

# **Jewish Community Center of Harrison**

## **B'nai Mitzvah Institute**

*Mitzvah Project*

*Opportunities*

**Tikkun Olam**

It is not upon you to complete the task of mending the world, nor are you free from trying to do your part.

–Pirkei Avot, 2:21

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# Introduction

- What exactly *is* a **mitzvah**?

A *mitzvah* is a commandment, one of the 613 found in the Torah.

- **Tzedakah** means giving to charity, right?

Not exactly. The word “*tzedak*” means justice. The justice that comes when we contribute our efforts so people are adequately fed, clothed, and have shelter, when we act against discrimination and oppression, when we welcome the stranger, protect the earth; and help those less fortunate in a dignified and compassionate way. Collecting needed items or raising money for a charity that endeavors to do this is *one* way to perform this *mitzvah*.

- What is **chesed**?

Acts of *chesed* are deeds of loving kindness. One example is visiting a friend who is ill.

- What is **Tikkun olam**?

*Tikkun olam* literally means to repair the world, accomplished through *tzedakah* and *chesed*.

- My family and I are so busy, how can we find time to this?

Everyone has an extra hour or two within a seven day period of time. Figure out *when* and in *what ways* you can commit your time. It can be something that is part of your routine. Your project can be something that is *already* a part or can *become* part of your routine.

Use this handbook to look for projects that spark your interest. Or use one of your hobbies as a means to organize a drive or collect equipment to donate, or to teach a group of children less fortunate *your* special skills. You will be using that time for practice and to perform a mitzvah.

# At a Glance

**Adopt a Grandparent:** Be a friendly visitor to someone who wants company.

**Book drive:** Organize a book drive for a clinic that services children.

**Centerpieces** can be made out of items that can be reused (plants, toys, CDs, books).

**Donate the flowers** on the *bimah* used during your service to a shelter, nursing home, or hospital.

**Environmental efforts:** Get your school, synagogue, or youth group involved in a project to raise awareness of 3 Rs – reduce, reuse, and recycle.

**Food drive:** Coordinate a food drive.

**Give a certain percentage** of the total amount you received in *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* gifts to a worthwhile charity.

**Have a tree planted** in Israel in honor of each guest or each table. Go to the Jewish National Fund website ([www.jnf.org](http://www.jnf.org)) for more information.

Israel is a wonderful place to connect and visit with tons of community service opportunities.

Just ask your guests to bring an item that can be donated to the homeless (socks, clothes, toiletries, toys).

**Know what the Harrison Food Pantry** does.

**Leftover food:** Donate the leftover food from your Kiddush or party to a food pantry or homeless shelter.

**Minyan:** Upon becoming a *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah*, attend *Minyan* regularly.

**Nursing Home, Hospital:** Bring your pet to visit patients.

**Organize a trip** with your family to a local farm where you can help farmers pick produce. Ask the farmers to donate a percentage of the picked fruits and vegetables to a soup kitchen.

**Plant a vegetable and fruit garden**, and donate the produce to a soup kitchen.

**Question the status quo.** Stand up for what you believe in.

**Read to people** who have difficulty seeing or are too young to read.

**Shut off the lights** when you leave the room.

**Take your outgrown sneakers** to be recycled or donate them to Nike's Reuse a Shoe or Soles for Souls.

**Use Passover as a "week of simple living."** Choose one thing to do without that week, which will enable you to use fewer resources and "take up less space" in the world.

**Volunteer at an animal shelter.**

**Walk or ride your bicycle** when you can.

**Xerox a list of environmental tips** and distribute them to neighbors and friends.

**Young children at Blythedale Children's Hospital** need video games rated "E."

**Zero waste:** Learn about zero waste and what you and your family can do to be part of the solution. Go to <http://myzerowaste.com> for more information.

# Go Green!!

## Tips for a Greener Simcha

- Make your table centerpieces out of items that can be donated to children who need them, such as sports equipment, books, and art supplies. Baskets containing food donations can be donated to a food pantry. Dog and cat toys, food, or accessories can be donated to a pet shelter.
- If you have fresh flowers at your events, donate them to a shelter, group home, or nursing home so they can be given to someone who could use a lift.
- Encore Studios and the Jewish National Fund (JNF) have entered into a philanthropic partnership. They created a line of invitations and designs to be used as favors, table signs or for candle-lighting ceremonies. Each invitation or certificate represents a tree that has been planted in Israel or a donation to water resource development in Israel in honor of your guests.
- Discourage food waste by requesting that your caterer wrap up the leftovers. Ask another Bar/Bat Mitzvah family to bring the food to a shelter the following day if your family can't.

