COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

Benefits of Living in a Smaller Out-of-Town Community



By Sara Aliza Cox

Pareve froyo. Twenty different restaurants. Jewish-owned clothing stores. There are definitely perks to living in the New York/New Jersey tristate area.

However, along with these perks come with endless traffic, hours searching for a parking spot a mile away and a cultural pressure strong enough to blow the lid off your cholent pot.

I've been living out of town for the past four and half years and I've never looked back. Here are some of the benefits I've experienced living in a smaller out of town community.

- Less keeping up with the Cohens. Imagine buying what you need, or at the very least, what you want and not because someone else has it. In a small community, people take inspiration from others but there's no need to look like another family. For example, there may be multiple Honda Odysseys in the parking lot but they are likely from different years and trim models. It's your life; you should enjoy it how you want to.
- Come as you are. Whether you are Modern Orthodox or Yeshivish, a



smaller community will look to find commonality instead of boxing you in. When everyone counts, what you bring to the table is valued and accepted. If you want to change religiously, that is up to you.
- Name, not a number. There are times when minyan factories come in handy, but not being noticed on Shabbos week after week can feel lonely. In a smaller community, people notice and care. You can build relationships when you're in shul with the same people. People can also rely more on each other when there's a name to a face. This is what builds a community as opposed to a factory.
- Connect with people in different age brackets. Ever feel like you're in an echo chamber? Having friends who are in different age brackets and stages of life lead to diversity of thought and wisdom gained from others. Smaller communities allow for people to befriend people they wouldn't have naturally gravitated toward if they were surrounded by their peers.
- Similar goals. In a smaller community, members want to see their community thrive so they make an effort to do so. Individuals become a team when there's a common goal. Whether it's pitching in to help make an event or cleaning up the local Jewish cemetery, you will find yourself in the company of people with a can-do attitude.

If you're interested in learning more about what it's like living in an out -of-town community, come check out the Indianapolis booth (wait - there are Jews in Indianapolis*? Where's Indianapolis, again**?) at the (virtual) OU Savitsky Home Relocation Fair on Sunday, Feb. 22 from 9 a.m.-6 p.m or email youcanjewishindy@gmail.com.

*Yes, there are Jews in Indianapolis.





**Indianapolis is in Indiana. We are three hours southeast of Chicago and two hours northwest of Cincinnati.

Sara Aliza Cox grew up in Passaic and moved to Indianapolis, IN in 2021. She is the marketing chair for Congregation B'nai Torah of Indianapolis. She and her husband, Asher, are blessed with two children.

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To learn more about the Jewish Community in Indianapolis,
visit https://www.btorahindy.org or email youcanjewishindy@gmail.com.