

Yated Ne'eman

Project YES Meets “The Shmuz”

Members of Tiferes Bnei Torah (TBT) - an innovative new program that provides a social-Torah environment for single and married working men, ages 18 through 30 - will act as mentors for teens serviced by Project Y.E.S., Agudath Israel of America's program for pre-risk youth.

The new partnership has been formed as a direct result of a Kids-at-Risk Forum session at Agudath Israel's recent 83rd National Convention, reports Project YES director Rabbi Yakov Horowitz.

“The special presenter at that session, “Square Pegs and Round Holes: Creating Yeshiva Alternatives,” was TBT director Rabbi Ben Tzion Shafier,” explains Rabbi Horowitz. “His dynamic presentation prompted an animated discussion about the topic, which led to the idea of pairing teens in need of mentoring with TBT members.”

Each week, The Shmuz - initiated by

Rabbi Henschel Lebowitz, Rosh Yeshiva, Yeshivas Rabbi Yisroel Meir Hachohen - brings together hundreds of young men from Brooklyn, Queens and Monsey for cholent, “take-out” and, of course, The Shmuz, delivered by Rabbi Shafier. The program has been lauded by rabbonim and community leaders for helping to strengthen ties between the young men and their communities.

The Project YES / The Shmuz venture is but one of several forum-initiated plans of action for helping kids-at-risk. Other new projects, some already underway, others still in the development stage, include a national toll free number for parents seeking information or referrals, a “No Jewish Child Left Behind In Kriah” program, and comprehensive pre-marriage sholom bayis and pre-parenting training programs.

The first training session for Shmuz mentors is scheduled to take place in Monsey on January 2.