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Amudim Event Raises Awareness of Abuse, Addiction and IV Community.

Date: May 15th, 2016

Event Location: Young Israel of Kew Gardens Hills

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Over 150 people turned out in Queens on Sunday May 15th for the Amudim awareness event, a rare opportunity to learn to empower children and protect their futures. The symposium, held at the Young Israel of Kew Gardens Hills, was held in

speakers, each of whom is well acquainted with the problems of abuse and addiction in the Orthodox Jewish community.

Rabbi Zvi Gluck, director of Amudim, opened the evening discussing the alarming rash of untimely deaths that has swept just two days earlier he had sent an emotional email to his contacts that spoke of the 65 deaths of people under the age of 40 in the Orthodox Jewish community in New York City. Hashana this year alone. By the time the event began on Sunday night, that number had risen, tragically, to 66.

Pretending that these problems don't exist in our community is a luxury we cannot afford, explained Gluck.

"It's no longer possible to try make believe that certain things that are killing our kids are not happening," said Gluck. "Whether from addiction or mental illness, these are issues we must confront and accept that it is a problem."

Gluck also stressed the importance of working with professionals and rabbonim in order to bring about awareness of the



Amudim's rabbinic advisor, Rabbi Elya Brudny, rosh yeshiva of the Yeshiva of the 21st Century, is currently advocating for our children from the Torah perspective, noting that we are living in a time of great change and in state of the art classrooms. While not every crisis ends in tragedy, it is a reality that we live in generations, making it all the more important for parents to stay informed.

"In a time of tragedy we have to reevaluate what parents are supposed to, or what the norm is out there. We are not going to save the world around the world today."

Ensuring their children's well being must be of paramount importance.

"We have to train ourselves to the mentality, to the instinctive ability, that my child should be safe no matter what the cost," said Rabbi Brudny.



Dr. Shloime Zimmerman, a member of Amudim's advisory board, has been a part of the organization for many years. He has experienced over the past few years have been years in the making.

"On the death certificate it says drug overdose but this guy didn't want to die. He was a good person. What is shame? It's feeling unworthy. Unlovable. Feeling rejected by themselves from me. They would not approve of me."

The importance of acceptance and compassion are crucial, said Dr. Zimmerman. We must embrace our children's imperfections and support them through their struggles.

"We don't have to be perfect," said Dr. Zimmerman. "We don't have to pretend to be perfect."

Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein, founder of Ohr Naava, spoke passionately about raising awareness of abuse so that those who are in shame and that help is literally just a phone call away.

"Before Amudim showed up, people who went through sexual abuse thought that it was a secret and that there was nobody who would help them. Now, the people who refused to give up on these kids, whether it is therapy or rehab, whether it is money or personal help. There is a person to go to that will not give up on this thing that used to be hidden."

Rabbi Wallerstein observed that once abused, a child's life is forever altered and that even those who appear to have gotten back on their feet are still struggling.

"For some victims, they were given a death sentence, but all have a sentence for life," said Rabbi Wallerstein.

With so many tragedies taking place this year, it is incumbent on each of us to do our part to prevent the statistics from getting any worse.

"At the end of the day it is on our watch," said Rabbi Wallerstein. "How are we going to answer that Hashem's bas or ben asked of us? We put something together called Amudim. Hashem, we did our best. There is no organization that does this better than us."

Participants lingered long after the event was over, approaching the speakers with questions, some seeking guidance or support.



"We have already had requests for follow ups in this community. We want to send the same message to all people: if you know someone who needs help, please reach out to them. We are here for you, between life and death."

To find out more about Amudim visit them online at www.amudim.org

(YWN World Headquarters – NYC)

Event Videos and Photos

Dr. Shloimie Zimmerman:



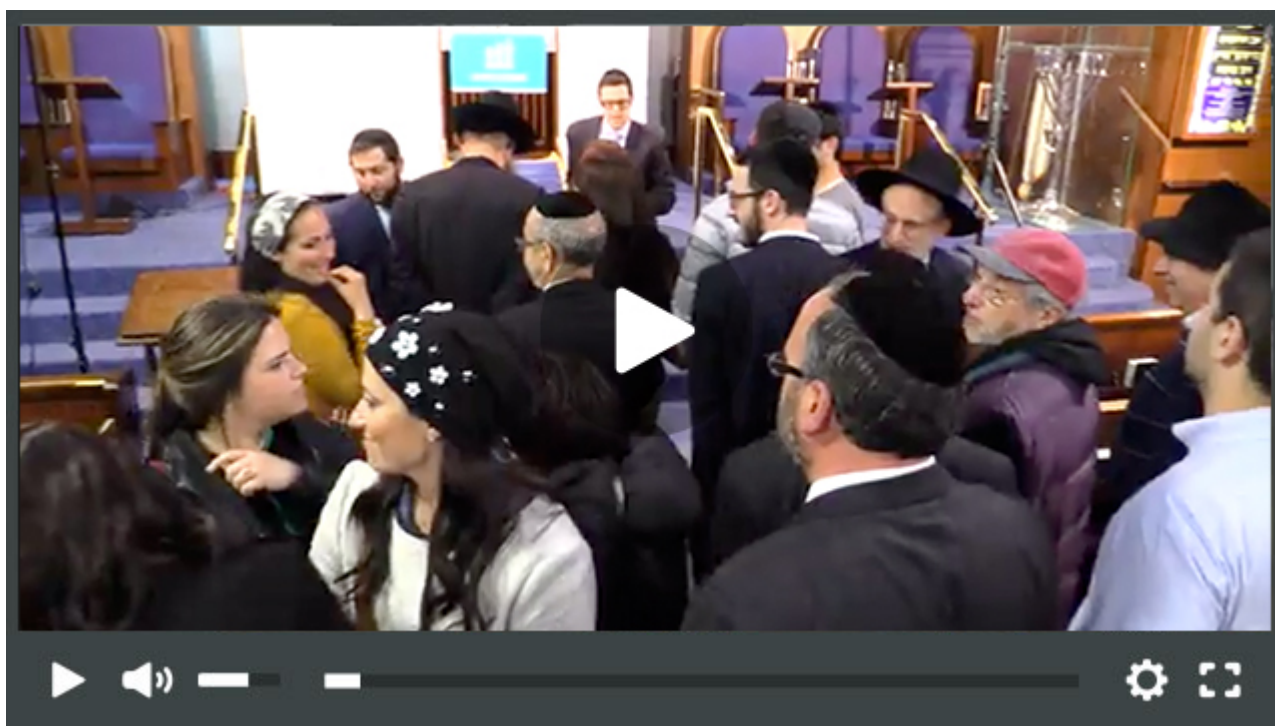
Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein



Harav Elya Brudny



AMUDIM MAY 15 event recap









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