

Restoring Smiles

Valeria, a patient in Boston was interviewed.

I was born in Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine that was a part of the former Soviet Union. When WWII started, I was only 3 years old. My father was drafted into the Soviet Army as a doctor because of his occupation. With a great difficulty, my mother was able to buy tickets to a ferry boat so she, my sister of 13 and I could flee from the Nazi occupation. While riding a ferry on the Volga River, we were under bombardment and we saw that a ferry next to ours was hit by bombs and sunk. With great trouble, we reached Izhevsk, Russia where we settled and felt safe. There was not much food, so one year later we moved to Samarkand, Uzbekistan, to my mother's sister. My mother got sick there with typhoid, and we worried she would not survive, but she did. Time was passing by, and I started going to school there.

I know that my mother's niece who lived in a small town in Belarus, lost her child. When the Nazis came to the town, all Jewish kids, including her child were taken to the school building and burnt there alive. A young mother was living in hiding for some time pretending that she was a Ukrainian, but later she was rounded up and sent to a German labor camp. She survived the camp and returned home, but she was not the same person after that terrible time.

Meanwhile, my father's military hospital was stationed in the same town where we lived, Samarkand, but we did not know about that. We lost each other during the war. After an acquaintance of my father had seen us in a street by chance, he told our father about it, who was able to find us, and our family got miraculously reunited. By the end of the war my father was offered to stay in Samarkand as an official with Uzbekistan Ministry of Health, but he decided to move the family back to the home town of Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine. Life was not easy after the war, and in addition to that, an anti-Semitic persecution started. My mother worked as a doctor and she lost her job because Stalin started the infamous "Doctors' case" when many Jewish doctors were fired, some were charged with criminal offenses. I could not attend a college I wanted even though I was at the top of my class. I applied to Ukrainian Medical School, Science College, but I was not accepted because I was Jewish. I could only get into a college that was not of my choice at all – to study civil engineering, to build bridges and tunnels. Though I wanted to continue graduate studies in Ukraine, it was not possible either because of severe anti-Semitism. So, I applied to college in Moscow and graduated from there.

My daughter could not pursue her studies and develop her career for the same reason. Once she was attacked in a café by boys in black shirts who were picking on Jews. So as soon as it became possible, we emigrated from Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine (which was part of the Soviet Union at that time) to Israel in April 1991.

These days I live in Boston, and I'm very thankful for the dental treatment which Dr. Zizmor kindly provided to me. He was extremely professional as well as attentive to my situation; he even found another specialist when it was needed. Without his treatment, I would not be able to smile happily as I do now.



Valeria with Dr. Zizmor

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PHOTO: LLOYD GRAUMAN Bernice Edelstein, Alpha Omega Holocaust Survivors Program manager right, with survivor and program patient Sylvia Guttman

All smiles

By Heather Alterisio
Advocate staff

Program provides free dental care for Holocaust survivors

BOSTON – Among the 100,000 Holocaust survivors living in the U.S. today, about a third live in poverty. In 2014, the White House put out a call to action for the nation to take responsibility and help Holocaust survivors who can't afford basic care – more specifically, dental care. Alpha Omega, an international dental fraternity founded 111 years ago, caught wind of this and decided to act.

They joined forces with Henry Schein, the world's largest supplier of dental equipment and technology, to create the Alpha Omega-Henry Schein Cares Holocaust Survivors Oral Health Program in January 2015. According to their latest report, the program currently expands 21 cities and has treated at least 27 patients in the Boston area.

Dr. Steven D. Spitz, of Smileboston Cosmetic and Implant Dentistry, is the incoming president of Alpha Omega, the

first international president from Boston area in 75 years. "In my practice, I think I'm working with my sixth survivor," he told *The Jewish Advocate*. "I do my best to find out a little bit of their stories. I have one patient who is so adorable – I just want to take her home because she's so cute. She calls her teeth 'decorations.' She has dentures and partial dentures; she doesn't have many teeth left, so she calls them decorations.

"Of course, she's lost a lot of bone over the years, so [the dentures] hurt sometimes when she's wearing them," he continued. "So, we've made her new dentures and she's so happy and appreciative that she can eat pain-free." Spitz said this patient told him that when she was 7 years old and living in Russia, her mother, a dressmaker, begged the woman she worked for, a non-Jew, to hide her daughter. "After pleading and begging," Spitz said, "the woman took this

young girl and hid her under the baseboards in the floor of her house. The pogrom came and torched and destroyed their neighborhood. Once that was done, this woman said, 'Okay, it is safe now. You can go home.' So, she basically kicked her out of her house and sent her home.

"She goes home to see that her home is totally destroyed though," Spitz continued; "her shtetl was just completely destroyed." Others saw the little girl and told her to "walk toward the bridge" to find her mom and miraculously enough, she walked toward the bridge and found her mother.

