

Lifnai Vlifnim School Cohort Program



Overarching Vision and Goals

How do we establish a culture of G-d awareness in schools? How do we ensure that the Torah students learn not only impacts their understanding of Judaism but also deepens their spiritual connection with G-d? While Jewish schools around the world often excel at developing students' abilities to "Do" Judaism- practice mitzvot, study Torah or say the words of Tefillah- they struggle with ways to develop students' inner world, identity and commitment.

Lifnai Vlifnim believes that achieving these goals requires a more holistic view of the faculty and student experience in schools. While ultimately looking to impact students' experience of Torah and Tefillah, we seek to do so through development of both students' and educators' inner world. If Avodat Hashem is essentially about building a relationship with G-d, we see the development of relationship skills as the building blocks of this connection. These include core skills such as: presence, trust, authentic dialogue, and self-awareness.

Our work engages participants at all levels of the school system in a process of mutually reinforcing activity. We seek to:

- ▶ **Avodah:** Engage educators in a dynamic process of personal religious growth within the framework of their work. To inspire their students to connect with G-d, educators must feel connected in their own *avodat Hashem*. Through exploring their own experience of Torah, tefillah, mitzvot and *bein adam l'chaveiro* they will be able to articulate their own inner world so that, in turn, they can help students articulate their own.
- ▶ **Chaburah:** Develop the strength of *chaburah*, the group, in creating a sense of belonging while supporting and challenging individuals in their process of growth. By building a culture of empathetic listening and vulnerability, educators will grow in their self-awareness and dialogue skills as they learn from each others' experiences. The *chaburah* becomes the engine for growth and conduit through which deep learning can take place. Educators will then be able to transfer their experience and understanding of working with groups to facilitating a *chaburah* amongst students as well.

- **Makom:** Empower teachers to develop spaces of *avodah* and *chaburah* with students in their classrooms, during extra-curricular programming and through personal conversations. Through an array class culture building activities, pedagogic tools and lens for curricular choices, teachers will deepen their relationships with students and students' relationships with each other that allows each person's *pnimiyut*, inner world, to become a present and powerful part of the learning.

By carefully working on deep cultural change with both faculty and students we seek to change the way they approach their religious experiences - providing them the language and self knowledge to bring themselves to their experience of G-d.



School Cohort Program

The Lifnai Vlifnim School Cohort Program is designed for schools interested in participating in an intensive multi-year experience supporting school leaders, teachers and students as they work to enhance the culture of *Avodat Hashem* in their schools. The program seeks, first and foremost, to build the capacity of school based facilitators (*manchim*) so that they, in turn, can develop and tailor the learning for their school. After the two years of learning and implementation with Lifnai Vlifnim's support, schools will have the capacity to continue applying their learning on their own.

For 2022-23, participants in the initial cohort are invited to continue as Cohort I Year 2 schools, while up to five new schools will join the program as Cohort II Year 1 schools. Both cohorts will be offered similar services with some common learning experiences at seminars and others differentiated based on experience.

Commitments

When schools agree to join the program, Lifnai Vlifnim and the school each commit to the program's components described below.

Lifnai Vlifnim will provide each participating school:

- Individual coaching calls with a team of one or two *manchim* up to once every two weeks from August to June.
- Up to one virtual or in person meeting per semester for each school with all their participating teachers
- Monthly cross-school *manchim* meetings focused on facilitators' learning and learning from their experiences
- Two intensive seminars for *manchim* focused on areas outlined below
 - A two day winter seminar in February 2023
 - A six day summer seminar in Israel from July 27th-August 3rd 2022 (no programming on Shabbat). All flights and ground costs in Israel will be covered.

- ▶ Two seminars for teachers participating in the program
 - ▶ A one day seminar in the NY area in February 2023
 - ▶ A one day seminar during the week of June 26th 2022 in a TBD location
- ▶ One Lifnai Vlifnim staff in person visit to each school to observe and learn with faculty, students and/or community members
- ▶ Access to a growing database of reflective lessons, protocols and other resources to assist schools in implementing the approach

Lifnai Vlifnim and its funders expect participating schools to:

- ▶ Appoint 2 *manchim* to serve as the primary liaison with Lifnai Vlifnim and lead the program's work in their school.
 - ▶ We strongly recommend two *manchim*, allocating 1.5-2 hours per week of time for *manchim* and appointing one *manche* who is a member of the school leadership team and one who is not.
- ▶ Establish a consistent framework for a group of teachers to engage in Lifnai Vlifnim work together for at least 40 minutes once every two weeks.
- ▶ *Manchim* join coaching calls at least once a month and up to once every two weeks
- ▶ Participate in August-June monthly cross-school *manchim* calls with dates and times established in July
- ▶ Provide release time for *manchim* and teachers to attend the seminars designed for them
- ▶ Administer a survey to participating teachers and/or students at least twice a year and a written report reflecting on the survey and the program's progress.

