



# New Hope Guild Centers *Tikvah*

2011 Ocean Avenue • Brooklyn, NY 11230 • Tel: 718/382-0045 • Fax: 718/382-0051

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*Sherman O. Schachter, M.D.*

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Community Liaison Dir.  
*Sheila Okin, MS*

December 31, 1997

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter to strongly affirm my support for Dor Yeshorim: Committee For Prevention of Jewish Genetic Diseases. As the Director of an Orthodox Jewish Mental Health Clinic, and as a member of the Orthodox community in Brooklyn, New York, I frequently come into contact with young men and women who are about to begin dating or who are about to marry. Many of them have used the Dor Yeshorim genetic testing system and are unequivocally grateful for the privacy and anonymity that this system affords them.

Although a very exciting time in young adult life, the prospect of dating and marriage for most young men and women is indubitably a life stressor. So too, for their parents, who certainly want only the best for their children. The prospect of discovering that one is a carrier of a genetic disease can only fill the young adult with feelings of fear and anxiety. It affects their sense of self and creates undue worry about their capability to date and ultimately establish a meaningful relationship with another. These psychological issues know no educational or economic boundaries; sophisticated, educated young adults are equally distressed by this situation. The anonymity provided by the Dor Yeshorim process helps to bypass this anxiety-provoking situation. The young adult does not have to look at *themselves* as *damaged* in any way; rather, it is the *match that may cause health risks to future generations*.

I have known of situations where parents (who, due to Dor Yeshorim's relatively young age, could not benefit from the Dor Yeshorim genetic testing system), are besides themselves with worry because they have a child with a genetic disease and are worried about the prospects of their other, healthy children. They know full well that by disclosing information about their sick child, the "shidduch" prospects of their healthy children will be tainted. With the advent of Dor Yeshorim, this painful process has been eliminated. Now, a simple blood test, and I.D. number and a phone call is all that is needed when the possibility of a match arises. Parents and young adults alike can have their fears alleviated, their questions answered and their futures secured. And all this, with privacy, delicacy and sensitivity to all parties involved. As a psychologist who is exquisitely sensitive to the issue of confidentiality, this system has no drawbacks. The anonymity provided by Dor Yeshorim does not

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hide or “sweep” information “under the rug”; rather, it provides the applicants with the very necessary information that they need to know without the expense of psychological damage to the young adult or their parents.

Much has been written on the halachic, philosophical and pragmatic aspects of Dor Yeshorim’s activities. I will not elaborate here on the highly sophisticated testing that Dor Yeshorim provides for several major genetic diseases. Suffice it to say that Tay Sachs disease, once quite prevalent in the Orthodox Jewish community, is now drastically reduced. The 17-bed Tay Sachs unit at Kingsbrook Jewish Medical Center, once totally and consistently full, now lies empty.

Since it’s inception, I have always been a staunch supporter of Dor Yeshorim, and am truly impressed by their remarkable work.

Sincerely,



Hindie M. Klein, Psy.D.

Director

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