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## TRT Cares helps people deal with tough times

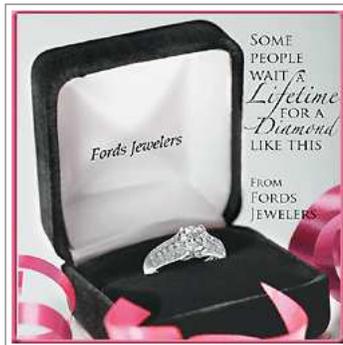
Volunteers offer assistance as individuals struggle with changing fortunes  
**BY REBECCA MORTON Staff Writer**

MARLBORO — With many people facing financial difficulties and coping with the stress of the economic recession, representatives of Temple Rodeph Torah put out a call for volunteers to form a new program that will be focused on providing help.

TRT Cares is a pilot program launched by volunteers to provide professional assistance to members of the community. The group's goal will be to advise and support people who have been affected financially or emotionally by the difficult economic climate.

Seeing the turn the economy was taking and the way congregants and area residents were being affected by those developments, Rabbi Donald Weber addressed the community during Rosh Hashanah and asked for volunteers to step forward and offer their expertise to those in need.

Weber said the response he received following his sermon has been overwhelming, with more than 120 volunteers stepping forward to offer their assistance.



Professionals are offering their time and services to help the community in legal matters; financial areas, including taxes, accounting and financial advice; real estate; career counseling and forming a job bank; and health experts to address stress related issues. Weber said the volunteers signed a form which states that they will not profit commercially by accepting as future clients those individuals who are being helped now.

When a meeting was held to organize TRT Cares, David Levy, a longtime member of Temple Rodeph Torah, stepped forward to act as the organization's chairman.

"This seemed like a great way to give back to the community," Levy said.

With no blueprint to follow, Levy said the professional volunteers have been divided into areas of expertise. Each subgroup has between six and 18 volunteers, he reported. Volunteers come from within the Temple Rodeph Torah congregation and from outside the community. Levy said the volunteers are unified by a desire to help.

"People often sit on the sidelines not knowing what they can do to help," Levy said, noting this is a different way to help instead of donating money to an organization.

It is not only professionals who have volunteered their time to the cause. The TRT Cares chairman said community members have come forward to answer telephones and were trained how to keep the calls confidential while redirecting the individual who was seeking help to the person who could best provide assistance.

The program is free and confidential to those who need assistance. Weber said TRT Cares is available to everyone and is nondenominational.

"People have questions and we have experts who can answer them," the rabbi said.

Levy said that at the moment the group has been focusing its efforts to help people in the local area, but he

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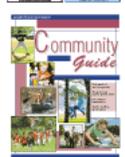
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said anyone from a surrounding county who learns about the program would be welcomed.

Though still in its infancy, the TRT Cares program has already helped ease one couple's stress this holiday season. Levy could not provide many details since the services are confidential, but he did report that the organization was able to find alternate housing for a couple who were being evicted from their home.

The career services branch of the program is putting together a job listing reference which will be distributed throughout the area.

Weber said he hopes the career services area will help individuals find employment and noted that help can also be provided in writing a resume.

Levy said the health group is planning a seminar of ways to handle the stress that can accompany financial difficulties.

Weber credits Levy for getting the TRT Cares program up and running after taking the lead.

"Without him it wouldn't exist," Weber said. Levy said the initiative inspires two great stories: one of a program that is dedicated to assisting one's neighbor, and another about a group of volunteers who are giving of themselves.

"I am absolutely amazed by the enthusiasm," Levy said of the large group of volunteers.

Anyone who would like to seek out the services of TRT Cares may call 732-320- 8287 for a confidential introduction or they can e-mail the group at [trtcares@gmail.com](mailto:trtcares@gmail.com). Additional volunteers in various areas of expertise are always welcomed by the organization.