

Around the LOCAL NEWS Community

Do You Have What It Takes To Change A Life?

iPads, iPhones, texts, and tweets... today's modern matchmaker is a far cry from the days of "Yenta" from "Fiddler on the Roof." Mrs. Mindy Eisenman, the bubbly, warm Staff Connector of YUConnects is a case in point. "My cell phone lets me make matches morning, noon and midnight!" Mindy jokes, as she is perpetually looking to offer suggestions, counsel couples, and work online to set up meetings. Not only does the current generation of matchmakers have amazing people skills, but they are enabled by high-tech tools and databases that allow continuous possibilities for those seeking their guidance.

"Being a matchmaker is the most rewarding profession possible," states Mindy. "It is amazing how many people approach me and want to join the ranks of our volunteer matchmakers (also called 'connectors') but many don't know what it entails."

YUConnects, Yeshiva University's Center for the Jewish Future's premier social and matchmaking program was started in 2008 and recently celebrated its 100th engagement milestone. Now open to the entire community, YUConnects 2,000 members and their matchmakers have access to the 30,000 Orthodox singles which comprise SawYouAtSinai's state-of-the-art database. Hundreds of dates are made each week and YUConnects is at the forefront of changing the dating scene by offering unique 10 - 12 comfortable social events per year, compiling empirical research on relationship trends and by presenting educational forums and workshops to the general community.

"The heart of our organization is clearly our dedicated cadre of volunteer connectors," says Dr. Efrat Sobolofsky, Director of YUConnects. "These 80 men and women develop a personal relationship with our members and devote an extraordinary amount of their spare time making appropriate suggestions." YUConnects offers special instructional courses, videos and conference calls for their matchmakers. "We are like one

family," continues Dr. Sobolofsky, "and each connector regales in the wonderful news of every new match—whether it was made by them or another."

So, what DOES it take to be a suc-



YUConnects "Meet the Connector" night on campus.

cessful matchmaker? What attributes are necessary to be part of this "dream team of mitzvot"? YUConnects staff is often on the lookout for that capable individual and has compiled a list of top traits that the caring connector should possess:

A CONNECTOR SELECTOR: "Ten Qualities Matchmakers Must Have"

· FRIENDLY AND OUTGOING: A Connector should be a real "people person." They often call people they don't know—singles, parents or references. Warm and affable personalities make everyone comfortable; the best matchmakers truly become friends and make deep relationships.

· SENSITIVE: Singles should be valued as accomplished individuals and not looked at in a "preachy" way or with a know-it-all attitude.

· TIME COMMITMENT: This is essential. YUConnects requires each connector to commit to 6 hours a week to adequately meet the needs of their members. People count on their match-

makers and the time needed is enormous. Not only do matchmakers "simply" make suggestions, but they often counsel and support the young couple right until their engagement or beyond.

· MONEY IS NOT AN ISSUE: Please don't "volunteer" relying on "shadchanus." When engagements are made, appreciative members and their families recognize their appreciation and "hakarot hatov" to connectors with monetary gifts for their hard work and dedication. But no set fees are mandated or charged. Chesed and building future homes are the ultimate rewards

· ALTRUISTIC: Please don't sign up to search simply for a relative. That makes a connector focused on a narrow goal. The best connectors are there to help for the greater good and not with any "ulterior motives."

· MARRIED and MATURE: You don't have to be a "senior," but experience shows that better matchmakers are more established in their own marriage.

· TECHNOLOGICALLY COMPETENT: YUConnects provides a state-of-the-art matchmaking website. Training is provided but matchmakers should be comfortable with emails and computers.

· UPBEAT: You are the best cheerleader for your members. Positive attitudes and friendly support are requirements.

· THICK SKINNED: Discouragement is not an option. Many suggestions made by matchmakers are ignored and it is natural that only a small percentage of people get married. Great matchmakers keep plugging away...

· CAN KEEP A SECRET: Confidentiality is key. YUConnects prides itself on the professionalism of their volunteer matchmakers; therefore, discretion and privacy concerns are paramount. Our connectors know they must never reveal who their members are or what matches are being made.

our team and starts to make wonderful matches, we at YUConnects take pride in "striking gold"—having found that exemplary individual who possess the necessary qualities plus more." Dr. Sobolofsky happily concurs. "The best matchmakers become amazingly devoted—working several hours of the day and night to make the ultimate impact on someone's life."

Kol Hakavod to them and to all working on this vital mitzvah!

YUConnects is offering a local Connector Training Session in the Five Towns on Monday, September 10th for those who want to join the team. Potential "connectors" are encouraged to apply and be pre-screened. Limited spots are available for those who indeed "have what it takes!"

To find out more and fill out an application, call Tova Klapper at YUConnects by the end of August at 212-960-5400 X 6163 or email yuconnects@yu.edu.