

It was Magic ...

By Roann Altman

From start to finish. From the moment we entered the lobby of the Illinois Beach Resort and Conference Center to the time we said our good-byes at noon on Sunday. The hugs, the smiles, the warmth of friendship. Everyone focused on bringing balance to our lives with sessions by our Kallah faculty—Micha Berger, Avi Fertig, Alan Morinis, Chaim Safren, Pam Wax, Efrat Zarren-Zohar and others—on holiness, awareness, silence, and equanimity.



Kallah XIII participants from the U.S., Canada, and the Netherlands (from l. to r.: Steve Kraus, Marga Vogel, Judy Shriar, Bonnie Pastor, Henri Vogel)

After a day of learning with opportunities for body movement and walks along the shores of beautiful Lake Michigan, we celebrated Shabbat together in community, with the energy leading us into dance. Shabbat morning services in each of the two *minyanim* were equally uplifting and inspiring, giving us a true sense of what it means to pray in a Mussar community, where everyone is walking the same path.

Anticipation was in the air as the Saturday evening networking event began, but once the conversations were under way, the creative juices started flowing and the wealth of ideas generated was enormous. But more than ideas, what was palpable was the energy and the connections between people.

Sunday morning we heard from members of The Mussar Institute's board and from several people for whom Mussar has made a huge difference in their lives. This wisdom would not have come to us now if not for the dedication of Alan Morinis, Dean of The Mussar Institute (TMI), who has translated this wisdom into a form that we can hear and understand.

Connections were also formed among the facilitators, who had special sessions designed just for them. What a great opportunity to share with fellow facilitators and improve on the earlier training acquired through *Manchim*.

Now, I have never done this before, but I believe so much in the work that TMI is doing that I am stepping out of my comfort zone and asking you to step up to help us in our efforts. The group responsible for overseeing all of TMI's events is the Board of Directors. The work they are doing to share the wisdom of Mussar would not be possible without contributions from generous donors. If you have been positively impacted by your study and practice of Mussar or if you wish to honor someone who is very involved with this work, then I invite you to take a couple of easy steps. Not only will you be helping TMI do its holy work, but you will be working on your own soul traits of generosity and gratitude, to name just two.

First, since you are receiving this issue of Yashar today on December 1—[#GivingTuesday](#)— please, right now, [make a contribution of \\$36](#) toward the development of a Mussar program for teens. The sooner we start programs in Mussar, the greater the impact will be over the long term. And don't forget to have a friend contribute \$36 as well.

Then, if you attended the Kallah and are not yet a member of TMI, please [become a member](#). As you consider the membership categories, please look deeply into the benefits you have received from this study. Can you have your Generosity match your Gratitude? And if you did not attend the Kallah this year but are reading this and are not yet a member—please take this as an invitation to join now.

If you are already a member of TMI, congratulations! The question now is whether you are willing to up your membership level. Perhaps you now realize how valuable Mussar is and how much you would like to give back to TMI to help others get started on the path.

Please note: For those of you who were not able to join us at the Kallah this year—we missed you. We hope you will be able to join us next year for the Kallah, which is changing venues. Kallah XIV will be held **December 1–4** at the beautiful Capital Camp and Retreat Center north of the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area. *Save the date and stay tuned for details.*