

SOUL STRINGS

CHABAD ELON



Chabad
Elon University

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You Helped Us Rise

We just finished celebrating Chanukah, The Lubavitcher Rebbe, of righteous memory, taught, what is the lesson of the oil?

When the olives are squeezed, the first drop of oil is the richest and most precious, and is what is used in the holy temple's menorah.



This year challenged us all in many ways. You, our dear supporters and partners, enabled us to not buckle under the weight, but rise to the occasion, to the unique challenges and opportunities of the pandemic, and truly be there for every Jewish student. Difficult times reveal our essence of golden oil.

Together, you, Rivka and I, and the Jewish community and students at Elon came together to care for each other and make sure no one was isolated and left alone.

So too, when we are 'squeezed and crushed', put to the test, we shine the brightest.

Rabbi Mendy & Rivka Minkowitz

You Helped Students Connect During COVID

A vital part of the college experience is human interaction: discussion groups, clubs, sports, parties, finding one's special group of friends. Enter Covid. Students were suddenly segregated from each other, allowed to meet only in a formal classroom environment. Students, especially freshmen, felt isolated, lonely, and stressed.

You were there, helping students stay connected during this challenge.

In careful compliance with federal, state, local, and university guidelines, Chabad has been permitted to host Shabbat dinners, a religious gathering. Your support gave the students one of the only places where they can relax, eat, chat, hang out, and fill this critical void.

Students keep thanking us for the warm and homey environment of Chabad. Your gifts have been a real lifeline for these teens and young adults. It's not a secret that depression and suicide numbers are

rising because of isolation, and you are giving them a wonderful gift of social interaction, meaningful experiences, in a safe environment.

An Elon parent alerted us: A first-year student was struggling. He lived alone and had no way to meet people. We reached out. He came to Chabad, met and connected with peers, and is now a happy member of the Jewish community.



Joe* is a senior who had only come by sporadically during the last few years, thinking his Jewish connection wasn't that important to him anymore. Covid closeds led him to

come for a Shabbat meal this fall. Once he was back at Chabad, he realized how much he loved and needed a personal, homey, Jewish connection. Thanks to you, Joe is determined to seek out a Jewish community as he starts his career and builds his future.

You Created Conversations and Cookies

Several students approached Rivka. Would she meet with them, answer pressing and personal questions, shmooze, and learn?

We are thrilled when the students take initiative, showing their ownership and personal investment. They did all the publicity and organizing. Rivka

came with fresh chocolate chip cookies, her deep knowledge, and warm heart. The girls were able to anonymously ask questions about anything on their minds and in their hearts.

It's common to feel adrift in these chaotic times. You gave these students a comfortable format to ask personal queries and dig into Judaism's wisdom on social issues and current events with a trusted mentor. You gave them a way to explore Jewish values and an anchor for them to hold on to when they feel adrift. What a special opportunity for these young women.

Thanks to your support, they bonded into a close community and got guidance from the Torah's unique perspective about their lives and our complex world. Oh yeah. They got yummy cookies too!



You Brought an Incredible Message to Elon

Surviving and Thriving: Lessons from a Holocaust Survivor.

George Abraham is a proud grandparent of an Elon graduate-- and a Holocaust survivor. He survived Auschwitz and the death march to Mauthausen, and went on to rebuild a beautiful family, living in Israel and now Florida. His granddaughter had been an active member of our community. We approached him, asking him to educate and share his story and experiences.

As Holocaust denial and antisemitism fester, and the number of survivors dwindles, the importance of such an encounter cannot be overstated. Mr. Abraham's poignant, tragic and inspiring story touched the audience deeply; reminding each of us to stand strong against hate and be a force for positive change; a shining tribute to the resilience of the Jewish people and human spirit.



A number of university groups and departments were proud to co-sponsor and the event was widely publicized throughout the university and town. More than 300 people watched on Zoom, and 2000 people have watched the playback since.

Your gifts made this unique and powerful event possible.

You Infused Greek Life with Jewish Pride

Frats are where a lot of identity formation and good times happen. For Jewish men at Elon, you made Jewish identity become a vital part of their Greek experience. In a historic first, AEPi, the national Jewish fraternity organization, was given a house on the campus mere months after their chartering. A parent reached out to Chabad, asking us to help infuse the home with Jewish content. The brothers were proud to have a mezuzah affixed to their new home's



front door, a visible symbol of Jewish identity. We celebrated their house's inauguration into the Greek community with a Covid-safe, tefillin wrap and pre-Rosh Hashanah shofar blowing, complete with masks and sanitizer.

You made this happen! The university's coming of age to support Jewish students in their own fraternity is a huge milestone. And your support lets us be there, helping these young men build and deepen their Jewish connection in a fun and meaningful way!

You Helped Rachel* Keep Kosher

The university scrambled to safely accommodate and quarantine students with Covid. They housed them in an off-campus hotel and provided generic meal packages. With staff maxed out in formulating emergency logistics, it was difficult for them to provide individual accommodations.

Rachel*'s mom called us in a panic. Rachel had committed



to a kosher diet, and was completely isolated ... and hungry! The university fare wasn't a choice for her.

Your support and gifts make sure that Rachel and all the Jewish students at Elon have what they need for a robust Jewish college experience - even during a pandemic!

**For privacy reasons, "Rachel" is not her real name, and the picture in this article is not of "Rachel".*

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