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Pair thank creator of matchmaker app

Federation B&P event venue for meeting of couple, JSwipe founder

by **Elaine Durbach**
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When Blaine Schoen and Craig Drachtman saw a chance to thank the guy responsible for bringing them together, they grabbed it.

The pair, both 25, met through JSwipe, a dating app designed for young Jewish singles. David Yarus, who created it, was invited to speak at a meeting of the Business and Professional Society of the Jewish Federation in the Heart of New Jersey.

They are among about 50,000 said to have met through the app. Yarus greeted the couple warmly. Schoen said, "I could tell that David was genuinely excited to meet Craig and me and was glad to have met people who were connected via his project."

For Schoen, who works in the advertising industry as a client services manager for an on-line women's lifestyle publication, and for Drachtman, an associate patent attorney with a firm in Princeton, the Feb. 22 B&P meeting in Red Bank was the first they had attended. The society's mission is "to strengthen relationships among Jewish professionals in the Heart of New Jersey through education and leadership," and about 75 people came to hear Yarus describe the JSwipe business model and newer ways of connecting Jews to Jews.

Schoen said of his talk, "It was awesome. I always find it interesting to hear about other young people's successes; it may be cliché, but it's inspirational in a way."

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JSwipe app creator David Yarus, center, meets a couple he helped bring together, Craig Drachtman and Blaine Schoen, at a meeting of the Business and Professional Society of the Jewish Federation in the Heart of NJ.

Photos courtesy Jewish Federation in the Heart of NJ

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Yarus launched the app two years ago, sensing, he has said, that there was “a gap in the dating market for millennial Jews.” Last year, the longer-established JDate sued over the use of that “J” and similarities in their software, but peace was achieved: The company that owns JDate, Smooch Labs, bought out JSwipe, and all is said to be copacetic.

Drachtman and Schoen met in early January 2015. Their first date was at a diner in Manalapan, where Schoen lives. She said, “I had matza ball soup and he had eggs. Right away, I could tell that he was just like me, and enjoyed the simple things in life.”

She had signed on to JSwipe, she said, because “I consider myself a social person, but I’m not really into the bar scene, so going the on-line route was my best bet. Like other millennials, I had basically given all of the apps a shot, and realized that they were the best way to go about meeting someone in this day and age.”

It wasn’t all smooth sailing. “I have plenty of stories and am very picky,” she said, “but with all of these apps, while I was looking for someone I would have commonalities with, I was also looking for someone Jewish so decided to give JSwipe a go.”

Drachtman said, “I tried Tinder briefly when it started out but never took it seriously. JSwipe seemed a lot more legitimate, although the first time I heard about it I thought it was hysterical (like a Jewish Tinder). But then I started getting a lot of matches and as I had conversations, I realized it would be a great way to meet someone, particularly since I don’t like going to bars.”

The two met about six months later. “I liked that it was easy to have a conversation with her,” he said. “I’m typically a quiet person, but with Blaine I felt comfortable even on our first date. We also had a lot in common and a surprisingly large number of mutual acquaintances.”

B&P Society chair Sylvan Goldwert said, “I was delighted to hear that our federation event not only helped to bring business people together, it also helped this young couple meet their matchmaker. Federation touches lives in more ways than we can know.”



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