"You never know with these stories what you are going to hear," Spitz said.

Allison Neale, director of public policy at Henry Schein and co-founder of the program, told *The Advocate*, "Many Holocaust survivors – those who are still alive today – were children during the Holocaust and had extreme nutritional deprivation and lack of access to care as children. So, their dental needs are even more substantial and significant than the elderly population who are not survivors of the Holocaust who, of course, already have significant dental issues in their older years.

"We learned that there are so many Holocaust survivors across this country living in terrible pain with really significant dental issues," said Neale, of why this program needed to be created. "Many are unable to eat properly, speak or communicate. Having such a lack of access to dental care really degrades their quality of life. Hearing this call to action and understanding its need, we quickly responded.

"We have now given free dental care to 1,200 survivors around North America," she said. Other Boston area dentists who participate in this program include Dr. Matthew Zizmor of Chestnut Hill and Drs. Arvi and Adelina Duka of Framingham Family Dental Care.

For more information about the program, visit ao.org/holocaust-survivors-program/about.

Dr. Steven Spitz reads the Massachusetts Governor's Citation recognizing the Alpha Omega-Henry Schein Cares Holocaust Survivors Oral Health Program



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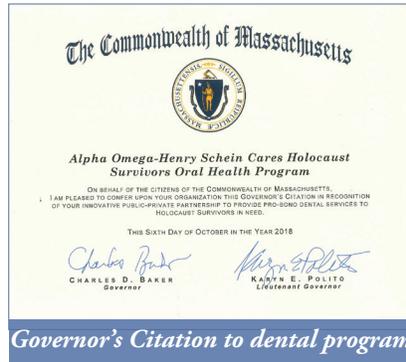
JEWISH
TIMES

Alpha Omega International Dental Fraternity Honors Night Program

Boston, Massachusetts | October 6, 2018 | Franklin Park Zoo



Dr. Steven Spitz



Governor's Citation to dental program



Dr. Steven Spitz, Dr. Robert Langer and Dean R. Bruce Donoff



Dr. Matthew Zizmor with Bernice Edelstein

Dr. Steven Spitz was the emcee for the event and Dean R. Bruce Donoff presented the 2018 Achievement Medal Award to Dr. Robert Langer from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Dr. Langer is a leading researcher and educator in the field of chemical engineering. Dr. Matthew Zizmor delivered a very inspirational speech; it is reproduced in its entirety with his permission.

Good Evening Everyone:

Let me wish you a *Gut Vach* or as we say in Hebrew, *Shavua Tov*- A Good Week.

When one speaks on a Saturday night, he has the luxury of referring to the portion of the week that was read in the Synagogue on Shabbat morning or what will be read this coming week. This morning we started a new cycle of the Torah. The portion was Bereshit, dealing with the creation, Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve, and Cain and Abel plus all the begets. This afternoon, we read the beginning of the portion of Noah. It deals with Noah and the animals, the ark and the animals, the flood and the animals, and the rainbow and the animals. There is a strong emphasis on Animals. Since we are all gathered at the Zoo, I could not resist speaking about the upcoming portion of the week "Noah". The Animals play an important part of the story.

Our Rabbis have always debated the righteousness of Noah. He was only able to save his own family and the animals. However, he could not save the rest of the world. Abraham, our ancestor, was concerned with the world. He argued with God to save the wicked city of Sodom. He went out to war against the four kings who held his nephew hostage. He brought people close to God, introduced them to Monotheism as opposed to Idolatry. Abraham had a very large tent, it was open on all four sides. He invited people in for food, drink and lodging. When people wanted to pay him, he refused. He told everyone that one thanks God for all his creations and bounty. He made people think of the presence of the Almighty. One of the characteristics of Abraham was his acts of loving kindness. This is our inheritance.

Alpha Omega is more than a dental fraternity. It is more than professionalism, it is more than an organization that defends the rights of Jewish students and dentists worldwide. It is an organization that seeks to help the Jewish and universal worlds. It is a key player in the Holocaust Survivors Oral Health Program. I am very fortunate to be a proud participant in this

program. Over the years, I have treated several patients in this program. I **love** them **all**.

Each has an inspiring story to tell. Two of my patients have spoken at my Synagogue The Young Israel of Sharon at our annual *Yom Hashoah* commemoration. After treatment, they become regular patients, and I see them on recalls. They all seem to be transformed. They have a sense of self- confidence and pride in their smiles. They feel so good about themselves. If they need further work, I do it. They are more appreciative than any other group of patients that come to me. If they have no work to do between recalls, I will call them to wish them a good Shabbat or a Good *Yontif*. They always bring me and my staff small gifts and mementoes.

