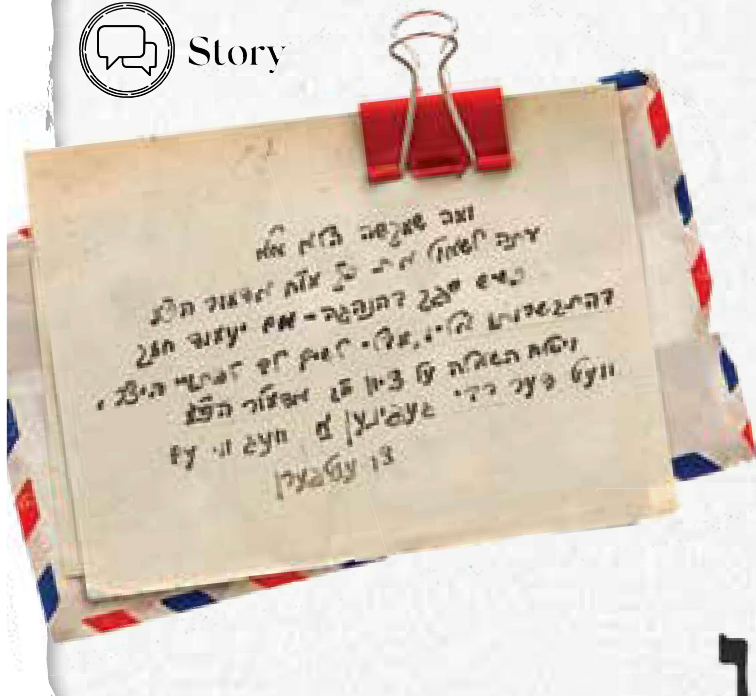




Story



דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

לזכות הילדה
פיגה טאובה

לרגל יום הולדתה כ"ד מנחם אב
יה"ר שתגדל לתורה לחופה ולמעשים טובים
מתוך בריאות נכונה
ושפע בגו"ר לנח"ר כ"ק אדמו"ר
והוריה הי"ו

Public Menorah in the Texas Outback

AS TOLD BY RABBI SAADYA KAUFMAN (HOUSTON, TX)

In Tammuz 5780*, my wife and I were appointed by Rabbi Shimon Lazaroff to be the Rebbe's shlichim serving remote Yidden spread out over 200,000 square miles of the great state of Texas. For over 10 years now I have served as the regional *mashgiach* for the OU, based out of Houston, Texas. My *hashgacha* work takes me all over the state and it was an opportune time to start Chabad of Texas Towns, to reach Yidden in towns and villages too remote for established shlichim.

We immediately started gathering names of Jews who had contacted various shlichim from different parts of the state. Despite the Covid situation we managed to assemble groups of Yidden and helped them celebrate the Yomim Tovim in various ways.

Beaumont, Texas is a town of 118,000 residents with a small Jewish community and we wanted to arrange a public menorah lighting at City Hall. I consulted with a Jewish fellow living there about my plan and he excitedly shared



with me that there was a Jewish councilmember by the name of Mike Getz who would certainly help out.

A quick search online yielded the email addresses of Councilmember Getz and Mayor Ames and I sent them both an email with a proposal to have the first public menorah lighting in Beaumont this Chanukah. I described what the event was all about and how this was a tradition observed all over the country.

Councilmember Getz was very enthusiastic about the idea but several hours later I received a message from the mayor's office that it wouldn't be possible to have the public lighting at City Hall and that Councilmember Getz would be the right person to help us find a more suitable location in town.

Unsure of what to make of this rejection I wrote back to the mayor's office requesting a phone meeting to clarify the proposal.

That night I was speaking with my son learning in the yeshiva in New Haven. He mentioned to me that the yeshiva was going to the Ohel the next morning. I shared with him the latest with Chabad of Texas Towns, describing my efforts in arranging the first menorah lighting in Beaumont and the mayor's rejection and asked him to ask the Rebbe for a *bracha* that we should succeed in this *peulah*.

At 11:30 a.m. the next morning I received a call from the mayor's office. The mayor's assistant was on the line and she said that the mayor reviewed my email and was very supportive of the public menorah lighting. We spent several more minutes on the phone discussing the details and she was very helpful in ensuring that everything would happen in the best possible way.

An hour later my son called me saying that they just arrived in Crown Heights. I told him what had happened just an hour earlier and we quickly realized that the phone call from the mayor's office came in as he was standing at the Ohel asking the Rebbe for a *bracha*.

On the seventh night of Chanukah, Councilmember Getz proudly lit the brand new six-foot menorah in front of City Hall as Mayor Ames and a crowd of several dozen looked on. There was a special energy in the crowd and the local paper ran the story on the front page the next day. Our first *pirsumei nisa* in the Texas outback. 🕒

YOUR STORY

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