

Project Chazon Conducts Tours of England's Yeshivah High Schools

Over 5,000 yeshivah high school students, teachers and parents, from a broad spectrum of schools in London and Manchester, recently attended 70 exciting *hashkafah* seminars delivered by Rabbi Daniel Mechanic, Rabbi Yerachmiel Milstein and Rabbi Yaakov Salomon, the well-known directors and dynamic lecturers of the New York-based Project Chazon.

With the *haskamos* of world-renowned *Gedolim* and *Roshei Yeshivah*, Project Chazon was founded by Rabbi Daniel Mechanic in 1997 in response to the *frum* community's concern over the increasing number of yeshivah and Bais Yaakov students who were slipping "off the *derech*." This phenomenon of at-risk teens became the subject of a host of articles in prominent Jewish publications. Based upon newfound communal awareness, a number of important programs were created to provide intervention services for individuals and families.

Project Chazon, on the other hand, was created as a purely preventive endeavor, its mission to reach young men and women of every Orthodox Jewish background with a message of *chizuk hadas* before they make irrevocably damaging life choices. Toward that end, Chazon presents a series of specialized *hashkafah shiurim* on *yesodei ha'emunah*, covering a wide range of issues basic to *Yiddishkeit*.

Beginning with only five schools in 1997, Project Chazon's *shiurim*, workshops and presentations are featured today in over 260 high schools throughout the United States, Canada and England, reaching 17,000 students annually. Hundreds of letters from principals, faculty, parents and, most importantly, the students themselves have been received at the Chazon office. They speak volumes about the profound and long-term effect these programs have had upon the students.

The two whirlwind, eight-day tours, organized by Rabbi Naftali Schiff of Aish HaTorah UK, brought the Rabbis to numerous London and Manchester schools including Menorah Grammar, Hasmonian, Immanuel, Bais Yaakov London, JFS, Eitz Chaim, Bais Yaakov Manchester, Manchester Seminary and Manchester Mesivta. The interactive *shiurim* and workshops included enthralling presentations on *emunah*, *Torah miSinai*, *Torah sheb'al peh*, *bechirah*, *tefillah* and *tachlis hachaim*. In addition to their school-based seminars, Rabbis Mechanic, Milstein and Salomon conducted parenting workshops in the local communities, and provided valuable teacher-training programs in a number of the larger schools.

Rabbi Daniel Mechanic commented on Project Chazon's foray to the British continent by stating, "Perhaps the single most valuable part of our England trips was to share the experience we gained from addressing well over 100,000 American teenagers in hundreds of U.S. *chinuch* institutions. The lessons we have learned are invaluable and have helped us understand teen behavior currents and trends in the *frum* community. Now we can anticipate future difficulties, strengthen teens' *shemiras hamitzvos* and *avodas Hashem*, and guide them toward making much better life choices."

The enthusiastic reception for Project Chazon in England found expression in the large number of additional schools requesting programs for their students in the near future and by the many letters Project Chazon received praising the presentations. In addition, the rabbis visited a number of the most prominent Torah leaders and received warm endorsements and *brachos*.

Summing up the trips, Rabbi Milstein explained, "When you learn a lot of *halachah* and *Gemara*, you may tend to disassociate it from your personal life. You can be the biggest *masmid* in yeshivah, but that won't necessarily mean that your level of *emunah* and *bitachon* is where it should be. We provide an anchor for these kids. We teach them that learning is all about relating to Hashem. You use your anchor to create a personal connection with *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*."

Project Chazon presents a series of *hashkafah* seminars on *emunah* and *bitachon* to yeshivah and Bais Yaakov high school students and teachers throughout the United States, Canada and England. To date, 1,200 seminars have been presented to over 100,000 students in 260 schools. In addition, Chazon's staff provides individual counseling and mentoring to hundreds of troubled young men and women in crisis. They can be reached at (718) 648-4555.



Rabbi Yerachmiel Milstein, executive vice president of Project Chazon, delivering a *shiur*.