

FROM THE EDITOR

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Mazel tov to Martyn Samuels and the entire *Jewish Life* team on the occasion of the 100th issue of the magazine. In honour of this very special event, turn to page 50 and read all about how the magazine came to be. It's an incredible testament to how one man's dream can wind up influencing an entire community for the better. I am truly blessed to work with this incredibly talented and hard-working team of professionals. May the magazine, and the wonderful team behind it, go from strength to strength – here's to another amazing 100 issues!

There's a post that recently went viral from a New Jersey father, Bob Cornelius, about his 11-year-old son, Christopher. While visiting his son's school, Bob noticed a page of questions (see photo inset) that his

son had been asked to answer. Next to the question: "Some of my friends are," Christopher had answered: "No one". Although this wasn't news to Bob, it was the first time that he had seen it "put down on paper" and it pained him deeply to see it. Bob recalled how Christopher, having seen his brothers host many sleepovers over the years, would periodically ask if he could host one too, but there was just one problem: there wasn't anyone to invite. That's because Christopher, who has autism, has "never had a 'real' friend" in his life. Bob doesn't point fingers of blame at anyone, making it clear that Christopher's classmates have "never been overtly cruel to him", that Christopher's "challenges make it difficult for his peers to include him", and that, unfortunately, children are just "not taught to embrace and accept the differences of others". Bob doesn't pretend to have an answer to the situation: "The reality is that I have to rely on the compassion of others to be incredibly understanding in order just to sit next to him, attempt to engage him, and make him feel included...Because even though he can't say it, he wants to be included."

Don't we all? And it's not just those who are different in some way, like Christopher, who can end up getting excluded, overlooked, and shut out, but it can happen to any of us.

Consider, for example, Shabbos, a wonderful time for family and friends to spend time together, but, for many, especially here in South Africa, Shabbos can be an incredibly lonely and even painful time each week. Whatever the reason – single, divorced, loss of loved ones, friends and family who emigrated – many people are left without a place to go each Shabbos and would gladly welcome an invitation, and a chance to enjoy a hot, home-cooked meal in the company of others. Maybe we can add a new twist to the Shabbos Project this year: making an extra special effort to take note of all of those around us and invite someone whom we've never had at our Shabbos table before – and with shul attendance on the decline, we'll have to keep an eye out in the many places we find ourselves each week.

What could make things even better would be to follow-up that first invitation with another one afterwards, an open invitation, giving people a real sense that their company is not only desired, but expected, letting them know that they always have a place at our table. And you'll find there's a big difference between saying, "You're welcome to join us again next week", and saying, "We'll expect you next week. If, for whatever reason, you can't make it, you can let us know". Try it for yourself. While the first statement will generally get a response akin to, "Thank you, that's very nice of you, but I wouldn't want to put you out (or be a burden or wear out my welcome)", the second statement will usually get a response along the lines of, "Thank you, that's very nice of you. What time should I be there?"

Every Jew deserves a Shabbos table that he can call home, even if it's not in his own home. May we find a place for everyone at our table – and may no one get left out!

ROBERT SUSSMAN, EDITOR

The Inside Scoop
Fascinating Facts About Yours Truly!

I am 11 years old. I am in 5th grade.

My teacher is Ms Feld

The members of my family are Dad, Mom, Michael, Anastasia, and I

Some of my friends are No one

My favorite food is Pizza

My favorite sport is occer

My favorite TV show is Simps

My favorite song is Bob Dylan

My favorite school activity is Trape

When I grow up I want to be Teacher

The nickname I'd choose for myself is Christopher



ON THE COVER: IN HONOUR OF JEWISH LIFE'S 100TH ISSUE, WE PRESENT A COLLAGE OF PAST MAGAZINE COVERS. CAN YOU SPOT ANY COVERS THAT ARE MISSING?