habayit of our beautiful Young Israel of New Rochelle building, we have seen our YINR community expand and flourish and our shul become the preeminent Orthodox synagogue in all of Westchester County. In addition to our Shabbat minyanim, we have eight daily minyanim, two daily daf yomis and many additional learning opportunities. We are the proud home of the Women's Initiative for Jewish Studies (WIJS) and Ruach's weekly Wednesday programming, and host highly respected scholars-in-residence throughout the year. Hundreds of our children participate in our youth programming each week as well as in special youth events. We also have an active Bnai Akiva snif for the first time in YINR history. The fewer than twenty members that comprised YINR when it was first established in 1957 surely could not have anticipated that our community would become the focal point of Orthodox Judaism within Westchester that it is today.

We are fortunate to have a kehillah that is energetic and diverse. As our shul continues to grow, adding 20 new families since last year's dinner, we strive to maintain the warm, welcoming atmosphere that drew so many of us to YINR. As the different generations that make up our congregation (including more than 25 2nd-generation member families) come together each week after davening, it is common to see younger and older members chatting comfortably at kiddush and to see new members pulled in as we connect to one another. That spirit of togetherness is at the core of the many successful YINR Women's League programs and committees, which help us to reach out to one another, while also ensuring abundant support during life cycle events. Of course, our greatest uniting force is the communal leadership of Rabbi Reuven Fink. His wisdom and guidance, as well as his dedication to YINR, are the engine to our continued physical and spiritual growth. He is assisted by Rabbi Chaim Axelrod who is a force for communal growth and inspiration. Our beloved Rebbetzins, Abby Fink and Yael Axelrod, play an integral role in the success of our community.

The 2019 honorees are the epitome of volunteerism and community mindedness that are the hallmarks of YINR. Simone and Mark have positively impacted every aspect of YINR daily life since they moved in over 15 years ago. They have taken on countless responsibilities and held numerous positions, culminating in the top leadership roles of YINR president (Mark) and Women's League president (Simone). Along the way, Mark co-chaired the shul's Commemorative Journal, becoming an expert on YINR history, and has become our go-to person for crafting shul communications. He served on the Executive Board for 9 years and oversaw the search for our assistant rabbi. Simone co-chaired the Hospitality Committee, organized special occasion shul kiddushes, and writes the exceptional poems that come with YINR's mishloach manot each Purim. We thank the Semers for all their energy, creativity and dedication, and for the incredible amount of time they have invested in making YINR the great institution that it is today.

Michelle and Rafi have become involved in so many areas of YINR life in since moving to 10804 just five and a half years ago. Rafi immediately volunteered to become an active lay leader in the Youth Department, helping develop a Shabbat afternoon learning program for younger children. Rafi also helped create and still organizes the Seudah Shlishit that meets every week with Rabbi Axelrod. He serves as co-chair of the Food Trucks Committee, which has brought much-needed Kosher dining options to the YINR community. Michelle has served as co-chair of the Hospitality Committee, helps

organize the Mikvah Bake Sale, and participates in every chesed opportunity that comes her way. The Halperts set a great example of volunteerism for their peers (and everyone else in the community).

We thank these honorees for allowing us to honor them and we look forward to so many of our members coming together on March 3 to salute their efforts. We are confident this Annual Dinner will be an outstanding success.

Michael Raskas, President Judy Friedman, Executive Board Chair