

Excitement Builds For First European Chinuch Convention

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The Manchester Torah Umesorah Teachers Centre opened its doors just over eight months ago, following many intensive months of preparation, with the *haskamah* of the Vaad Roshei HaYeshivah of Torah Umesorah in the United States.

It currently serves 800 *Rebbeim* and *kodesh* teachers across the spectrum, impacting vicariously on 7,000 students in 45 *mosdos hachinuch*.

The centre has received over 1,200 visits over a six-month period and has produced many satisfied consumers, who are clamouring for more.

The Torah Umesorah Teachers Centre in Manchester is unique, as it is the first centre opened outside North America. It is modelled on the New York and Lakewood Teachers Centres, which have enhanced the working lives of teachers in innumerable ways, by virtue of the exceptional services provided.

The work of Torah Umesorah was begun by Rav Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz, *zt"l*, in 1944, in order to reach out to far-flung American communities. Through his vision and energy, the infrastructure that he set in place thrived and spread across North America, eventually providing assistance and facilities for the entire range of *mosdos hachinuch*. Today, Torah Umesorah is involved throughout the United States and Canada, enabling exceptional growth in the world of *chinuch*, serving schools with an incredible total of over 260,000 children.

Torah Umesorah Conventions

Throughout the course of the year, Torah Umesorah in the United States runs conventions to enable *anshei chinuch* to come together, to receive *chizuk* and enable networking and continued professional development, under the umbrella of Torah Umesorah with the direction of the Vaad Roshei HaYeshivah. These include Harav Shmuel Kamenetsky, Harav Aharon Feldman, The Novominsker Rebbe Rav Yaakov Perlow, Harav Elya Brudny and Harav Malkiel Kotler, *shlita*. Participants are able to interact with the *Gedolim* and receive counsel from them. There is an incredible growth-oriented atmosphere, with exceptional opportunities and *chizuk* for those who are privileged to work in the field of *chinuch*.

Participants return from these events

enthused, uplifted and inspired, with additional fuel to continue in their *avodas hakodesh*. Many of those who have been privileged to attend from the United Kingdom and continental Europe have returned similarly motivated, but they often wish they could export the fervour and incredible atmosphere to these shores.

Now, incredibly, this dream may become a reality!

With tremendous *siyatta diShmaya*, a committee was formed to be able to provide the *chinuch* community in Europe with the opportunity to attend the European Chinuch Convention, with guidance from Torah Umesorah U.S., on *Parashas Vayetzei* 5779, Nov. 15-18, 2018, in Amsterdam. The event will be graced with the participation of the senior *Roshei Yeshivah* of Torah Umesorah.

How did this come about?

A few years ago, Reb Yitzchok Uri Dunner from the Amsterdam Cheder was present at the Torah Umesorah Convention, and he returned truly inspired. When those in leadership at the *cheder* realized that the *Rebbeim* and teachers would benefit from the guidance of a *chinuch* consultant, it was decided with the assistance of a very special individual to enlist the services of Rabbi Yisroel Meir Rubinfeld, Chinuch Consultant at Torah Umesorah, U.S. Reb Yisroel Meir began to travel regularly to Amsterdam to provide his services, and slowly the idea was born: Why not import this type of training to Europe?

The seeds had been planted and were nurtured along the way.

A committee was set up, combining the *kehillos* across Europe, and it grew to include Holland, Belgium, London, Manchester, Moscow and Switzerland.

Following the recent Torah Umesorah Convention on Lag BaOmer, the Vaad Roshei HaYeshivah agreed that this convention could proceed with guidance from Torah Umesorah, with Rabbi Rubinfeld consulting at every meeting. They also recruited the input of the Manchester Torah Umesorah Teachers Centre to provide assistance via Torah Umesorah at this end of the Atlantic.

Why Torah Umesorah?

