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*of Greater Phoenix*



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## Enriching community

### Kollel rabbis attend national convention

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Assistant Editor

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While many Americans celebrated July 4 with barbecues and fireworks, representatives of 17 Jewish communities across the country gathered to discuss ways to strengthen their communities.

Phoenix Community Kollel rabbis and their families joined 130 participants at the first-ever Community Kollel Convention July 4-7 in Denver.

"Over the last 10 years, there has been a proliferation of community kollels, and they seem to be the most effective way to strengthen Jewish communities," says Rabbi Zvi Holland, director of the Phoenix Community Kollel.

"Organizing is a way for us to communicate, learn from each other and pool resources."

Session topics included teaching beginners, balancing the stresses of life with personal growth and building the organization.

Holland says the highlight of the convention was "the presence of leading rabbis and educators," including Rabbi Shmuel Kamenetsky of the Philadelphia Talmudical Academy, Rabbi Shmuel Feurst of Chicago and Rabbi Reuven Leuchter of Jerusalem.

"The best and the brightest in the kollel world representing virtually all western community kollels were present," he says. Communities included Los Angeles, Dallas, Houston, Denver, Seattle, St. Louis, Minneapolis, Atlanta, Cincinnati and Cape Town, South Africa.

Local participants were Holland and wife Sima, Rabbi Raphael and Cindy Landesman, Rabbi Yakov and Esther Bronsteyn and Rabbi Dovid and Shira Goldman. The convention also offered day camp and a babysitting program so both parents could attend sessions, Holland says.



Phoenix Community Kollel rabbis Raphael Landesman, center, and Zvi Holland, right, sit in a session with Rabbi Shmuel Kamenetsky, dean of the Philadelphia Talmudical Academy, during the Community Kollel Convention.

*Photo courtesy of Rabbi Zvi Holland*

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"We discovered a lot of great contemporary, user-friendly educational programs that we hope will enrich our community, especially with our new center in Scottsdale," Holland says.



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