

MIDDLESEX

# Program of study and action proves strong draw among area Orthodox

by **Debra Rubin**  
NJJN Staff Writer

Just two months after kicking off a program promoting Jewish study and action within the Raritan Valley Orthodox Jewish community, participation has grown from an initial 40 people to 94.

“We signed up nine more people at Sunday night’s [July 16] program,” said Phil Rosen, coordinator of Achieving Change through Torah, or ACTT. “People have been very positive about their experience with ACTT. We heard from one of our members that one of their friends, who is also a member of ACTT, said that ACTT changed their whole life.”

The program asks participants to commit as little as five minutes a day to Torah-oriented reading and to performance of one act relating to the current topic, with the goal of gradually improving their moral character.

The synagogues involved are: Congregation Ahavas Achim, Congregation Etz Ahaim, and Congregation Ohav Emeth, all in Highland Park; Congregation Ohr Torah in Edison; Congregation Poile Zedek in New Brunswick; and Young Israel of East Brunswick. Those from outside the community may also participate through on-line discussion groups and material.



Rabbi Yaakov Luban spoke July 17 as part of Achieving Change Through Torah, or ACTT.

The idea behind the program is to help community members who have faced tragedy to handle the difficulties through prayer and study, leading to gradual moral development.

On July 16, Rabbi Yaakov Luban, religious leader at Ohr Torah and executive rabbinic director at the Orthodox Union, spoke at Ahavas Achim on “Judging Favorably — Naivete or Shrewdness.”

Rosen said that several weeks ago, 20 people showed up on only five days’ notice for a discussion on the “loving-kindness” module.

“We shared our experiences with the program and gave each

other encouragement and support,” he added, noting that other such meetings are being planned to discuss judging favorably.

The group will also continue to have on-line discussion groups to share ideas and disseminate inspirational materials, according to Rosen.

The module on judging favorably will be followed by segments on *kavana* or concentration during prayers, gratitude, trust in God, anger management, and guarding one’s tongue.

To register or for information, contact 732-993-5376 or [info@actt613.org](mailto:info@actt613.org) or visit [www.actt613.org](http://www.actt613.org).

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