

Thousands of New York Children Safer Thanks to Magenu

It's been only 10 months since Magenu, the children's safety organization, was launched by a proactive Brooklyn couple determined to protect Jewish children through education. Since then 2,126 children, 374 teachers, and 879 parents in 106 Brooklyn classrooms have been educated by the Magenu "Be Safe!" program and have become empowered with essential safety tools.

"Every child has the right to explore the world without being worried about personal safety," asserts Magenu's director, Shani Verschleiser, AuD, who founded the organization with her husband Eli Verschleiser. "And it is the responsibility of every community to ensure that right."

Magenu's vision for community safe-

ty is broad. In addition to bringing Safety Kid — an award-winning, rabbinically endorsed program lauded for its cultural sensitivity and effectiveness in preventing abuse — to every Jewish school, its plan to heighten general safety awareness in other ways is well under way.

Last month, it unrolled the Magenu Comic Series, an educational series focusing on seasonal safety concerns, which was published in numerous media outlets and available free of charge to schools and shuls.

For Purim, the full-color, professionally designed comic strip highlighted the dangers of underage drinking; for Pesach, the focus was on maintaining safety during Chol Hamoed outings, an important topic for the *frum* community.

"As the summer approaches and daily structure dwindles, the risks multiply tenfold," says Shani. "It is precisely during free, unstructured time that safety is most compromised, whether in the form of a child getting lost in a public place" or other incidents.

Under the direct guidance of Rabbanim, Magenu is determined to bolster awareness of and adherence to basic safety guidelines in the *frum* community.

"Our children are our most valuable assets," says Eli Verschleiser, a Wall Street executive who has taken up Magenu's cause with a passion. "Nothing is foolproof — but as parents and as communities, we have an obligation to empower our children to stay safe."