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The View Into Our World from **ZACK POLLACK'S WHEELCHAIR**

Zack Pollack is one of the world's most unlikely motivational speakers. Now 24 years-old, Zack has suffered since birth from cerebral palsy, rendering him a quadriplegic and confining him to a wheelchair. Unable to read due to a combination of physical and learning disabilities, at the tender age of 8 Zack started to prepare for his Bar Mitzvah by memorizing his Haftorah and the Brachos.

Zack also suffered from severe curvature of the spine (scoliosis) which put pressure on his internal organs. At the age of 14, Zack underwent a 10-hour operation to relieve that pressure with the insertion of two titanium steel rods which run from his neck to his lower back. During a full year of convalescence, Zack's home tutor, a local public-school principal named Mr. Janoowalla, helped him to hone his skills to become an effective motivational speaker.

Zack graduated Emerson public high school in New Jersey in 2014 with a regular diploma and an outstanding achievement award for his participation in its elective program for broadcast journalism. When his guidance counselor asked Zack what he wanted to do next, he expressed a desire to study Torah at Yeshiva University in Manhattan.

The Dean of the RIETS seminary of Yeshiva University, Rabbi Menachem Penner, approved his request. For the past three years, Zack has been attending regular lectures (shiurim) at RIETS three days a week..

Zack learns gemara entirely

aurally (*baal peh*), with the support of two *chevrusas* (study partners) in the RIETS *bais medrash* (study hall) and a third at night over the telephone.

Zack is still unable to read, write or use a computer. Instead, he learns by listening. He prepares each speech entirely in his head, and tailors its message to the specific audience and occasion. He speaks haltingly, with considerable effort, yet he makes himself clearly understood, inspiring his audiences with his message of indomitable hope, friendship, faith and inclusion.

His message of hope, friendship and inclusion has been warmly received by both Jewish and non-Jewish audiences, including teens attending Newark's inner-city public high schools, and students majoring in occupational therapy at the Long Island University campus in Brooklyn.

Zack's Torah message to yeshiva students is particularly powerful. At a recent Shabbaton, speaking at Shalosh Seudos, Zack told the kids, "Each morning we say 'Modeh Ani' when we first open our eyes to thank Hashem for giving us another day of life. I also say 'Modeh Ani' each time I enter the *bais medrash* because learning Torah is the love of my life."

Zack is an outspoken public advocate for inclusion. In a video sponsored by the Ruderman Foundation, Zack calls upon the MTA to incorporate wheelchair accessibility in its upgrades to subway stations across New

York City. Having personally experienced the pain of bullying, his presentations sensitize young people to detect and counter bullying in all situations.

His devoted parents, Larry and Barbara Pollack, provide for Zack's every physical need and his transportation. They are dedicated to helping him succeed in his career as a motivational speaker. Zack is a young man with a purpose; to empower and inspire people to "get out of their comfort zone" to help others, and thereby make the most of every day.

Zack never turns down an invitation to speak to an audience. He tells them, "don't cry for me," and emphasizes the joy he gets from the memorable experiences in his life, with never a trace of self-pity or bitterness. He speaks of the lasting friendships he treasures with his teachers, his counselors and others he has met while pursuing his mission in life. The uplifting emotional impact of his presentation is an unforgettable experience.

Zack Pollack is living proof that, with sufficient determination, a person's strengths can prevail over their weaknesses. **B**

For more information on Zack Pollack, including videos of his motivational speeches and media articles, go to www.zackinspires.com. He may be contacted at 973.472.6586.

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