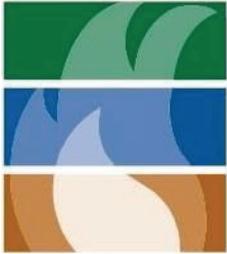
I could not do this work without the help of my assistant and hygienist, Elizabeth Kaponya and Nakecia and Phyllis at the front desk. Each patient of this group allows me to do the best dentistry that I have been trained for.

Every dentist connected with Alpha Omega must become a participant. Look what we bring to the table: our training, our vast experiences and expertise. Plus, each participant has his own network to make sure that the areas of dentistry that we do not do, others will do.

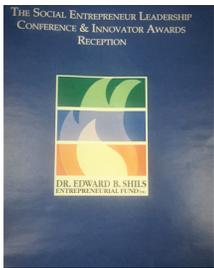
This is not just a *Mitzvah*. If a synagogue or school or individual needs funds, then one writes a check for the *Mitzvah*. This is an act of *Gemilut Chasidim*, an act of loving kindness. One has to be personally involved. When one visits the sick or makes a Shiva call, one has to do it himself. Our goal should be to have all our members as participants in one way, shape or form. May all of us live a full life until one hundred and twenty. I can say only one thing - that this Act of Loving Kindness will tip the Scales of Judgement in your favor. This is your Ticket to the World to Come!!! If you do this then God will Bless You and You will be Successful in All Your Undertakings.

Thank you.

The Social Entrepreneur Leadership Conference & Innovator Awards Reception



DR. EDWARD B. SHILS



The Dr. Edward B. Shils Entrepreneurial Fund, Inc. awards ceremony and a new Social Entrepreneur Leadership conference took place on October 4th in Philadelphia.

Dr. Bari Levine was one of two keynote speakers. She founded the nonprofit Growing Smiles Foundation and shared her story, “My Rollercoaster Ride to Social Entrepreneurial Success”. Christopher Lai, a fourth-year dental student at Penn Dental Medicine followed.

This year, there was a Shils Stars Dental Student Competition, where teams from the University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine’s Dental Innovators, Creators and Entrepreneurs DICE program pitched their business ideas to a panel of judges led by Stanley Bergman.

There was a very moving tribute to Dr. D. Walter Cohen, led by Stan Bergman. There were a number of Innovator Awards given out and the Special Recognition Awards were given to John D. Kemp President and CEO of The Viscardi Center, Chairman, Project Accessible Oral Health and to the Foundation for Endodontics, accepted by Dr. Mary Pettiette.

The Cohen-Volpe Award was presented to Dr. Allen Finkelstein in recognition for his “extraordinary lifetime achievement and leadership in the advancement of integrated dental care to ensure optimal dental health for all and his outstanding philanthropic commitment to social responsibility.”

The Shils Meskin Award was presented to Dr. Jack Dillenberg for his “exceptional and relentless pursuit of innovation in education, public health leadership, health program development, and addressing oral health issues to ultimately improve our nation’s oral health.”



Dr. Jeffrey Dorfman, NYC AO-HSC dental provider attended the Shils event.

THANK YOU FROM



Our clients are so, so happy with the amazing dental work that they are receiving through Alpha Omega at no charge! They all speak about the high-quality dental care that they receive and about how well they are treated when they come to the office - with such caring, dignity and respect.

Thank you so much for all that you do for our clients. You are giving people the means to be able to eat better, feel better and to feel better about themselves. You are literally adding years to their life and life to their years!

Thank you,
Judah

Judah Zellermaier, LCSW | Director, Holocaust Survivor Program

News Notes



The newest area to join the program is Broward County, Florida. The program has partnered with Goodman Jewish Family Services of Broward County. Dr. Michael

Eggnatz is the Ambassador and following dentists are participating:

Mark Berger, Sherri Bluth, Michael Gertsen, Jennifer Schaumberg, Bertram Moldauer and Barry Rosenthal. If you would like to participate, please contact Michael Eggnatz at mdeggnatz@aol.com or Bernice Edelstein at bedelstein@ao.org.

Welcome Penn Dental Medicine!

We are pleased to announce that Penn Dental Medicine, under the leadership of Morton Amsterdam Dean Mark S. Wolff, is now participating in the Holocaust Survivors Oral Health Program. Penn Dental Medicine will be joining with Temple Kleinlife Faculty Dental Center in treating Holocaust survivors in conjunction with the AO-HSC program in the Philadelphia region.



Certificate of Appreciation given to Temple Kleinlife Faculty Dental Center. Pictured left to right: Dr. Howard Wimmer, Ms. Victoria Dawdanow, and Ms. Sheryl Neckritz, hygienist.

