

Kol Bogrei Rambam is the Alumni Council's monthly e-newsletter for and about Maimonides School graduates. Each month we share information on individual graduates' ventures and accomplishments, as well as general news notes, all reflecting the school's mission of preparing educated, observant Jews to be contributing members of society. Your ideas and accomplishments will help sustain and strengthen this key communications tool; please forward to alumni@maimonides.org.

Doctor-Patient Partnership in Diagnosis Crucial, Grad Writes in New Book

Dr. Joshua Kosowsky '83 has been on the Emergency Department staff at Boston's Brigham & Women's Hospital for more than a dozen years. He says his experiences as a physician and a teacher have shown that "despite all the technology we have, sitting down with a patient and speaking for even a short time is the most important piece of getting the right diagnosis."

Josh made that observation as his new book, *When Doctors Don't Listen: How to Avoid Misdiagnoses and Unnecessary Tests*, was introduced two weeks ago at a book-signing in Brookline.

"My passion is in patient-doctor communication and understanding the role that this plays in the diagnostic process," he said. "I think all of us can be better listeners as doctors."

Dr. Kosowsky earned undergraduate and medical degrees at Harvard University, but he said his commitment to a diagnostic partnership really began "around our dinner table when I was a child." His father, Dr. Bernard Kosowsky, former Maimonides Board chair, was chief of cardiology at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Brighton. "My dad would tell stories about patients of his, and those memories still resonate," Josh said. "My ideas of what it is to be a physician were informed by my dad and his approach to diagnosis."

"As I went into practice and began to teach medical students and residents,



Dr. Joshua Kosowsky

the importance of diagnosis became clear to me, and the importance of partnering with patients to get to a working diagnosis became ever more apparent," Josh related.

The idea for the book germinated more than three years ago, when Josh and his co-author, Dr. Leana Wen, "began to talk about things we could do to improve the care of our patients." Josh said the book will be of interest to "anyone who has ever gone to the doctor. It's meant for the common person, not for health-care policy wonks."

The publisher is St. Martin's Press, and the book is available through the usual online sources (the signing was hosted by Brookline Booksmith at Coolidge Corner).

"Leana and I see this book as part of a burgeoning movement, empowering patients to take control of their health-care," Josh said. "Our approach has the endorsement of leaders in medicine

and health policy. It's not about laying blame on doctors or the system so much as offering a way forward for patients." Additional details and links can be found at www.whendoctorsdontlisten.com.

Josh, the Vice Chair of Clinical Affairs for the BWH Emergency Department, explained his choice of emergency medicine as a specialty. "One of the joys of emergency medicine is you get to meet 20 or 30 new patients and their families every day, from all walks of life, from the homeless person to the mayor and everyone in between."

"I fell in love with diagnosis when I was a medical student, and that's really what emergency medicine has become — the place where people come to get a diagnosis."



Mindy Schimmel '76, her husband Benjamin Wurzburger (a former Maimonides kindergartener) and their nine-year-old daughter Yona pose with Shilgiya, the snow-lady, who paid a visit to their home in Jerusalem on Jan. 11.



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Maimonides a Crucial Crossroads in Alumna's Journey from Poland to Israel

Monika (Lewkowicz) Landau '94 was a 17-year-old high school student from Wroclaw, Poland, with an emerging Jewish identity, thanks to a summer program sponsored by the Lauder Foundation. That camp turned out to be a launching pad to a life in Israel — with a significant stop at Maimonides School.

"While growing up in Poland, I did not know that there were a lot of Jewish children," she recounted. "I was unique in that both my parents were Jewish, which is very rare today in Poland. We would go to synagogue on the holidays and my brother and I were the only children there." In 1989 Lauder began funding summer and winter camps run by Rabbi Michael Shudrich (now the chief rabbi of Poland) for Jewish families. "We attended them and I started to feel more comfortable knowing that there were other Jewish families and children living in Poland, and we stayed in touch," Monika said.

Every summer a few campers were offered the opportunity to attend a Jewish high school in the United States. In 1992, Maimonides School teacher Rabbi Seth Farber, who was also a summer counselor at the Lauder camp, worked with Rabbi Shudrich to bring Monika and Basia Eigenberg to Boston.

