

**Kol Bogrei Rambam** is the Alumni Committee's monthly e-newsletter for and about Maimonides School graduates. Each month we share information on individual graduates' ventures and accomplishments, as well as general news notes, all reflecting the school's mission of preparing educated, observant Jews to be contributing members of society. Your ideas and accomplishments will help sustain and strengthen this key communications tool; please forward to [alumni@maimonides.org](mailto:alumni@maimonides.org).

## Alumnus Making an Impact through Jewish Divorce Resource Line

**Rabbi Jonathan Hefter '02** is the program director for the Jewish Divorce Resource Line sponsored by the Organization for the Resolution of *Agunot* (ORA). The program, called One Step Forward, provides support, guidance and referrals to hundreds of Jewish women and men who are going through the separation and divorce process.

Ideally, he expressed, "There is nothing that we would want more than to go out of business."

"By providing assistance and resources early on in the divorce process, One Step Forward empowers individuals to effectively advocate for themselves in the Jewish and civil divorce processes, ensures the timely issuance of the *get*, and prevents divorces from degenerating into situations of *get*-refusal," Jonathan explained.

"Our work at ORA is focused on creating social change in an effort to rid our community of abuse perpetrated through *get* refusal," he said. "Before launching the helpline, ORA was primarily focused on *agunah* advocacy, as well as on educational initiatives promoting the *halachic* prenuptial agreement." (*Agunot* in today's Jewish world are women not living with their husbands, yet who are not free to remarry because they cannot obtain a *get*, a *halachic* document of divorce.)

However, ORA discovered that "many callers did not need advocacy help, but instead needed information, emotional support, and referrals to other agencies that could help them in other aspects of their divorce process. One Step Forward is

a program whose purpose is to empower individuals in this process and equip them to make the best decisions possible."

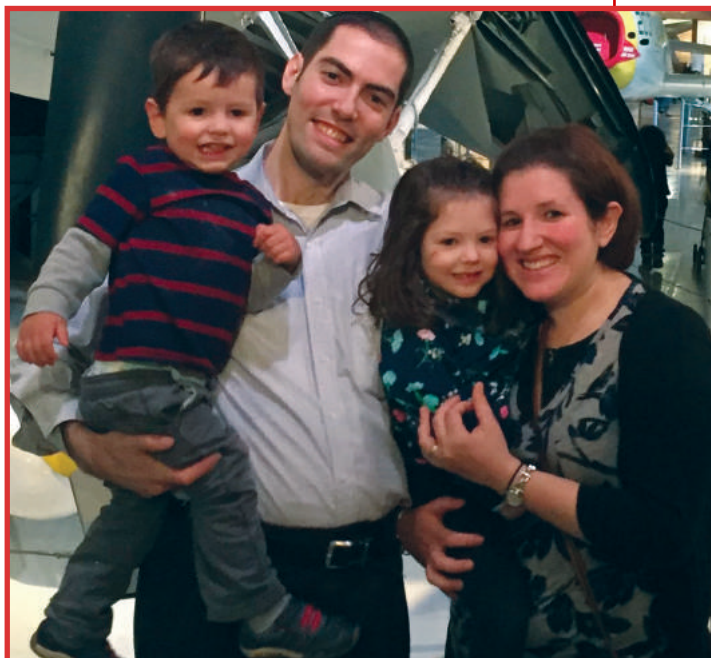
Jonathan studied at Yeshivat Har Etzion for two years before embarking on his undergraduate career at Yeshiva University. He received *semichah* from YU's Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS) in March 2014 and two months later his Master's in Social Work from the Wurzsweiler School of Social Work at YU.

"I can trace my decision to pursue social work to early influences in my life," he said. "The core values of social work, which include the dignity and worth of each person, the importance of family relationships, and social justice among others, resonated with me as an Orthodox Jew and a rabbinical student."

"These were also themes familiar to me from my experiences growing up, both at home and in the Boston Jewish community. In particular, my mother and paternal grandfather are proud social workers with years of service to their respective communities and proven records in their dedication to improving the lives of others."

While studying for his ordination at RIETS, Jonathan said, he accepted a year-long rabbinic internship at ORA, where he was involved in the agency's educational

programming for high schools and colleges. "That experience was very eye-opening for me and made me realize how critical ORA's work is in facilitating positive change in people's lives and in the Jewish community," he said.



Jonathan Hefter '02 and family

"The issue of *agunot* is very much on people's minds, in Israel, America and around the world," Jonathan commented. "While many will narrow the discussion to cases of documented *get* refusal, it is clear that throughout the divorce process there are opportunities for abuse to be perpetrated. Whether this abuse takes the form of refusal to cooperate in the *get* process

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## *Undergraduate Part of a Team That "Can Change the Lives of Millions"*

These days, you don't need advanced degrees, years of experience or powerful contacts to improve the lives of thousands of people.

