

Community



Briefs

A True Caring Community

Jewish Life met with Rabbi Yosef Carmel, dean of Jerusalem's Eretz Hemdah Institute, on his recent visit to Los Angeles. Rabbi Carmel is a firm believer in the power of caring as opposed to coercion in reaching out to the unaffiliated and in all his other dealings. At his institute they are *makpid* both to teach classes to the secular on the one hand, and to be careful when answering *shailos* not to step on the toes of any of the local rabbanim.

Eretz Hemdah's primary function is to train the next generation of religious Zionist rabbis. Their intensive seven-year program only accepts five out of every 50 applicants and all scholars must have complete military service and already received *smicha*.

While Eretz Hemdah performs many functions, the one of most general interest might be its "Ask the Rabbi" Web site. Jews from all over the globe can ask a *shailo* with the click of a button. This is an opportunity for those who don't have a rav, those whose rav is very busy or those who are too embarrassed to ask a local rabbi. They answer about 100 shailos per month, ranging from questions from a soldier who feared a kidnapping, wanting to know if could make any arrangements for a get for his wife if he was never found, to questions about closing a Web business on Shabbos. It's both *lemaaseh* and fascinating. *Anyone desiring further information should e-mail info@eretzhemdah.org.*