"This arrangement included staying with a family who I did not know. It was not an easy decision to make, but I knew that I wanted to leave Poland and my parents supported the move," Monika related. "They thought that eventually we should all leave the country, and this was the way to get it to start to happen."

"Those two years at Maimonides opened up a new world for me," she testified. "I got to see how religious Jews really live and study, go to syna-

gogue on Shabbat and celebrate holidays. I never saw anything like this in Poland. Living day by day with Harvey and **Reva Gertel '68** and experiencing first-hand the religious lifestyle, plus going to a Jewish school every day, made a very big impact on me. The Gertels are a very special family. They were very warm, supportive, and understanding. It is really impossible for me to properly express my gratitude for everything they did for me."

Monika recalled that "everyone received me and Basia with tremendous warmth, including the entire staff, Rabbi (David) Shapiro (the principal), and the students." In Poland there wasn't much of an opportunity for experiential Judaism, so "during those two years I learned to love and appreciate the religious lifestyle. I felt very comfortable."

Since most of her classmates would be learning in Israel for a year after high school, "I willingly decided to join them, since I was already interested in living in Israel. From that first year in Israel, I knew that I wanted to stay there." After graduating from Maimonides, Monika studied for two years at Machon Gold in Jerusalem. She returned to Poland but only for a few months before making aliyah in 1996.

"I always wanted to live in Israel when I was growing up in Poland," Monika said, adding, "I knew that I did not want to stay in Poland. When I was growing up, I was always afraid to tell people I was Jewish. It was not a place



Ze'ev and Monika Landau and family

for Jews to continue to live. I knew that I wanted to raise my children to feel proud to be Jewish and not have to hide it."

Monika received her nursing degree from the Shaare Zedek Hospital Nursing School in 2001 and spent more than 10 years in that Jerusalem medical center, working in neo-natal intensive care, pediatric intensive care, and the IVF unit. Monika and Ze'ev Landau were married in 2005. Their daughter Naomi Chana, age 6, is in first grade and their son Reuven Yehuda just turned 2. "After Reuven Yehuda was born, I took a long maternity leave and decided that I needed to work closer to home," she said. "So I reluctantly left Shaare Zedek and I am now working for the Meuchedet Health Fund in Beit Shemesh."

Monika's mother and brother also left Poland for Israel and became religious. Her brother and his family live down the street in Ramat Beit Shemesh Aleph and her mother lives in Jerusalem. Monika said she often reunites with the Gertels on their visits to Israel.

Alumnus a Leading Advocate for Accessibility in Electronic Communications

Network providers overcharge for or deny access to websites. Cable firms block devices that allow consumers to speed through television commercials. Phone companies implement exorbitant rates for calls to and from prison inmates.

These are the kinds of challenges **Harold Feld '85** confronts as senior vice president of Public Knowledge, a Washington-based technology advocacy organization.



Harold Feld '85

Public Knowledge works at the intersection of copyright, telecommunications, and Internet law. This ranges from "ensuring universal access to affordable and open networks" and "promoting creativity through balanced copyright" to "advancing the public's access to knowledge" and "upholding and protecting consumer rights."

After graduating from Princeton and Boston University School of Law, Harold practiced with a large Washington law firm. But information technology was in his DNA. "I've been online since Rabbi (Zalmen) Stein's computer class back in 1984," Harold reflected. That is when he acquired his first computer.

"In the late '90s, when suddenly this became big, I was one of the few people who knew what a router was," he recounted. "It was very easy to be an expert about cyber law — because there wasn't any."

So in 1999 Harold chose to shift to public interest work, and spent the next nine years with the Media Access Project, a law firm that advocates for the public in the area of telecommunications.

"We identified early that the Internet has the potential to bring people more than they get on network news. It transforms people from being passive consumers to active producers of content and information," Harold observed. "People may sneer at political conversations that go on blogs, but this is the most interactive conversation since the Sons of Liberty got together at taverns in Boston. It is the pivotal development in the last 25 years, with enormous potential to improve quality of life."

He acknowledged that there are trivia and bias, "but if they choose to, people are receiving through these social networks more information and more differing perspectives on events than they would get in a traditional media environment."

