

New Chabad leadership provides 'home away from home'

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Tulane students Gabby Possess, left, and Jennifer Britt prepare salads for Tulane Chabad's Rosh Hashana dinner on Sept. 13. More than 250 students attended the service and dinner, which was hosted by Tulane Chabad's new directors of undergraduate programming, Rabbi Leibel and Mushka Lipskier. (Photo by Cheryl Gerber)

Rabbi Leibel and Mushka Lipskier have taken over undergraduate programming at the [Rohr Chabad Jewish Student Center](#) at Tulane University and are ready to provide a Jewish-centered “home away from home” for Tulane students.

[The Lipskiers](#) relocated to New Orleans from New York in August, right before the fall semester began. This is their first campus assignment. But less than a month in, they have already hosted Rosh Hashana dinner for more than 250 young adults, gathered members of the Tulane community for weekly home-cooked Shabbat dinners and worked with groups to bake dozens of loaves of challah.

“What we try to do is provide a meaningful and fun way for students to engage” on some level and meet one another, Leibel Lipskier says. “We try to appeal to them in something they appreciate.”

The couple, who have two young sons, have an extensive job description, even serving as mom-and-dad substitutes for students who may be living away from home for the first time.

“There was a freshman girl who was helping me, and she was like, “I love being here. I really feel like Shabbat at home,”” Mushka Lipskier says. “It touched a soft spot for me. This is what we’re here for.”

The Lipskiers say they are on call 24/7 and that they provide their cellphone numbers to students and anxious parents.

But besides on-call parenting, they will use events like discussion groups, women's leadership programs and holiday services to bring the community together without regard to level of religious observance.

“We’re here to provide a Jewish experience,” Leibel says. “Everybody can participate on a level that they feel comfortable.”

The Lipskiers succeed Rabbi Yochanan and Sarah Rivkin, who will now focus on graduate student programming at Tulane Chabad.



Rabbi Leibel and Mushka Lipskier are the new directors of undergraduate programming for Tulane Chabad. They are pictured with their children, Mendel and Levi. (Photo from Rabbi Leibel Lipskier)