

The National Council of Young Israel's "One Community" Initiative

The 'One Community' initiative is a creative and innovative approach to kiruv. I really like the idea of coordinating the efforts of many groups within the community towards a common goal. This program could energize and entire community towards an end of passion and practice of Yidishkeit. I believe that this has the potential to change families and communities.

Rabbi Shmuel Zuckerman, mara d'atra of the Young Israel of Pelham Parkway, Bronx, NY

In the history of Jewish outreach, few have become religious simply through a rousing class, a stirring speech, or a beguiling discussion. The great secret to kiruv is, and has always been, 'The Community'.

A shul and its community is the anchor for when we dock at the shore of an ever more precarious world.

When kiruv takes place within a shul we are not just introducing someone to Torah values but allowing him/her to enter into the cosmos of our lives.

The National Council of Young Israel's new outreach plan is not, then, an idea or a novel notion, rather it is the best low-risk security account for a vibrant future of Am Yisroel.

Rabbi Moshe Taub, mara d'atra of the Young Israel of Greater Buffalo, NY

I am thrilled to hear that Young Israel is returning to its original mission statement of reaching out to the greater Jewish community through the power of its many satellite branches. Chazak U'Baruch.

Rabbi Chaim Wasserman, President, Council of Young Israel Rabbis in Israel and Rabbi Emeritus, Young Israel Passaic/Clifton

Much Hatzlacha with this endeavor. Reaching out to even one neshama is saving a world.

Rabbi Peretz Steinberg, mara d'atra of the Young Israel of Queens Valley, NY and yoshev rosh, NCYI Vaad Halacha

Great ideas and plans.

Keep plugging.

Torah will win out.

Rabbi Berel Wein
Famous Rabbinic Author/ Lecturer

Torah tziva lanu Moshe morasha kehillas yaakov. The National Council of Young Israel appropriately sets K'lal Yisroel's communities as "home" for our mesorah, as it seeks to bring every Jew home.

Rabbi Aaron Kotler
CEO
Beis Medrash Govoha Lakewood

The National Council of Young Israel is embarking on an initiative that is very exciting and much needed in our times. We live in a time of great spiritual hunger, and we see many, many Jews returning to the ways of our fathers. The challenge is that more than 4/5 of our people are generations removed from a Torah lifestyle. And while so many unaffiliated Jews would love to learn more about their heritage, the problem is how do you touch so many. The NCYI is launching a grass roots effort to get every Young Israel and get involved in the process of reaching out. I wish them much hatzlacha in this great endeavor.

It is to hope that this program will find great success.

R' Ben Tzion Shafier
The Shmuz

It is wonderful to see that such an important organization, the National Council of Young Israel, is now officially undertaking to promote and do outreach and the Jewish world. Rabbi Yakov Couzens is a wonderful choice as the director of outreach and development for young Israel. I know him for many years, as he has committed his life to outreach, as he cares deeply about his Jewish brethren throughout the globe. I wish young Israel and Rabbi Couzens great success in this new endeavor.

Rabbi Yaakov Meyer
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It is exciting to see Young Israel embracing the responsibility of outreach, not just on a national level, but within their 130 community synagogues throughout North America. Rabbi Couzens is the ideal leader to head this remarkable initiative. We look forward to partnering with them for the good of K'lal Yisroel.

Lori Palatnik
Founding Director, The Jewish Women's Renaissance Project

I was overjoyed to hear the wonderful news that my dear friend, the talented Rabbi Yakov Couzens, has been appointed Director of Outreach & Development for the National Council of Young Israel. Rabbi Couzens is a true visionary with a distinguished track record of successful work on behalf of the Jewish community in Philadelphia. His creativity and passion has spearheaded some of its most ambitious projects in recent years.

Young Israel, that venerated and stalwart institution, has stood as a positive force for Jewish life and faith since the transitional years of previous century American. This outreach initiative, pairing such an accomplished leader with such an institution whose reach spans the entire North America, is great news for K'lal Yisroel. There is no question that due to this collaboration, many more of our brothers and sisters will find their way back to a life of dynamic Torah observance.

With blessing of success and a deep yearning for the in-gathering of our exiled people,

Benzion Klatzko
Shabbat.com

“The next Jewish person I meet who does not enjoy a nice home-cooked Shabbat meal among friends and family will be the first. The unique sense of community that we observant Jews take for granted is something to which many of our fellow Jews do not have access. The NCYI outreach initiative aims to break down barriers so as to allow us to welcome our Jewish brethren into our homes - enriching our lives at least as much as theirs.”

Harry Rothenberg, Esq.

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The Young Israel proposal to reach out to fellow Jews through its many member shuls is a brilliant concept. Member families will be highly effective ambassadors to introduce Jews to the serenity and joy of a Shabbos and other holidays. Mobilizing shul members who are active participants in the work force will empower them to draw professionals and business people closer to Judaism through spreading knowledge of its inspiring principles.

Leah Mark
Major Attorney & Outreach Leader

The new Young Israel initiative to make shuls and communities newcomer-friendly has tremendous potential. Many searching Jews do not avoid Orthodox shuls for ideological or theological reasons but because they are convinced that they will be lost in the services and unable to keep up or participate. Just sensitizing shul members to the needs of first time visitors and others who may appear unsure of themselves can make the shul far more attractive.

As someone who would likely not be frum today had it not been for an Orthodox rabbi in Chicago who invited me home for Shabbos lunch every week for two years, I can confirm that we have no more powerful tool in our outreach arsenal than Shabbat meals. Making it known that visitors to Young Israel can count on Shabbat invitations will expose many to the beauty of Shabbat and the Jewish family.

Jonathan Rosenblum
Well-known Writer