**Sarah Pomeranz '15** is the co-founder of Sulis, a fledgling company emerging from the Innovation Lab at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, NJ, where she recently finished her sophomore year. Sulis is developing a "simple, innovative piece of technology" that sanitizes water for personal use.

promotes the development of social innovation after extensive research on the key issues affecting the world.

Sulis came into being through identifying the gaps between existing measures in water sterilization and the solutions needed to resolve the problem, she said. The four co-founders are veterans of the Innovation Lab, an incubator for social innovation ventures developed in the Forum course. Now Sulis has evolved from a concept to a full-fledged company with the goal of impacting 10 million lives by 2025.

"We are competing in the international Hult Prize competition with other social entrepreneurs from all over the world, vying for a \$1 million prize," Sarah said. In March the Rutgers team placed first in the regional competition among over 50 teams from all over the world,

According to the World Health Organization, Sarah said, the average person in the developing world needs 12 liters of water for all of his or her daily needs, including cooking and cleaning. (She added that the average American uses close to 100 gallons a day.)

The device has been tested in a Rutgers lab for variables such as turbidity and direction of sunlight. Sarah and the team will be traveling to India for two weeks in July to achieve field test results and speak to customers on the ground. She said her company has developed connections with both governments and non-governmental organizations there to establish distribution channels.

Later this summer the four will spend six weeks in a private castle in London in the Hult Prize Accelerator, along with 39 other teams working on energy-based social innovations. The top teams will pitch in the fall at the United Nations and the winner will be awarded the \$1 million prize. Meanwhile, the team has launched a crowdfunding campaign.

Sarah, a management major with a concentration in entrepreneurship, also carries an academic minor in social justice. As a freshman, she was involved with another innovation project – a kit for individual protection from malaria. "Through Sulis, I have found a way to apply my business skills to my passion for solving global issues and learned more than I ever thought possible along the way," she said.

"Clean water is going to be the most limited resource in the future," Sarah asserted. "Our device, at \$10 per unit, will have many applications for commercial markets." More information is available at [www.suliswater.org](http://www.suliswater.org) or from Sarah at [sarah@suliswater.org](mailto:sarah@suliswater.org).



Sarah Pomeranz '15 and the Rutgers team with their device after winning the regional Hult Prize competition.

"We believe that we can change the lives of millions around the world cheaply and sustainably with nothing more than the natural power of sunlight," Sarah declared. "With the hard work and dedication that has gotten us this far, we will continue to expand as a company and redefine 'liquid sunshine.'"

The concept for Sulis was developed in the Rutgers Honors College Forum, which

including Harvard, Princeton and Brandeis.

Sarah described the device as a container that uses reflectors to concentrate solar radiation into the barrel of water, where it then interacts with a metal catalyst to sanitize the water. "It's easy to use, which is crucial," she said. "You put the device in the sun for seven hours and it will kill the bacteria and pathogens in the water."



## *Graduate Running for Congress in the Country's Most Jewish District*

"I hope to be a Millennial Jewish voice in Congress for expanding opportunities for my generation."

**Naomi Levin '00** is the only Republican on the ballot for U.S. House in Congressional District 10, which she said is "the most Jewish district in New York City and the United States." She is also on the Conservative and Reform party tickets. The district is composed of most of the west side of Manhattan and part of Brooklyn.

"Just like my parents, who came here with only one hundred dollars and two suitcases each, and were able to succeed, I want everyone to have the opportunities our country has to offer," Naomi declared.

"That is what initially got me involved in politics. More immediately, however, as a resident of the Upper West Side, I got interested in this particular race when I found out that our Congressman championed the Iran nuclear deal." The incumbent is Democratic U.S. Rep. Jerrold Nadler.

Naomi, who earned a dual degree from Boston University in biology and computer science, has been working with emerging tech and young entrepreneurship. She is currently a software engineer at Yext, Inc., a digital knowledge management company based in New York City that recently issued its initial public offering.

The candidate believes that "we must protect our country economically, culturally and physically," and thus has outlined three "practical, common-sense goals" in her campaign for Congress:

-- "A tax system overhaul, and on a federal level, less burdensome and de-motivating taxation, that would exclude items that do not belong in taxable income and are especially problematic to New Yorkers." (She listed some examples -- rent expense, insurance-approved out-of-pocket medical expenses, and dividends paid from taxed corporate income.) Naomi said she is working with state majority party leadership to influence this issue.



Naomi Levin '00

-- Superior educational opportunities "through allocating funding to excellent charter school programs."

-- "Policies that keep our city and our country safe, a key issue being advocating for putting in a maximum pressure campaign to address the Iranian regime's

nuclear proliferation. A particular pain point in my district is Iran's increasing power in the region, and our congressman's participation in that."

Naomi noted that "another key issue is parents in the religious communities of Boro Park and the Upper West Side do not take advantage of the public school system, but pay tax dollars for it anyway." She pledged to work with state officials and agencies to allow residents to earmark tax-deferred college savings plans "for public, private or religious elementary or secondary schools, which was provided by the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act but not yet incorporated in New York State."

"I am not surprised that I have strong support in areas such as the Upper West Side and Boro Park, but many Modern Orthodox Jews on the UWS are not registered to vote in this district, so voter enrollment will be something I need to tackle," Naomi observed.

"Another key challenge I face is reaching Millennial voters," she continued. "About a third of residents in the district are Millennials. I think that I have the potential to activate them, given that I am also a Millennial who is running on issues that appeal to them, such as promoting the expansion of opportunities in emerging tech and entrepreneurship, and STEM education programs."

She added she has launched a special campaign to reach female voters ([www.facebook.com/WomenUniteForNaomi](http://www.facebook.com/WomenUniteForNaomi)). "I plan to host events to promote this message, and have been approached by various political action committees that are eager to support female Republican candidates this election cycle."

Naomi said she was surprised to find how much support she has in many Manhattan neighborhoods, such as Battery Park City, which she discovered while petitioning for signatures in April. She is also getting endorsement from unexpected groups, such as the Reform Party of New York.

"My campaign needs your help. We need volunteers, connections and funding," Naomi said. Her email address is [naomi@naomiforcongress.com](mailto:naomi@naomiforcongress.com). "I'd love to hear from you."

More information can be found at [www.naomiforcongress.com/issues](http://www.naomiforcongress.com/issues). She added, "You can follow my campaign adventures on Twitter ([www.twitter.com/NaomiLevinNY](http://www.twitter.com/NaomiLevinNY)) and Facebook ([www.facebook.com/naomilevinNY](http://www.facebook.com/naomilevinNY))."

## Maimonides School Graduates Here and There....

Several 2014 Maimonides School graduates received pre-Commencement departmental recognition at Stern College for Women. **Yael Green** received the Bernard Brown Award for Excellence in Business Studies at Sy Syms School of Business. **Shira Krinsky** was presented the Malka Fishhaut Memorial Award for excellence in Jewish Studies. **Liorah Rubinstein** received the Ida Lampert Hurewitz Memorial Award for Excellence in Psychology; the Prof. Nathaniel L. Remes Memorial Award for character,

personality, and service to Stern; and the Lisa Wachtenheim Memorial Award for Service. **Rena Weinberg** accepted the Phyllis Gordon Solomon Memorial Award for Excellence in Pre-Law Studies.

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**Moshe Forman '15**, a sophomore at Muhlenberg College, recently received the Martin A. Rosoff Clu Memorial Award, presented to the student "who has revealed, through schoolwork or related activities, sympathetic concern and schol-

arly interest in the relationship of Judaism and Christianity to each other, to other religions, and to human culture, philosophy and the liberal arts."

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**Shuli Roditi Kulak '00** and her husband David are the honorees of the upcoming Prospect Heights Shul Summer Gala in Brooklyn. Shuli oversees logistical operations of the shul, including set up, High Holidays, and child programming.

## CLASS NOTES

### 1977

Mazal tov to **Sara (Popkin)** and **Michael Salzberg** on the birth of their granddaughter, Laura Karen. Parents are **Meira (Salzberg) '04** and **Rabbi Ben Houben '03**.

### 1978

Mazal tov to **Leah (Rosenfield)** and Dr. Hylton **Lightman** on the birth of their granddaughter, Tamar. Parents are Aryeh and Rafaella Greenfield.

### 1982

Mazal tov to **Dr. Rebecca (Kolodny)** and Steven **Schwartz** on the marriage of their son **David '11** to Dena Guttman. Rebecca is the daughter of Prof. Nancy and Dr. Gerald Kolodny.

### 1986

Mazal tov to

**Elissa (Levine)** and Eliot **Green** on the marriage of their daughter **Yael '14** to **Jared Kraay '14**. Elissa is the daughter of Dr. Lawrence Levine.

**Reuven Harow** on the engagement of his son Shuki, currently serving in the IDF, to Miriam Shabtai.

### 1987

Mazal tov to **Sherri (Rabinovitz)** and Dr. Judah **Cohen** on the marriage of their daughter **Gabriella '13** to Avery Feit. Sherri is the daughter of Marlene and Stanley Rabinovitz.

### 1994

Mazal tov to **Dr. Michal Eisenberg** on her marriage to Ze'ev Gal. Michal is the daughter of Laura and Dr. David Eisenberg.

### 2001

Mazal tov to **Rachel (Galper)** and David **Borden** on the birth of their daughter. Grandparents are Linda and Dr. Jonas Galper.

### 2002

Mazal tov to **Eva (Fenton)** and Hillel **Broder** on the birth of their son, Asher Kalman. Grandmother is Dr. Anne Fenton.

### 2003

Mazal tov to **Meira (Salzberg) '04** and **Rabbi Ben Houben** on the birth of their daughter, Laura Karen. Grandparents are Eileen and Jeffrey Houben.

### 2004

Mazal tov to **Meira (Salzberg)** and **Rabbi Ben Houben '03** on the birth of their daughter, Laura Karen. Grandparents are **Sara (Popkin) '77** and Michael **Salzberg**.

### 2005

Mazal tov to

**Josh Kirschner** on his marriage to Dr. Jodie Eisner. Josh is the son of Adrienne and Dr. Steven Kirschner

Mazal tov to **Aliza Wolfe** on her marriage to Ryan Ahern. Aliza is the daughter of Barbara Rosenblum and Dr. Michael Wolfe.

### 2006

Mazal tov to **Ezra Waxman** on his marriage to Judite Ferreira. Ezra is the son of Sheila and Dr. David Waxman.

### 2009

Mazal tov to **Yoey Schacht** on his marriage to Penina Kozlovsky. Yoey is the son of Phyllis and David Schacht.

### 2011

Mazal tov to **David Schwartz** on his marriage to Dena Guttman. David is the son of **Dr. Rebecca (Kolodny) '82** and Steven **Schwartz**.

### 2012

Mazal tov to **Talia Epstein** on her marriage to Eytan Baratz. Talia is the daughter of Beth and Marc Epstein.

### 2013

Mazal tov to **Gabriella Cohen** on her marriage to Avery Feit. Gabriella is the daughter of **Sherri (Rabinovitz) '87** and Dr. Judah Cohen.

### 2014

Mazal tov to **Yael Green** and **Jared Kraay** on their marriage.

### Condolences to

**Frances Green '69** on the loss of her beloved father, Rabbi Beryl Chafetz, ז"ל.



## *One Step Forward Provides Support, Guidance and Referrals* continued from page 1

or in another area, the most important question is: What are we as a community doing about it?"

His full-time position includes both daytime hours and a few evenings a week, "to make the helpline more available. One Step Forward fields calls from individuals across the U.S. and around the world, from the full spectrum of the Jewish community."

While some callers are looking to learn about the Jewish or civil divorce processes, others have specific questions about complex divorce situations, Jonathan said. "Together with the staff at ORA and our contacts in other agencies, we try to help them find solutions."

Even if all *get*-related issues disappear, "The services that we offer encompass a wide range of resources, including legal

and social services referrals, information and guidance," Jonathan said. "I hope to be able to continue to contribute to the Jewish community, helping individuals and organizations create positive social change for all Jews worldwide."

Jonathan, his wife Sefi, and their three young children reside in Riverdale, NY.



Another recent gathering of Class of 1976 members in Israel included (front) Elihu Stone (left) and Dr. Yoel Anouchi; (rear, from left) Esti (Hoelzel) Gross, Beulah Trey, Judy Thaler-Lev and Renee Blechner-Hirsch.



Ephie Mandel and Eitan Katz (right), Maimonides 2008 classmates, celebrate receiving their master's degrees in marketing from Yeshiva University – members of the first class in the new graduate program. Ephie's wife Yael (Refah) '08 (left) recently received her juris doctor degree from YU's Benjamin Cardozo School of law.



Classmates from all over the world celebrated with Ezra Waxman '06 and Judite Ferreira (center) at their recent wedding. Guests pictured include Casey Anis, Moshe Arazi, Justin Charlap, Eli and Margaret Zwiebach-Cohen '08, Ross Eisenberg, Sam Israel, Reuven Kawesch, Toby Kuperwaser, Yonah Liben (and his fiancée Nofar Dadush), David Micley, Jonathan Packer, Joseph Sugarman (and his fiancée Dana Petrov), Raphy Rosen and Josh Warren, as well as 2007 graduates Danit (Rozman) Keller, Yael Krinsky and Shira Petrack.