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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Aaron Troodler
(888) 897-7450

YOUNG ISRAEL PROGRAM ADDRESSES SECURITY IN MIKVAOT AND SYNAGOGUES

In furtherance of its ongoing effort to continue enhancing the services and support that it offers to its member synagogues and their families, the National Council of Young Israel (NCYI) recently sponsored a program entitled “Security Concerns and Solutions for Mikvaot and Shuls.” In response to requests from its rabbinic and lay leaders, the NCYI took steps to put forward a program that offers proactive suggestions on how to best secure our shuls, mikvaot, pre-school and after-school programs, and senior centers.

The special conference call, which was organized by NCYI Director of Rabbinic Services Rabbi Binyamin Hammer and NCYI Assistant Director of Synagogue Services Ari Matityahu, was open to Young Israel synagogues across the United States. The call featured Dr. Josh Gleis, an experienced security professional who is the president of Slingshot Security, LLC, which provides consulting services throughout the United States and overseas, and which is a leader in the security field with a unique understanding of the threats facing the Jewish community. The National Council of Young Israel has had an ongoing relationship with Dr. Gleis and Slingshot Security, which has long provided counsel to the NCYI in order to assist its member shuls in the area of synagogue safety and security in mikvaot and other Young Israel institutions.

The topics discussed on the nationwide conference call included general security concerns for mikvaot, protocols for maintaining a safe mikvah, general security concerns for synagogues, and suspicious activity and prevention. The presenter also reviewed ways to mitigate threats to shuls and mikvaot through improved operations and target hardening of their facilities, discussed common spy equipment used for unauthorized surveillance, and shared best practices from experts in the field.

In addition, there was a discussion about the importance of mikvaot and synagogues conducting an impartial, professional risk assessment of their facility in order to identify vulnerabilities and develop solutions.

As part of its ongoing partnership with the National Council of Young Israel, Slingshot Security and its network of specialists has developed discounted, pre-negotiated pricing with the NCYI to provide all Young Israel shuls with a host of security solutions. These services include risk assessments, de-bugging, security guards, alarms and panic buttons, CCTV cameras, lighting, access control systems, blast proof film, bollards, investigations, and operational training.

“The security of our member synagogues and their families has always been of paramount importance to the National Council of Young Israel,” said NCYI President Farley Weiss.

“Whether it is our shuls, mikvaot, schools, or senior centers, we have to remain vigilant and be cognizant of the fact that although we may face a variety of threats, there are practical measures that we can and should take in order to augment the security measures in our institutions.”

“We need to be proactive when it comes to safeguarding our shuls and mikvaot, which is why the National Council of Young Israel has partnered with a reputable and experienced security company that has the ability to assist our community’s institutions in a very substantive fashion,” said NCYI Chairman of the Board Bob Levi. “By working collaboratively with these security professionals, we can take steps to maintain a safe environment in our most sacred institutions.”

“This conference call was engaging and informational,” said Ari Matityahu. “It gave our member shuls the ability and understanding to be proactive instead of reactive in times of uncertainty. We have been helping our shuls with their security needs for quite some time and they have benefited from our programs and initiatives tremendously.”

For more information about the National Council of Young Israel’s security initiative and its partnership with Slingshot Security, call NCYI Assistant Director of Synagogue Services Ari Matityahu at 212-929-1525 x103 or email amatityahu@youngisrael.org. To receive an audio recording of the “Security Concerns and Solutions for Mikvaot and Shuls” conference call, email NCYI Director of Rabbinic Services Rabbi Binyamin Hammer at bhammer@youngisrael.org.