Public Knowledge focuses on protecting consumers and promoting innovation in the areas of intellectual property and telecommunications. It works for balance in copyright and patent law to promote innovation, and to ensure "network neutrality," so networks can't block access or charge extra to reach certain sites.

Harold, who lives in Silver Spring, MD with his 1985 Maimonides classmate and wife **Rebecca Pearlman** and their son, was a delegate to the recent World Conference on International Telecommunications in Dubai, where he expressed "concern that countries like Russia are advancing proposals that are very dangerous to freedom of expression online."

Battling for competitive phone rates in and out of prisons "is literally a case where you advocate for the widow and the orphan, help the helpless," Harold said. "Our organization is part of a coalition that has pressed very hard on this issue. Otherwise nobody is going to care."

Harold also noted that his professional blog, *Tales of the Sausage Factory*, features "Torah mixed with technology. The reason I do this is because I owe a particular debt to [Maimonides teacher] Rabbi Isaiah Wohlgemuth and his vision of what it means to live in a world where we have a responsibility to make the world a better place, no matter what ugliness may be thrown at us." The blog can be accessed through www.wetmachine.com.



Maimonides School graduates, from left, Helene Weiner '07, Jacqui Boroda '06, and Michal Fuld '06 are dressed appropriately for a recent shift of relief work, helping neighborhoods devastated by Hurricane Sandy. The day of service was organized by Abbe Pick '04. "Maimo alumni are still committed to doing chesed together even after graduation," Helene wrote.

Time and Technology Are Necessities for This "Modern-Age Matchmaker"

Lori (Michaelson) Salkin '00 is a 21st Century *shadchan*. "The stereotype of a matchmaker is an 85-year-old grandmother," she said. "Singles today want a modern-age matchmaker with whom they can speak openly and honestly."

A *shadchan* since 2008 with the international SawYouAtSinai.com matchmaking service, among others, Lori's record includes five marriages, two couples about to become engaged, and dozens in serious dating relationships. That includes a couple in their 50s on their second marriage.

(It doesn't always work, Lori acknowledged. "Last night I got a coaching call, and I had to explain to the boy that he had to pay for the girl's coffee on their date. He said she got to the cash register first... There's only so much you can do.")

Lori's "career" began in 2005, "when I actually matched one of my Maimonides classmates with my college roommate." Then, three years later, "my sister-in-law wanted help and I applied to be a matchmaker on [SawYouAtSinai](http://SawYouAtSinai.com). After a six-month screening and application process I was approved."

[SawYouAtSinai](http://SawYouAtSinai.com) describes itself as "an online Jewish dating service where expert Jewish matchmakers assist Jewish singles with finding love and meaningful relationships."

After graduating from Maimonides and earning degrees at Boston University, The Juilliard School and Fordham University, Lori worked as a producer and assignment editor for MSNBC in New York City and then for Channel 7 News, WHDH-TV in Boston. She and her husband Leon were married in 2005; earlier this year they relocated to the Philadelphia area with their daughter Chloe, and recently welcomed their newborn son, Zachary.

Lori is convinced that "opposites attract." But that's more of a guideline;

the work is in the trenches. "The real trick to matchmaking is to interview singles in person and make phone calls and get to know people personally," she testified. "I interview on average three new singles in person a week, spend four hours a day on phone matchmaking and even longer on the computer. There are more than 100 people in my network with [SawYouAtSinai](http://SawYouAtSinai.com), and I have several hundred more that I keep tabs on. There are 20,000 in the network altogether. I receive at least four new requests and referrals a day." She is the only matchmaker on [SawYouAtSinai](http://SawYouAtSinai.com) to have an assistant, based in Israel.

Lori emphasized the importance of "coaching," in which she counsels "what or what not to do on a date." Using technology to the fullest, she coaches clients to "text or email me a picture of what they're wearing before they go out the door... Singles are eager to have private coaching sessions and learn from their mistakes."

It doesn't stop there. "I've taken them shopping. I've texted reminders — 'don't forget to shower and shave,' and written emails for them to copy and paste to their potential dates. The funniest situations include those where singles text me from the bathroom while on dates for pointers and what to say. And one time I was chatting with a boy, feeding him lines to use on the phone call he was simultaneously on. Hundreds send me text messages day and night."

There are demands and frustrations inherent in this line of work. "It's often thankless. There's complaining: 'He was stupid; she was ugly; he was bald.'" Lori noted that it is all volunteer and she is paid only if a marriage results.

Lori remains involved with the *shidduch* group run by Rebbetzin Mindy Gewirtz of Young Israel of Brookline, calling into meetings and consulting regularly with Rabbi Naftoli Bier, the Rosh Kollel in



Lori and Leon Salkin

Boston, for halachic questions. She also runs meetings out of her own home for married women in the community.

Lori is also the voice of [SawYouAtSinai](http://SawYouAtSinai.com) and its affiliates on Facebook and Twitter. She hopes to one day host a Jewish reality dating show. With financial backing, she said, "I'm ready to go."

Ida Crown Honors Kahan

Dr. Jeremy Kahan '83, assistant principal for curriculum and instruction at Ida Crown Jewish Academy in Chicago, will receive the Educator of the Year Award at the day school's scholarship dinner March 12. Jeremy, who also teaches math at Ida Crown, moved to Chicago eight years ago after serving as director of teacher education at the Rabbi Soloveitchik Institute at Maimonides. "He values his opportunity to work daily with ICJA teachers, students and parents to enhance the quality of all facets of an ICJA education, and is beloved by the staff and students," according to the school's website.

Several Members of the Class of 2012 Running for Chesed in Israel

Several 2012 Maimonides School graduates currently learning in institutions in Israel are training to run in the March 1 International Jerusalem Marathon, as an act of chesed.

Six of the students have affiliated with Team Butterfly, a training group of about 40 who are raising money to benefit the Jackson Gabriel Silver Foundation.

The foundation "supports efforts to find a cure for epidermolysis bullosa, an extremely rare, painful, and life-threatening skin disease that causes blistering throughout the body," said **Naftali Ehrenkranz**. "The team was founded by David Beiss, an 18-year-old yeshiva student who has battled EB his entire life."

Naftali and some of his classmates are friends with David, who lives in West Hempstead, NY and is in his second year of learning at Yeshivat Torat Shraga.

Another classmate, **Elie Sundel**, is seeking donations for SHALVA, the Association for Mentally and Physically Challenged Children in Israel. "SHALVA is staffed by professional educators and therapists and assisted by trained volunteers," said Elie, who noted that all programs are individually designed and free.

The marathon includes not only the full 42-kilometer event but also a 21-kilometer half-marathon and a 10-kilometer run. Each runner has a web page noting contributions in support of his or her efforts. Following are links to the Maimonides alumni:

Naftali Ehrenkranz: <http://www.crowdrise.com/TeamButterfly2013/fundraiser/naftaliehrenkranz>

Jonathan Michaelson: <http://www.crowdrise.com/TeamButterfly2013/fundraiser/jonathanmichaelson>

Menachum Polack: <http://www.crowdrise.com/TeamButterfly2013/fundraiser/menachumpolack>

Talia Epstein: <http://www.crowdrise.com/TeamButterfly2013/fundraiser/taliaepstein>

Elisheva Spellman: <http://www.crowdrise.com/TeamButterfly2013/fundraiser/elishevaspellman>

Deena Rosenblatt: <http://www.crowdrise.com/TeamButterfly2013/fundraiser/deenarosenblatt>

Elie Sundel: http://www.run4shalva.org/view_profile.php?id=569

Project Had an Impact, Any Way You Slice It

Here's an update on the pizza project engineered in Israel last fall by **Sam Packer '03** and his wife Leora of Givat Shmuel. They arranged with various pizza merchants in beleaguered communities in the south of Israel to take orders for delivery to IDF troops and residents. "Well over 1,000 pies were purchased, according to our estimates from speaking to some of the pizza stores and emails from those who purchased," Sam reported. "I received several emails from the Maimonides community, mostly from people I don't know. The gratitude expressed by the stores, as well as that of the surprised recipients of the pizzas (relayed by those who delivered the pizzas), made it clear that the project had its intended impact. I think that the feeling of directly contributing by calling the stores from the U.S. was meaningful to those who gave as well."



Posing before kickoff at the Patriots' first-round playoff game are Boston-area graduates, from left, Jeremy Thompson '93, David Galper '93, Dr. Ben Galper '97 and Dr. Ernest Mandel '96.