

5 TOWNS Jewish Times

\$1.00

WWW.5TJT.COM

VOL. 6 NO. 9 16 CHESHVAN 5766 NOVEMBER 18, 2005

Charging For Charity

BY ARYE NISONSON

Starting this month, the community can show their support for Israel while shopping at supermarkets, dining at restaurants, filling gas tanks or purchasing Chanukah presents.

Heritage Affinity Services, founded in 2003 in Cedarhurst by Zev Dobuler and Menachem Landau, have just launched the first-ever Visa® Platinum credit card in support of Israel. HAS Advantage, issued by U.S. Bank headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota, officially launched this September. HAS, together with U.S. Bank turn every purchase made by a card member into an effortless and rewarding charitable experience by donating a percentage (of each purchase) to an Israel-related charitable organization of your choice.

HAS Advantage card members can support up to five Israel-related charitable organizations within the HAS network, which includes hospitals, social service agencies, humanitarian causes, emergency services and community development programs in Israel. Some of the current charities include the Jewish National Fund (JNF), Children of Chernobyl, One Family Fund, Meir Panim and many more. HAS is currently expanding the list of charities to offer card members the opportunity to support a wide variety of important causes.

At the same time, HAS Advantage card members earn one HAS Advantage point per dollar spent. HAS has partnered with EL AL Airlines, the Dan and Sheraton Hotels and car rental companies, Avis and Budget in Israel, to encourage card members to redeem points for Israeli travel. In addition, HAS offers a very competitive rewards program, including the option for card members to redeem points for domestic travel on any airline, as well as brand-name merchandise, electronics, Judaica, gift certificates and more.

The HAS Advantage card is the first of its kind to benefit Israel by supporting Israeli charities, boosting tourism and encouraging spending in Israel—while simultaneously accumulating benefits for the cardholder.

"We're thrilled to partner with an organization as highly-regarded and respected as Heritage Affinity Services," said Tanya Turner, Senior Vice President of affinity products at U.S. Bank. "We are confident that this partnership will result in valuable returns for HAS and its members, and we look forward to the new opportunities that this relationship will provide in the future."

Landau, from Toronto, Canada and Dobuler, from the Five Towns area, both made *aliyah* with their families at a young age. They met in a youth group in Israel which helped American teen *olim* adjust to their new lives in Israel. Both served 3 years in the Israel Defense Force and have a deep connection and commitment towards Israel. While Dobuler and Landau are proud citizens of the State of Israel, it was clear that they would need to be "on location" in the U.S. at least in the initial years of the program. Dobuler and Landau

decided that there was no better community to begin the journey with, than a community connected and constantly showing their support to Israel. "The numerous activities held locally, from school trips, rallies, dinners, raffles and other wonderful programs in support of Israel make the Five Towns the best and most obvious place to lay the foundations of HAS," says Dobuler.

HAS divides its support of Israel into three main categories—charitable giving, promotion of tourism and purchasing of 'Blue and White' products. "This is the HAS philosophy of supporting Israel and this is what we focus on," says Landau. The HAS Advantage card is the first affinity credit card of its kind that targets Israeli charities while promoting Israeli investment and tourism.

The co-CEOs have been invited numerous times to the Knesset, the Israeli Parliament, to meet with political leaders to introduce them to the Heritage Affinity Services program. They have successfully secured the official endorsement of the Israeli Ministry of Tourism.

The HAS vision and long-term plan includes partnering with Israeli companies to encourage the purchase of

Israeli products and to assist Israel's economy. "HAS looks to make it as easy as possible to keep the Jewish community connected to Israel, by boosting the Israeli economy and support of the people of Israel, all while making it rewarding for each card member." Karin Dimant, Chief Marketing Officer at HAS. "We want to help make an everyday difference for Israel and the Jewish community," says Dobuler.

In addition, HAS plans to roll out its "Partners in Solidarity Network" in mid 2006. The Network will include hundreds of partner merchants including jewelry stores, restaurants and museums in the United States and in Israel. When shopping in the Network, cardholders will receive discounts and double points. An added benefit to partner organizations is that they receive double donations when a card member frequents at these locations. "We encourage our card members to support local merchants and we encourage local merchants to support our card members with discounts and double points for their efforts," states Barry Goldgrab, Chief Financial Officer at HAS.

In the coming weeks, the HAS marketing team will "take to the streets" of the Five Towns, and other surrounding neighborhoods. From representatives at supermarkets to brochures in local restaurants—HAS is determined to make a major push in the area that it calls a home away from home.

HAS invested the past three years to develop a very comprehensive and unique credit card platform "It is essential that our rewards program is not only comparable to any credit card, but exceeds its value with the unique redemption opportunities and charitable component," said Landau. The HAS philosophy is to keep the Jewish community connected to Israel every day, without changing their daily routine. ♦



Menachem Landau and Zev Dobuler of the Heritage Affinity Card. See Page 29