

Staten Island Advance



One design of the new Heritage Advantage VISA card shows men praying at the Western Wall.

New credit card raises money for Israel charities

By **LESLIE PALMA-SIMONCEK**
STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE

Zalman Indig describes it as a "no-lose situation" for his Staten Island-based charity, All4Israel.

The charity that provides direct financial help for the families of terror victims is one of about a dozen that will benefit from a credit card issued last week to raise money for Israel.

U.S. Bank and Heritage Affinity Services' new VISA card, being marketed to Jewish and evangelical Christian communities, will reward cardholders with points for dollars spent, and also will donate a portion of each purchase to up to five Israeli charities that are linked to the card.

"It's going to be a while, but we'll hopefully get some money from this," said Indig, a Willowbrook resident.

The card was the brainchild of Menachem Landau and Zeb Dobuler, who met in Israel after making aliyah as teenagers. Landau said Heritage Affinity Services, based in Cedarhurst, L.I., is the first company to offer a credit card that supports Israel.

"It's the first ever and the response has been tremendous," Landau said. Several hundred people already have signed up for the card and a media blitz is under way.

Card members will earn one point for every dollar spent. Points can be redeemed for miles on EL AL Airlines, domestic and international travel rewards, brand-name merchandise, gift certificates and Judaica.

Additionally, a small percentage of the fee that U.S. Bank charges merchants for each transaction will go to charities that raise funds for Israel-related causes.

So far there are 13 charities linked to the card, with more promised in the future. Cardholders may designate up to five charities to receive money from their accounts.

The card comes in four varieties. One pictures men praying at the Western Wall. Another shows the the American and Israeli flags as one; a third features a Star of David, and a fourth shows just the rays of the sun. Landau described the latter as the "non-denominational design."

He said he and his partner are hopeful that Jews across the religious and secular spectrum will sign up for the card because it supports the one cause — Israel — that most unifies the community.

"The card is an easy way for the Jewish communities to support Israel," said Dobuler.

"The HAS philosophy is to keep the Jewish community connected to Israel every day, without changing their daily routine," Landau added.

The fee-free card also is being marketed to evangelical communities because of that group's "very staunch support of Israel."

For information on the card, call Heritage Affinity Services at (516) 295-7600, or visit the Web site at www.hasadvantage.com.

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Partner organizations

With the new HAS Advantage VISA, cardholders can designate up to five charities to receive a small percentage of the money they spend on the card. These are the charities that are part of the new venture, with more expected to come on board in the future:

A TIME

A not-for-profit organization that provides information and support to couples experiencing infertility.

Aleh Foundation

Helps support Aleh Israel, which provides advanced medical care, therapy and special education services to children with severe developmental disabilities.

All4Israel

Provides direct financial aid to hundreds of terror victims and their families.

American Friends of Herzog Hospital

Supports Herzog Hospital in Jerusalem, which treats geriatric and psychiatric patients.

American Friends of Laniado Hospital

Supports the only hospital in Netanya, which serves a population of over 250,000.

Chabad's Children of Chernobyl

Provides evacuation and medical care for children affected by radiation from the 1986 Chernobyl disaster.

Gush Etzion Foundation

Supports the Gush Etzion community and works to raise public awareness about the history and heritage of the region.

Honest Reporting

Monitors the media to expose anti-Israel bias.

Jewish National Fund

Raises funds to develop 25 new communities in Israel's southern desert region.

Just One Life

Provides counseling and financial support for pregnant women in Israel who are contemplating terminating their pregnancies.

Meir Panim

Raises funds to improve the lives of Israelis living in poverty.

One Family Fund

Provides assistance to the more than 2,500 families affected by terrorism.

The Children's Brigade of Zichron Menachem

Raises funds to ease the suffering of pediatric cancer patients and their families.

SOURCE: Heritage Affinity Services.