Thank you to our Donors!

Thank you for supporting this vitally important program to treat the oral health needs of this most deserving population!

Michael & Susan Dab
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Azizi Khosrow
Jeffrey Knauer
Marshall Knauer
Nolen Levine
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Marlene Tenenbaum Memorial Tribute Fund

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416-250-7417

Upcoming Events

Thursday, February 21st – Chicago Midwinter Dinner – Join AO for its annual Midwinter Dinner coinciding with the Chicago Dental Society meeting. Harry Caray's Italian Steakhouse. Register <http://bit.ly/AO2019MWMDinner>



Friday, April 5th – Building Bridges Conference
4th Annual conference to promote coordination of services from healthcare providers, NGOs & Government agencies for youth and families with special needs. Watch for additional details.



Sunday – April 7th – AO DC Chapter Gratitude Brunch RSVP: aodcholoaustbrunch.rsvpify.com

A poster for a "Thank You" event. The left side features a colorful stained-glass Star of David with the Hebrew word "תודה" (Toda) and "Thank You" written across it. The right side is a blue background with white text: "Please join us for a brunch reception to celebrate the Holocaust Survivors Dental Program and honor its participants", the HSC logo, "Holocaust Survivors Oral Health Program", "Program Sponsors: The Clara Freilander Family Foundation, Robert J. Schuchman Foundation, Inc.", "Sunday, April 7, 2019 11:00 am", "Woodmont Country Club 1201 Rockville Pike / Rockville, MD 20852", "Spouses/Significant Others and Office Coordinators are also invited", and "RSVP by Friday, March 22, 2019 aodcholoaustbrunch.rsvpify.com".



Bernice Edelstein
Program Manager

Shalom!

Happy New Year - I hope you celebrated the start of 2019 in good health with family and friends. It was wonderful to see so many of you in NOLA at the AO Convention. It was filled with lots of fun and fraternalism. For those who could not

attend, pictures are posted on the AO Facebook page.

A quick snapshot from **2018**: 334 patients were treated through the program and the value of the donated dental care was \$606,795.00. I am awaiting an additional 59 encounter forms and those forms represent additional donated dollars in dental care.

Since the program's inception in **2015**: over 1,200 patients have been treated and over \$2.3 million has been donated in pro-bono dental care. The program expanded from the original nine pilot cities to 22 cities! We are working with 4 dental schools; Penn Dental Medicine is the most recent school to join the program. New York has seen tremendous growth - 44 patients have been seen through the program and the value of the dental care was \$169,330.00!

2019 will bring additional expansion. Miami/Dade, Cleveland and Denver are next on the list. If you practice in one of these areas and would like to join the program, please contact me.

The year ahead will present its own challenges, but I know that by working together to treat as many Holocaust survivors as we can in each city, we will have another banner year.

Bernice Edelstein
Program Manager

By the Numbers (Jan. 2018- December 2018)

City	Ambassador	In Treatment	Completed
Atlanta	Michael Friedman	3	1
Boston	Garry Feldman & Murray Miller	0	9
Chicago	Laurie Gordon-Shaw	4	45
Cincinnati	Dr. Glen Meyer	2	8
Columbus	Shaun Rotenberg	1	5
Dallas	Gary Solomon	0	0
Detroit	Jamie Feldman, Marv Sonne, Mark Luria	2	2
Florida	Dr Michael Eggnatz – Broward	0	1
	Dr. Allen Ressler – Miami/Dade	1	-
Los Angeles	Paul Selski	6	4
Milwaukee	Stan Teplin	0	4
New York	Rada Sumareva	10	44
NYU College Dentistry		3	-
Phila./South Jersey	Bruce Silver	4	21
Phoenix	Irwin Feinberg	0	2
ASDOH	Irwin Feinberg	0	0
San Francisco	Jay Cohen	0	2
Seattle	Kal Klass	1	5
Washington, DC	Ben Williamowsky, Alan Singer	3	74
West Hartford		1	0
Calgary	Brian Sacks	0	1
Montreal	Jeff Tenser	-	7
Toronto	Gerald Pearson	10	34
Winnipeg	Gary Hyman	2	6
Temple/KleinLife		6	59
TOTALS		59	334

FROM AO PROGRAM HQ

NOTE TO ALL AMBASSADORS AND DENTAL PANEL MEMBERS

This is a friendly reminder that if you have any Encounter Forms for 2018 that have not been submitted, please do so now. Record the appointment dates, the dental codes and patient initials and send to bedelstein@ao.org.
THANK YOU!!

Information about the program is online. Visit www.ao.org and click on the Holocaust Survivors Program tab. There, you will find all the program forms including the lab protocols and the Standard Dental Encounter Form. You will also find the program videos.

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