

Copy: 2009 Alumnus of the Year

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2009 Akiva Alumnus of the Year: Rabbi Ronald Schwarzberg

Rabbi Ronald Schwarzberg (Akiva '77), director of the *Morris and Gertrude Bienenfeld Department of Jewish Career Development and Placement* at **Yeshiva University's** Center for the Jewish Future, is responsible for the placement and ongoing mentorship of rabbis and Jewish educators in communities throughout North America.

Prior to his position at YU, Schwarzberg served as senior rabbi of Congregation Ahavas Achim in Highland Park, NJ for nearly two decades. During his tenure there, he expanded his congregation into a vibrant community of more than 250 families. He also worked as both Educational Director and Associate Rabbi at the *Hebrew Institute of Riverdale* in Bronx, NY. Rabbi Schwarzberg received ordination from the *Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary of Yeshiva University* and holds a degree from the **Azrieli School of Jewish Education**.

Schwarzberg says he has always made a priority of helping Jewish people beyond the boundaries of his own community. To that end, he was among the first rabbis to lead humanitarian and religious relief missions to the then-Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and Cuba. He has also been a strong advocate for the State of Israel by leading congregational missions there even during the darkest days of the intifada. He proudly served as chairman of the **United Jewish Communities**, working together with rabbis of all denominations and partnering with the **Jewish Federation** to promote the welfare of Jewish communities worldwide. His current position allows him to use his expertise to strengthen the American Jewish Diaspora.

Inspired by his Akiva education, Rabbi Schwarzberg says he was motivated to pursue a career in Jewish communal service; he added that his Jewish education helped imbue a set of leadership skills necessary to pursue his goals.

“I was inspired and transformed by the love of the Jewish people and of Israel that lies at the core of Akiva’s mission and serves as an integral part of the Akiva education,” Rabbi Schwarzberg said.

Rabbi Schwarzberg and his wife Judy, who reside in Highland Park, NJ, are the proud parents of four children, Ari married (Naomi), Elana, Aviva and Shayna. Schwarzberg is also the uncle of

four recent Akiva graduates: Daniel, Rachel, Adam and Noam Greenbaum, children of Marla and Michael Greenbaum.