The warm and welcoming atmosphere of the Manchester Centre is immediately evident upon entering the premises. The centre is ideally equipped to provide all

the conceivable needs of a *mechanech* or *mechaneches*. This includes a wide range of interactive posters and educational material, and a computer room with access to all T.U. Teachers Centres' materials, across the United States and Canada (much more than is available on *chinuch.org*), which can be adapted for individual teachers' use. These are then produced in a "Make it and Take it" Craft Room, where teachers can print, laminate and bind very large size posters/books, create beautiful classroom displays and crafts, with an impressive array of Torah themed unique die-cuts and design personalised badges, tokens and so on, to take away.

A beautiful reference library includes a section with Torah Umesorah publications covering a wide variety of subjects. These can be ordered by schools via the centre. The conference room is equipped with a large screen for linking up to the U.S centres for long-distance learning and to facilitate participation in conferences and the like.

The centre has initiated and enabled numerous professional development and networking opportunities since its launch. These include 15 sessions for *Rebbeim* and 12 for *mechanechos*, over a six-month period. Topics included *kriah* (separate sessions for men and ladies); *Toldos Am Yisrael* – enabling students to visualize and live our history, by Mrs. Batsheva Lopian; focus on *avodas hamiddos* of both student and teacher, by Rabbi Y.Y. Katz; and "Teaching subjects or students?" by Rebbetzin Ernster. A *menahalim* conference was arranged by Rabbi Y. Yodaiken, *Menahel* Yesoiday HaTorah Primary School together with Rabbi Y. Moskowitz, *Menahel* Talmud Torah Kerem Shloime. This brought together *menahalim* of nearly every *mossad* in town, in an unprecedented display of *achdus*.

Additional sessions throughout the year included integrating weaker students into mainstream lessons, by Rabbi David Benarroch, who has created an exceptional tracking system for students throughout their school years; *Has'chalas Gemara*, under the guidance of Rabbi Dovid Kestenbaum with ongoing support, and networking enabled by Rabbi Refoel Jacobs.

The centre was delighted to host a highly successful session on understanding the emotional needs of the child and what their behaviour shows by Mrs. Sarala Yodaiken

and also featured several sessions on Kagan Structures, a method devised by Professor Kagan Spencer, delivered by Mrs. Rochelle Steinberg, which ensures total engagement and interaction from every student within the classroom. The *Rebbeim* were privileged to hear Rabbi Avrohom Yaakov Schwab, *Mashgiach* Yeshivas Neveh Tzion, Telshe Stone, discussing the topic of enabling good communication amongst teenage boys, to prevent the "at-risk" phenomenon. Rabbi Moshe Young, former Headmaster of Beis Yaakov High School (Manchester), addressed *mechanechos* on methods of dealing with the current *chinuch* crisis.

At the end of the school year, a joint inset day was held for most of the boys' high schools, expertly coordinated by Rabbi Binyomin Sulzbacher, *Menahel* Manchester Mesivta, and Rabbi Yechiel Emmanuel, *Menahel* Beis Hatalmud. This began with an address by Rabbi Yehuda Leib Wittler, followed by four highly successful networking sessions that were split by category and left the *Rebbeim* clamouring for more.

The final two days of term featured two open days; between 10 a.m.-10 p.m., with heavy traffic in the centre throughout both days, producing a very large amount of educational material for the coming year, with the input of the centre's graphic designer.

More recently; at the start of the new *zman*: a two-day training seminar for *Rebbeim*, with a live link-up from the New York centre took place, leaving *Rebbeim* enthused and inspired, equipped with plenty of take-home tools for the new year.

This was followed closely by a "Three plus three" training event for new *mechanechos*, which was also very well received. These sessions give three days of training at the start of the year and another three days a few months into the year to follow up on any concerns or issues that might present themselves.

The committee looks forward to welcoming *menahalim*, *menahalos*, *mechanechim* and *mechanechos* to the November convention, for a sampling of this incredible fare and to whet their appetite for more of the same ... restoring the glory of those privileged to take the driver's seat in the wonderful world of *chinuch*.



The Torah Umesorah Centre in Manchester.

