

Published August 24th, 2016

## The Roving Rabbis Take to the Streets to Help Jews Learn About Their Faith

By Pippa Fisher



Rabbi Mendel Weinfeld and Rabbi Mendel Erlenwein. Photo provided

businesses. They spend time talking to commuters outside the BART station and also approach people on the street to ask simply "Are you Jewish?" and then follow up if people are interested in learning more. They are visiting homes too and talking, listening and teaching in a one-on-one, informal situation as they bring their message of goodness and kindness to all.

"We're very relaxed. We're not intimidating at all," said Erlenwein.

"People are searching," said Weinfeld. These two young men hope to reach culturally Jewish people in the area and help them rediscover their heritage. They carry with them and hand out Shabbat candles, kosher foods and mezuzahs - a religious scroll which is placed on the doorway of a Jewish home. For many who have lost touch with their Judaism or who have never been taught about their heritage, this is a welcome opportunity to learn.

When asked how this area compares with other areas that he has taken his message to, Weinfeld notes that Californians are very laid back and ready to talk.

The Roving Rabbis program was started more than 60 years ago and is run by Merkos L'inyonei Chinuch, the educational arm of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement. "We have been empowered by the world leader of the generation, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson," says Weinfeld. Chabad, or Chabad-Lubavitch, is an Orthodox Jewish, Hasidic movement, well-known for its outreach.

Weinfeld and Erlenwein will continue their work in this area until early September. If you would like to contact Rabbis Weinfeld and Erlenwein you can email them at [mendelwein@gmail.com](mailto:mendelwein@gmail.com) or call them on 925-434-1745.

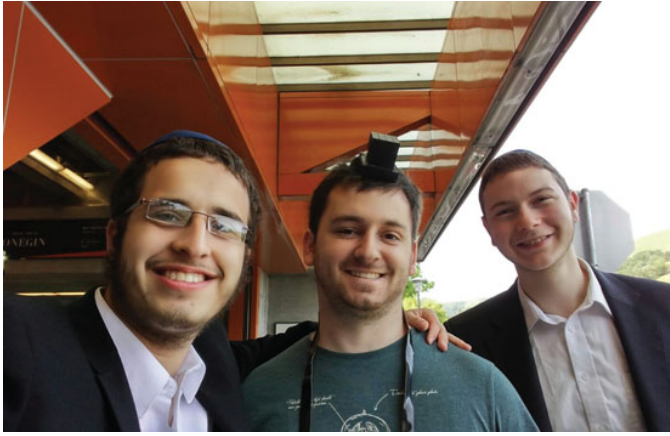
Locally, Rabbi Yisroel Labkowsky has been the director of Chabad in Lamorinda for about a year. He offers Shabbat services and Hebrew school out of his home. No membership fees are charged and

Local residents might have noticed a couple of friendly young men, dressed in wide brimmed black hats and serious black suits, on the streets of Lamorinda over the past week or so.

Rabbi Mendel Weinfeld and Rabbi Mendel Erlenwein are two 19-year old rabbinical students from Brooklyn, N.Y. "People do stop and look at us", said Weinfeld with a smile. But he says that the response of people in this area has been very welcoming and friendly.

As much as their appearance stands out in California, they come across as approachable and open. They are striking up conversations around the community with the intent to ignite a spark among non-affiliated Jewish people in the area. Weinfeld says they have been introducing themselves in restaurants, banks and other

Weinfeld says it is a stimulating and welcoming atmosphere in which to learn about Judaism. If you are interested in finding out more, visit its website at [www.chabadoflamorinda.com](http://www.chabadoflamorinda.com).



The Roving Rabbis are a hit around town. Photo Provided

Reach the reporter at: [info@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:info@lamorindaweekly.com)

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA