Machon L’Yahadus Students Have it ALL

The dorm is open. Virtual classes are in session. Students are happy.

The motto of Machon L’Yahadus Women’s Seminary is “Live, Learn and Love Judaism.” And even in these unprecedented times, that’s exactly what the Machon L’Yahadus students – under the leadership of Rabbi Shloma Majeski principal - are experiencing.

What is significant to a Machon L’Yahadus student who has made the important decision to begin or strengthen her Torah education as a mature young woman? What mitigates the pressure she is grappling with from family and childhood friends regarding pausing her career or secular education to pursue full-time Torah study? What calms her when she is in Crown Heights, a hot-spot of the Covid-19 virus?

For these young women, their anchor is Torah study, and lots of comradery and laughter!

And that’s what these past 12 days have been filled with for the students!

While the Machon L’Yahadus school building at 825 Eastern Parkway closed at noon on Friday, March 13 when all of the Crown Heights schools closed, classes immediately resumed via facebook live and conference calls on Monday, March 16. For the current special Pesach learning, the teachers and students have transitioned to the more interactive Zoom platform.

In addition to classes, days have been filled with Pesach cleaning the dorm on President Street (under the direction of Mrs Shterna Rodal the dorm mother), special projects, cooking (including Shabbos) and chessed opportunities. In fact, a first response of students was organizing themselves to help others. To that end, the students made themselves available to shop and run errands for people in the community “to bring Moshiach sooner,” explained Esther, the project coordinator. (The project was suspended when students starting having virus symptoms.)

“Why is the dorm open?” people have asked. For a number of simple but varied reasons. Many of the dorm students would not be able to celebrate Pesach properly in their own homes. Many have elderly or immune compromised relatives at home and were concerned that they were already exposed to the virus and they did not want to expose their relatives. Still others hail from countries that would have required a two-week quarantine upon entering their country, possibly in isolation from family, and that was a scary prospect for these young women.

So the dorm is open. The triumvirate of Pesach cleaning, Spring Cleaning and Sanitizing Cleaning is in high gear. The students are in high spirits and wondering what new and unusual experiences the future holds for all of them!

The special Pesach Classes on Zoom – through next Wednesday - are open to all women and girls. When these classes started, the students were so enthusiastic that interactive classes taught by some of their favorite teachers, were up and running.

As can be imagined, keeping the dorm open and the students healthy, happy and safe in these crazy times has created huge unexpected expenses that were not in the “budget.” In these days when we are all increasing in tzedaka as a zechus for our loved ones to be healthy, this pandemic to end, and the geula to finally commence, please donate at http://womensyeshiva.org/donate/.

A huge shout-out to the Machon L’Yahadus madrichos and students who have banded together, bonded even more, kept positive and upbeat even when Plan A and Plan B and Plan C didn’t materialize. To Regina and Smadar who liberally spice all of their cooking with so much TLC that the girls could be nourished from that alone. To the staff and mashpios who have kept in touch with and given encouragement to the students throughout this entire time. You rock!

For more information about anything Machon L’Yahadus related email Yehudis Cohen at machonlybh@gmail.com