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## **Agudath Israel of Ohio's Project Geshher to Embark on a Comprehensive Community Study**

With support from the Mt. Sinai Health Care Foundation,  
Geshher will begin the effort in October 2020

**Cleveland, Ohio:** Geshher, a public resource organization dedicated to helping the Jewish community, today announced that it will embark upon a year-long effort to understand the unique challenges and opportunities of the Orthodox Jewish community in the Greater Cleveland area.

The study will measure the social sustainability of the community - addressing topics related the social health, cohesion, and support systems - through a survey effort, focus groups, and interviews. Every family, organization, and community resource will be reached to ensure a complete picture of the health of the Orthodox Jewish community, as well as its assets and needs. These survey efforts are supported by the Mt. Sinai Health Care Foundation.

“This is an exciting and valuable project that we are embarking upon that will allow us to accurately gauge the true needs of the community.” says Rabbi Avrohom Adler, Geshher’s founder and board member of Agudath Israel of Ohio. “This survey will strategically position us to assist our clients and provide data that will guide our programming for the future.”

“This comprehensive study will help programs and services move upstream so that we can focus on *health before care*,” says Mt. Sinai Health Care Foundation President Mitchell Balk. “As a trusted partner in the Orthodox community, Geshher is well-positioned to thoughtfully capture the community's assets and challenges.”

Through Mt. Sinai support, community members will be trained to host focus groups and interview their neighbors. The effort will be wholly community-centered and supported by community institutions.

“Charity and chessed is a core value in our community and we hope this survey will provide data to our community and leaders that can be used to identify areas of need and underinvestment,” says Rabbi Yitz Frank, the director of Agudath Israel’s Ohio branch. “This effort can serve as a blueprint for communities around the country. We are grateful to the Mt. Sinai Health Care Foundation Board and President Mitch Balk for their continued support and leadership in this area.”

The effort will be guided by academic researcher and previous Cleveland resident, Hannah Lebovits. An Orthodox Jewish wife and mother, Lebovits is an incoming assistant professor at the University of Texas - Arlington.

**About Gesher:** Gesher, the social service arm of Agudath Israel of Ohio, a nonprofit organization, is part of a growing effort across Ohio to cultivate the next generation of Jewish professionals and entrepreneurs through education, mentorship, and job placement. Additionally, Gesher is a cost-efficient answer to any family in need. Gesher strives to help all those who walk through its doors and to collaborate with community organizations to provide all Cleveland area families access to benefits for which they are eligible.

**About the Mt. Sinai Health Care Foundation:** Established in 1996, the Mt. Sinai Health Care Foundation is a grant-making public charity that seeks to assist Greater Cleveland's organizations and leaders in improving the health of the Jewish and general communities. Mt. Sinai advances its mission through approximately \$7.3 million in annual grant-making across four program areas: (1) Academic Medicine and Bioscience; (2) Health of the Jewish Community; (3) Health of the Urban Community; and (4) Health Policy.