

The value of a Rabbi and a Rebbetzin is inestimable! But the value of Rabbi Chaim and Rebbetzin Yael Axelrod is priceless!

We are celebrating ten years **כַּן תִּרְבִּינָה** of exceptional leadership. Rabbi Chaim has all of the qualities that one could possibly desire in a Rabbi. He possesses great scholarship, oratorical excellence, pastoral capability and the sweet, noble personality that we all enjoy. Rabbi Axelrod is there for all of our lifecycle events; from birth to the grave. He stands tall and able in all of these occasions and makes everything more meaningful and significant. Rabbi Axelrod is the consummate chazzan leading our services on the High Holidays. His wonderful *nusach* and passionate voice help us connect to our G-d on these most important days. At a *shalom zachor* or a *Tish* and at *seudah shelishit* the Rabbi is the **ראש המזמרים**. We thank Rabbi Axelrod for all his efforts and pray that G-d blesses him and us with his continued tenure.

Rebbetzin Yael Axelrod is one powerhouse of a woman. I often wonder where she gets the time and energy to do the things that she does. She is the mother **בלי עין הרעה** of a large young family. She is an award winning teacher at YUHSG, a kallah teacher, challah baker and Rebbetzin. She has elevated the study of Torah in our community by all of her inventive learning programs. *Aggadah* and *halacha* and all Torah topics are all part of her Torah repertoire.

I must also add a comment about the Axelrod children. The boys and girls have made themselves an integral part of our community. They are all exceptional children and serve as exemplars of everything we hope and pray for our children.

Together and as individuals the Axelrods are most valuable to our Shul and our community. By honoring them we honor the Torah that they represent. I pray that Hashem continues to bless this family with all His many Brachot.

The Talmud in *Bava Batra* (6b-9b) discusses the laws associated with town councils: its officials and appointees. There are a number of characteristics and personality traits essential for that type of communal leadership. Among those qualities is even-temperedness, wisdom and integrity. The Talmud then cites verses from the Prophets that project great blessings to those individuals who toil on behalf of the Jewish community.

This evening, we are honoring an exemplary couple who have worked hard for our community. They certainly possess the qualities enumerated in the Talmud, and even more.

Tamar Croog is an unusual combination of prodigious talent in every area of organizational needs, as well as possessing the kind of personality that brings out the best in the people she works with. Tamar is a corporate executive who makes time for community. Tamar grew up in New Rochelle and I take tremendous pride in the exemplary woman she has become. Her smile, coupled with her unparalleled efficiency allows her to chair or work in every area of communal endeavor. She has chaired multiple dinners, committees, packed *mishloach manot* and is involved in Women's League, AMIT, SAR and so much more. She has unusual sensitivity to others and possesses the rare ability to hear a point of view that is opposite to hers and treat it and the individual who espouses it with respect and understanding. Anyone who has worked with Tamar would describe her as the quintessential leader!

Jon Croog is casually known for his smile and self-effacing sense of humor. In fact, however, Jon is a very serious individual. An expert in

his field he is admired for his wisdom and perspicacity and depth of analysis. I personally know Jon to be a sensitive and compassionate person who works hard to help the community and especially to help others. Watching him with the IDF soldiers at last year's Peace of Mind event revealed a צדיק נסתר in our midst! He revels in all of Tamar's accomplishments and encourages her in her work.

The Croogs are very proud of their wonderful children and all of their accomplishments.

A special *Mazal Tov* to our long-time members , Tamar's parents Aviva and Stan Adler.

The young Israel of New Rochelle is immensely lucky to have two such impressive and wonderful families in our midst.

May we continue to thrive as a community,

Rabbi Reuven Fink