

# The Suburban

## 'Recovery saves lives!'

*Message delivered at grand opening of Chabad Lifeline's new home*

The Suburban staff

Last Thursday evening, April 19, more than 230 invited guests attended the grand opening of the Chabad Lifeline house at 4615 Côte Ste. Catherine Rd.

Formerly known as Project Pride, Chabad Lifeline is a non-sectarian organization that has been dedicated since 1989 to helping adults suffering from various substance and behavioural addictions and with the people affected, including friends and family members.

Though the move from its Queen Mary Rd. location took place in December, they decided to make it official with a touching event, organized and hosted by Heleena and Eddie Wiltzer.

After a brief introduction from founder and executive director Rabbi Ronnie Fine, followed by Chabad Lifeline director Rabbi Benyamin Bresinger, many of the guests were brought to tears hearing heartfelt testimonials from two former addicts who said they owed their lives to the organization.

The first to speak was Cindy, who told the audience how, abandoned as a baby and raised in foster care, she never really felt that she belonged. "Cindy said she was always feeling so uncomfortable with herself and with her life that she felt she could never really breathe properly — like she was always having a hard time catching her breath in an emotional sense," said Rabbi Bresinger.

By age 12, Cindy found comfort in alcohol and by 17 was a full-fledged alcoholic. She said she was ready to commit suicide when she happened upon the organization. "She was in a real bad place," said Rabbi Bresinger. "She found us six years ago and spent a lot of time here, which she described as a safe haven, a haven where there's no judgement and that is welcoming to everybody."

Now in her mid 30s, Cindy is a caring single mother of a well-adjusted five-year-old child. "She said now she can give to her child what she needed, which is a safe and stable home. She attributes her turnaround to the help she got from Lifeline," said Rabbi Bresinger.

The next to speak was Gianni. Also in his



From left: Heleena Wiltzer, Lilian Vineberg, Eddie Wiltzer, Rabbi Benyamin Bresinger, Rabbi Ronnie Fine, and artist Haim Sherrf.

mid 30s, Gianni recounted how he randomly called Chabad Lifeline out of the phonebook three years ago as a way to say goodbye to someone before he took his own life.

Since the age of 12, he had been abusing prescription drugs that he would steal with his older brother. The pair quickly advanced to harder, more addictive drugs and by the time he was 25 — in and out of jail and married with children — he was ready to end it all but had no one left to talk to.

Gianni has been clean for three years now, working very hard in a landscaping company. He is a father to his children though he and his wife are separated. His Italian mates are confused when he gets a call at work from Rabbi Bresinger checking up on him, but he has found a guardian angel who took him in, got him into rehab, and allowed him to become a positive member of society. He only laments his older brother wasn't able to do the same — his brother passed away from an overdose.

The evening concluded with a tribute to Stephen Vineberg, who just recently passed

away. Mr. Vineberg has been a long and generous supporter of first Project Pride and then Lifeline. His son explained how his father identified Rabbi Fine as a great man who would impact the lives of many. From that early encounter, Rabbi Fine recounted how Mr. Vineberg was always there to lend advice, financial support and anything else that was asked of him.

"There is a solution, recovery is possible, a recovery that can make life for the addict, their family and everyone they touch and influence immeasurably better. Recovery saves lives! Chabad Lifeline has a proven track record of the solution in action," said Rabbi Bresinger.

*If you need help for an addiction, Chabad Lifeline could help you. Call 514-738-7700, visit [www.chabadlifeline.com](http://www.chabadlifeline.com), or drop by the centre at 4615 Côte Ste. Catherine Rd. If you would like to help in the wonderful work they do at Chabad Lifeline, you can send your donations to (tax receipts available) to Chabad Lifeline, 4615 Côte Ste. Catherine Rd., Montreal, QC, H3W 1M1.*