

A Guide to Creating a Synagogue Shidduch Committee

Here are some proven-effective ideas to establish and facilitate a shidduch-committee in your shul. This information comes from an article on the subject featured in the Spring 2000 "Jewish Action", the magazine of the Orthodox Union. (Every OU synagogue should be receiving a copy of "Jewish Action" quarterly. Contact Rabbi Waxman if your shul is not receiving "Jewish Action.")

Passaic, New Jersey is a community which has warm outreach on an individual level and has organized an effective system for helping singles meet their match. Their *shidduch* [matchmaking] committee meets once a month to share information about single friends in a manner that is efficient, yet discreet. Their system can work in your community too! Here's how to get started:

Preparation

- Send a postcard to every person in your community who would be interested in sponsoring a single. One side of the postcard contains an invitation to the upcoming meeting and the other side is a form for the sponsor to fill out, to be used for presentation at the meeting and for later inclusion in a newsletter.

Meetings

- Meetings last about an hour. At the first meeting, every sponsor presents information about a single, who is then assigned a number. He/she is referred to either by the name of the sponsor or the corresponding number. At subsequent meetings, only new singles will be presented. Since some sponsors will attend only to hear about any new potential partners for their singles, not every attendee will present.
- At the end of the meeting, a sign-out sheet should be circulated. On this sheet, indicate by number who you presented and who (if anyone) sounded like a possible match. For example if you presented #8 and you think he/she should meet #12, then you would indicate that on the sign-out sheet. Blank index cards

should be available for sponsors to exchange phone numbers.

Follow-up

- Once the meeting has ended and you return back to your everyday responsibilities, it is important to prevent any loss of momentum that was generated at the meeting. A follow-up person should be selected to phone every sponsor who expressed interest in a single. The follow-up person ascertains if introductions

have been made and assists in coordinating a first date for the designated singles, if necessary.

- To broaden the possibilities beyond the immediate geographic area, the group sends out a newsletter and maintains a profile list available to sponsors via email.

Making the initial connection between singles is only half the battle. Because many times singles are unsure about whether they should continue dating someone they have met or are unsure about the ways to bring a relationship to a deeper level, it is vital to keep tabs on the progress of couples that you introduce. In Passaic, there are a number of couples (some of whom happen to be mental health professionals) who mentor dating singles and assist them in developing interpersonal skills as well as helping them in their decision-making process.

In addition, many families form strong bonds with the singles in their community, especially those who are *baalei teshuvah* or happen to live far from their own families. A standing Shabbat invitation, a listening ear, and helpful mentoring provide a genuine support system for the single members of the community.

Coordinating Taskforce on Marriage

The Orthodox Union Department of Synagogue Services has been asked to serve as a coordinating body for volunteer 'Shadchanim'.

A group of lay-leaders will oversee an organized effort to unite Orthodox singles between the ages of twenty four and thirty five. All synagogue based introduction/shidduch groups and services are asked to contact Frank Buchweitz at (212) 613-8188 to participate in this new initiative.

Yad L'Simcha The Passaic/Clifton Shidduch Committee

Date: _____

Sponsor's Name: _____

Sponsor's Phone #: _____

Initials: _____ Male/Female Age: _____ S / D / W # of Children _____

FFB / Long-time BT / Recent BT / Kohen Height: _____ Build: _____

Profession: _____

Religious Description: Yeshiva Learning / Yeshiva working / Modern Orthodox /
Not yet observant / Chassidish

Religious Education: _____

Secular Education: _____

General Description: _____

Seek: _____ Up to age: _____