

עשרת ימי התשובה, ו' תשרי, תש"ס
16 September 1999

Ms. Elana Sassower
c/o Congregation Anshe Chesed
251 West 100th Street
New York, NY 10015
U.S.A.

Dear Elana,

I cannot begin to tell you how pleased and gratified I am that the Anshe Chesed community is showing you a special honor in recognition of the many years you have served God, Torah, and the People of Israel by leading the most wonderful Children's Tefilla on the face of the planet. For the past decade and more that you have led the services, you have immediately touched the souls and lives of scores and scores of children and families. Your impact, however, does not stop there. The effects on the souls of the children and parents you have helped shape go on and on. They will continue to help bring about *tikkun olam* for ages to come, as these souls touch others, and so forth. You know that, in my view and in the view of others, you have been tirelessly engaged in doing the most sacred work there is.

I cannot begin to tell you how proud I am, to have had the privilege of introducing you to the Anshe Chesed Children's Tefilla, to have worked together with you, and to have observed up close and steadily how you have applied your pedagogical talents and skills and your extraordinary energy and spirit toward making Shabbat and Festival mornings a new, exciting, and meaningful experience for a group of children and adults. For years, when we were living on the West Side, your Tefilla was the minyan in which I myself felt most spiritually nourished.

You are surely familiar with the rabbinic saying, *mikkol melammedai hiskalti, umittalmidai mikkullam*, "From all who have taught me have I grown wiser, but from my students most of all." Having taught hundreds of students of all ages for over three decades now, I am afraid that I find our sages' adage to be something of an exaggeration. But you are truly the most outstanding exception to my cynical view. I have learned from you far far more about teaching children, about bringing Torah alive, and about holding to one's idealism than I have from anyone else.

I have been leading a somewhat different Children's Tefilla for almost a year now in our minyan in Yerushalayim. Each week, as I prepare to lead it, I think of you and the high standard we can only dream of emulating. You have a standing invitation to lead a Tefilla for Yerushalayim's children, whenever you're ready. Meanwhile, may God continue to give you the strength to keep leading the Anshe Chesed Children's Tefilla, for as long as there are children at Anshe Chesed. (And may the Jewish educators in our midst have the wisdom to have their students train with you.)

Sorry I can't be there for the celebration, but I will be joining you for davening before too long.

Bivrakha rabba uvehibba,

ש. פ.

Ed

Ed Greenstein
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