Manchim Seminars

We see the *manchim* from each school as playing the most significant role in making sure that the work students and teachers engage in builds the new culture of Avodat Hashem we are hoping to achieve. Strengthening the cohort of leaders across different schools will play a critical role in developing buy-in and commitment to doing the hard work of culture change within their schools. Our work with *manchim* also requires simultaneous development of personal skills as well their abilities to faculty and student initiatives.

The seminars will focus on the following four strands of learning:

- ▶ **Individual capacity** - developing leaders' heightened self-awareness about their individual strengths and weaknesses both personally and in their school roles, skills to be more present "in the moment/experience", to listen and learn with empathy and make dialogue with Hashem a greater part of their own lives
- ▶ **Group dynamics and development** - learning protocols and facilitation skills to build a strong sense of community in groups, creating safe and trusting environments where participants engage in authentic dialogue and feel comfortable engaging in personal reflection and discussion about their inner world
- ▶ **Torah learning** - methods for teaching *limduei kodseh* in ways that connect students' inner world and experiences with their learning, developing the ability to use questioning and other pedagogic tools to deepen text learning and shifting it to "torat chayim"
- ▶ **Leading and coaching faculty** - building trust and leading faculty through a process of change that can help them learn and internalize new ideas, developing a shared language and school wide culture

Cost

Participation in the 2022-23 School Cohort Program will cost \$3,000 per school.

A limited number of small scholarships may be available for schools outside the NY area who will be required to cover more transportation costs.

This participation fee gives schools access to the services described above. It does NOT include:

Flights and other transportation costs to get to NY based seminars

Flights to Israel that exceed that allocated budget established based on flight costs at the time of acceptance into the program

Lifnai Vlifnim staff writing individualized curricula or lessons for a specific school

Staff



Rav Dov Singer, a leader of the modern Israeli revival of Hassidut, heads the innovative Makor Chaim Yeshiva, founded by Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz. In addition to Rabbi Steinsaltz, he counts Rabbis Shagar (Shimon Gershon Rosenberg) and Menachem Fruman as his primary mentors and teachers. Influenced by the Zohar, Rebbe Nachman of Breslov, and other Hassidic thinkers, Rabbi Singer's unique educational approach is predicated on the development of religious and emotional intelligence. He leads workshops on prayer throughout Israel and the United States, and has also established the Beit Midrash L'Hitchadshut Study Center for Renewal, an adult spiritual outreach program, and Lifnai Vlifnim, an educators' training program. He is the author of "Tikon Tefillati" - "Prepare My Prayer", a popular guide to developing personal prayer skills. Rabbi Singer lives in Tekoa with his wife and ten children.



Rav Yishai Singer has been the director of Makor Chaim's Lifnai Vlifnim Educators Training Program since 2013. In addition he has been involved in a wide range of hands-on educational instruction in various fields including emotional therapy, drama therapy, group facilitation, playback theater and more. He has taught high school as well as at-risk teenagers. He was awarded the 2017 President's Outstanding Teacher Award for Special Education. He holds a B. Ed. from Herzog College and an "Experienced Therapist" Masters from Tel Chai College. Yishai Singer lives in Tekoa with his wife Rachel and 6 children.



Rav Yehuda Chanale is North American Director of Education for Lifnai Vlifnim. Over the past two years, as Director of Educational Advancement, he led the Fuchs Mizrachi School's partnership with Yeshivat Makor Chaim and implemented *Lifnai Vlifnim* programs with staff and students in its Junior High and Stark High School. He currently teaches and coaches other faculty at Maayanot in Teaneck, NJ and is Director of Yeshiva University's Lilmod L'lameid Initiative.



MAYBERG FOUNDATION



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UnitED is an initiative of the Israel Ministry of Diaspora Affairs to support the work of Jewish day schools throughout the world by helping to deepen Jewish identity, attachment to Israel, and building one's local Jewish community.