HERALD WHOLESALE PREMIER BATH, LIGHTING & HARDWARE



<u>1765 W. Maple Rd.</u> • Troy • (248) 398-4560 M & Th 9 am - 7 pm • Sat 9 am - 4 pm T, W & F 9 am -5:30 pm www.heraldwholesale.com



metro

Online And In Touch

Lubavitch school for Chabad leadership graduates create online schools to educate Jews worldwide.



Brothers and graduates of the Oak Park school who created the first worldwide online Jewish school: Rabbi Gedalya Shemtov and his brother, Rabbi Moshe Shemtov.

Kristin Schenden Special to the Jewish News

n China, England, the United States, Canada and Denmark, not all Jewish children live in communities that have a Hebrew day school providing Jewish education; however, the Internet has revolutionized the computer and communications world like nothing before.

Thanks to two graduates of the Lubavitch Yeshiva-International School for Chabad Leadership in Oak Park, students across the globe have access to a Jewish education. Rabbi Gedalya Shemtov, who attended from 1970-1980, and his brother, Rabbi Moshe Shemtov, who attended from 1975-1985, developed an online school tailored to meet the needs of Chabad-Lubavitch emissaries around the globe.

"We're proud to have been able to establish the online school that caters to shluchim's children with courses and lessons that you'd expect from any Jewish school but in the comfort of your own home — anywhere in the world," said Director Gedalya Shemtov. "All they need is a computer, webcam, mic and a high-speed Internet connection and they're ready to go."

The online school has about 700 students from around the globe enrolled.

We realized that not only were we giving the children an opportunity that has never existed before, but we were,

in fact, helping hundreds of Jewish communities as well," Associate Director Moshe Shemtov added.

Levi Lowenthal, 16, of Copenhagen, Denmark, who is fluent in five languages (Danish, Hebrew, Yiddish, Swedish and English), says he benefited greatly from the shluchim online school.

"When we first started out it was called, 'home school-phone school' because the phone was used. Then it went to the computer where first it was a half-day online. We had both Americans and Europeans in the same online class all learning together, and we also got to use Skype for video and voice instruction from time to time," said Lowenthal, who is now in his first year at the Oak Park school.

Class sizes average eight students, and the faculty is comprised of devoted Chabad-Lubavitch rabbis who are committed to the highest level of Jewish education. Classes are held within the traditional September-June school calendar and are modified for students signed up around the world.

The Meyer and Lillian Nigri School for Boys and the Shluchim Online School for Girls currently serve children ages 4 through 13, from Gan through eighth grade. Cost of the online school is the same tuition as most day schools due to the extensive costs for custom software and IT infrastructure and maintaining a school office building in New York for teachers and administrators, such as principals. Many of the students are on scholarships.

Classes take place from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. with a break for lunch, along with two other 15-minute breaks. Tests are emailed to students and then sent back to the teacher with answers.

In his second year at the Lubavitch Yeshiva in Oak Park, Mendel Greenberg, 14, of Shanghai, China, said, "Without this online school, we would not have a way of learning to help prepare us to enroll at a place like this. Living in China, I took classes in the U.S. time zone from 2 p.m. until 8 p.m., which was a non-traditional school time. It worked because other students were from around the United States."

Avremel Silverberg, 13, of London, Ontario, Canada, had three years of the online instruction. "The online classes helped me learn what I needed to know to be able to be a student here, and I made a lot of friends that I now go to school with here in Oak Park."

Recently, another learning opportunity called the Jewish Online School was created by the two graduates of the Oak Park school. Judaism comes to life with a full-color, entertaining and fun curriculum that is growing by 15 percent each year. Classes on Judaic studies, Hebrew reading and writing, Tefillah, Jewish history and traditional Jewish values are available for all children.

The Jewish Online School is the largest online Jewish school offering three different programs: Online Hebrew School, available once a week, which offers basic Hebrew reading and an interactive Judaic curriculum; the Online Jewish Day School, which is an afterschool program; and the Online Bar Mitzvah Lessons, where personal bar mitzvah lessons are tailored to students' needs.

The unique classroom set up includes being able to see the instructor and fellow classmates, along with having full interaction with classmates, teacher and whiteboard. Currently, the two online schools combined have more than 800 students enrolled.

"The online courses are now in demand as students can learn the Chabad philosophy no matter where they live," Moshe Shemtov said. □

For more information on enrolling for online classes, visit www. jewishonlineschool.com.







JN