



The AVI CHAI Foundation

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2008 AVI CHAI Fellows Announced

AVI CHAI Fellowships Announced FIRST AVI CHAI FELLOWS INTRODUCED TODAY At a Press Conference at Foundation Offices in NYC Recipients Awarded Fellowships of \$225K Over 3 Years Foundation Commits \$3 Million to Launch Program Fellowship is Investment in Emerging Jewish Leadership

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New York, NY (May 12, 2008) -- The recipients of the new **AVI CHAI Fellowship** were introduced today at a 2:30 pm press conference in New York City at the offices of The AVI CHAI Foundation at 1015 Park Avenue, at the corner of 85th Street (entrance on 85th Street).

Last week, the AVI CHAI Foundation announced that it is allocating up to \$1.15 million over the course of the next three years to four individuals and one team of two whom it has selected as the first recipients of The AVI CHAI Fellowship. Today, the identities of the six Fellows were revealed and press had the opportunity to meet with them and hear from foundation leadership about the new fellowship.

The first AVI CHAI Fellows are:

- **Ariel Beery**
- **Aharon Horwitz**
- **Dr. Betsy Dolgin Katz**
- **Rabbi Elie Kaunfer**
- **Rabbi Dov Linzer**
- **Rabbi Menachem Schmidt**

[Click here for their bios](#)

Mr. Beery and Mr. Horwitz are collaborating on a joint project and will be sharing a single fellowship.

The AVI CHAI Fellowship is unique and constitutes the largest cash award to emerging communal and educational leaders within the North American Jewish community. It has been approved for three award cycles with a financial commitment of approximately \$3 million.

The recipients of the AVI CHAI Fellowship were selected from an initial pool of more than 40 nominations that were submitted by twenty nominators (18 located in the United States and 2 in Israel). The seven members of the selection committee met privately over the course of four months. During this time, The AVI CHAI Fellowship was kept under wraps and the nominators and selections committee remained anonymous so that the integrity of the nomination and selection process not be compromised.

Only when the pool was winnowed down to seven nominees was their involvement solicited. The winners were informed of their achievement in late April.

The AVI CHAI Foundation occupies a singular spot in North American Jewish life, defining its goals as fostering high levels of Jewish Literacy; deepening Religious Purposefulness and promoting Jewish Peoplehood and deeper connections to the State of Israel.

AVI CHAI works toward achieving these goals via (1) supporting programs in the Jewish day school and camping fields, (2) strengthening key institutions in these fields, and (3) engaging partners and successors. "By engaging partners and successors," explains Yossi Prager, AVI CHAI's Executive Director in North America, "we mean identifying and cultivating philanthropists, thought leaders and practitioners who advance our core goals, within and beyond the fields of our programmatic activities."

This is an especially important strategy of the Foundation in light of its decision to spend down its assets and close its doors by 2020.

"Although the Foundation will cease making grants in 2020," explains Arthur Fried, AVI CHAI's Chairman, "its work will be far from completed, for the challenges that confront the Jewish communities where we work are perpetual. It is our desire that the work not end -- rather that it be continued by others, who perhaps will be animated by what we have started, and by the standards we have tried to set."

"The AVI CHAI Fellowship is intended to be a vehicle for investing in people with vision, creativity, courage, savvy and stamina to try new things, to think outside the conventional boxes or inside them in new ways, and to see opportunities where others see obstacles," he added.

Each of the AVI CHAI Fellows has demonstrated a track record of commitment towards these ends and although the award - \$75K per fellow or team per year - will go towards their proposed activities, the purpose of The AVI CHAI Fellowship is to advance and promote the individual winners as important forces in building a vital American Jewish future built upon these values.

The fellowship program has been approved for three consecutive award cycles, with the possibility of renewal.

For further information about the first AVI CHAI Fellows, please contact Shira Dicker at 917.403.3989 or by email at shira.dicker@sd-media.com.

ABOUT THE AVI CHAI FOUNDATION:

The AVI CHAI Foundation, endowed by Zalman C. Bernstein, z"l, is a private foundation operating in Israel, North America and the former Soviet Union that is committed to the perpetuation of the Jewish people, Judaism and the centrality of the State of Israel to the Jewish people.

In North America, through its work in Jewish day schools and overnight summer camps, AVI CHAI seeks to achieve its mission by fostering high levels of Jewish literacy, deepening religious purposefulness, and promoting Jewish Peoplehood and deeper connections to the State of Israel.