Campers at Machaneh Hakayitz had a ball in camp this week

Five Towns Friendly

The Three Weeks is a period of introspection, a time when we focus on mending broken relationships. It's a time when we increase our love towards our fellow Jew, hoping to engender more love, respect, and admiration for our brothers and sisters so we can help to rebuild the Beis HaMikdash that was destroyed due to animosity and hatred. During these three weeks, we connect with one another and become closer to each other.

But why should that love and respect towards others end with the fast of Tisha B'Av? Why can't we carry those warm feelings and relationships into the next few weeks – or even months?

Living in the Five Towns, we are fortunate to enjoy "small town" living on a large scale. The pace of life here is more relaxed than in other large frum communities. We share closer relationships with our neighbors than people living in other areas. We know our mailmen; we wave to those who pick up our garbage; the UPS deliveryman greets us when we see him on the street.

This month, the JWLC (Jewish Women's Leadership Council of the Five Towns) presents a community-wide program called "Five Towns Friendly." The idea behind the initiative is to maintain the attitude of achdus and connection that we focus on during the Three Weeks.

In this program, community members are reminded to go out of their way to be "Five Towns Friendly."

The program is simple yet profound. With small acts of connection towards others, we are creating closer and closer bonds with our neighbors and community members. These connections can be made with those you know well, those you may recognize from seeing on the street, or with community members whom you've never met. Either way, the goal is the same: bring an unexpected smile and joy to someone you meet!

To make this program more exciting, JWLC is encouraging community members to share their "Five Towns Friendly" moments. Send in a photo of you and the "new friend" you've just met or share your "Five Towns Friendly" experience with us. Email photos and/or experiences to *fivetownsfriendly@gmail.com*. (They may be featured in *TJH* or on our website, so stay tuned!) All submissions will be entered into a raffle for $100 at your favorite local store.

Here are some ideas of how to be "Five Towns Friendly" (although we're sure you will come up with so many on your own!):

• Have an extra bag after you checked out at the supermarket? Give it to the person behind you!

• See someone you know at a bus stop? Ask if you can give them a ride along your way.

• Thank your waitress – and ask her for her name!

• Let the car waiting to merge or turn go in front of you.

• Invite a new neighbor for a Shabbos meal.

• Neighbor going on vacation? Ask them if you can bring in their packages.

• Introduce yourself to a new person in shul.

• Tell your neighbors you're going shopping. Can you pick something up for them?

• Text someone whom you haven't spoken with in a while.

• Buy lemonade from the neighborhood stand.

• Stop and say hello to an elderly person sitting on the park bench.

The list is endless, and it all starts with you!

Become part of the "Five Towns Friendly" program, and remember to share your experiences with us! Fivetownsfriendly@gmail.com. Look for our table at the Sidewalk Sale and receive a free "Five Towns Friendly" bumper sticker.

To learn more about JWLC, visit www.JWLC5T.org.