# Simcha Food Donations

To avoid throwing out food after your *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* Kiddush or party, bring it to people in shelters who would appreciate it!

Bring food to one of the following places, but please call beforehand to let them know you're coming and if they are in need of donation at the time.

## **Open Arms Shelter**

86 East Post Road

White Plains, New York

(914) 948-5044

<http://www.gracecommunitycenter.org>

Contact: Ada Raiford, [adarai@msn.com](mailto:adarai@msn.com)

## **Oasis**

19 Washington Place

New Rochelle, New York

(914) 633-0101

<http://www.foodclothingshelter.org>

## **Providence House**

89 Sickles Avenue

New Rochelle, New York

(914) 632-4177

<http://providencehouse.org>

**Please note that in accordance with the New York State Bill Emerson Food Donation Act (Good Samaritan Laws), "A person or gleaner shall not be subject to civil or criminal liability arising from the nature, age, packaging, or condition of apparently wholesome food or an apparently fit grocery product that the person or gleaner donates in good faith to a nonprofit organization for ultimate distribution to needy individuals." Additionally, "A nonprofit organization shall not be subject to civil or criminal liability arising from the nature, age, packaging, or condition of apparently wholesome food or an apparently fit grocery product that the nonprofit organization received as a donation in good faith from a person or gleaner for ultimate distribution to needy individuals." However, we ask that families please donate food no more than a day or two after your simcha.**

# Social Action at JCCH

## For Seventh Graders

- **New Rochelle Salvation Army Soup Kitchen**  
Serve approximately 50 men and women a complete meal
- **Westchester County Breast Cancer Walk**  
Walk and obtain sponsors to raise funds for breast cancer research
- **Coachman Center**  
Birthday party for children and teens  
Games, activities, snacks, prizes and gifts
- **United Hebrew Home Chanukah Visit**  
Sing Chanukah songs and assist residents with Chanukah art project
- **Breakfast Run**  
Prepare and serve breakfast, collect and hand out clothes and toiletries to the homeless in Manhattan
- **Kids' Kloset**  
Sort and package children's and teen clothes in White Plains
- **Year-end JCCH Parking Lot Car Wash**  
Raise funds for charity

## For the Whole Community

- **Mitzvah Day**  
Assist with various Mitzvah Day projects  
Contact JCCH event chairperson
- **Purim Carnival**  
Run Purim Carnival booths, activities, and games  
Contact JCCH event chairperson
- **Purim Mishloach Manot Baskets**  
Help to make baskets that are distributed to congregants and staff  
Help deliver baskets to recipients (with parent)  
Contact JCCH Sisterhood
- **Yom Kippur Food Drive for Harrison Food Pantry**  
Organize bags to give to community after Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur Services  
Collect food to fill bags  
Contact Rabbi Hammerman

# Feeding the Hungry

## **Food Bank for Westchester**

200 Clearbrook Road

Elmsford, NY

(914) 923-1100

[www.foodbankforwestchester.org](http://www.foodbankforwestchester.org)

See website for volunteer opportunities. **You must pre-register** using the online volunteer registration system. A volunteer profile must be completed for each volunteer (including minors).

## **Bread of Life**

65 Orchard Avenue

Rye, NY

Volunteer opportunities are posted on our website or arranged by emailing [sue@givingtreeglobal.org](mailto:sue@givingtreeglobal.org).

Food Donations may be arranged by calling Pastor Pasquale at 914-602-9783 or by emailing [sherri@givingtreeglobal.org](mailto:sherri@givingtreeglobal.org).

## **Hope Community Services**

50 Washington Avenue

New Rochelle, New York

(914) 636-4010

<http://hopecommunityservices.org/volunteers>

Dinner is served every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday.

Generally, volunteers are needed between the hours of 4:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. on those days. Volunteers serve dinner to our clients, prepare “take-away” meals for distribution at the end of the meal, and assist in clean up after dinner. Minimum Age: 13

## **Mazon: A Jewish Response to Hunger**

<http://www.mazon.org>

This organization allocates donations from the Jewish community to eliminate and alleviate hunger throughout the world. *Mazon* donates to people of all faiths and backgrounds.



# People to People

## Bullying

[www.pacerteensagainstbullying.org](http://www.pacerteensagainstbullying.org)

It is important to not speak poorly about others. When witnessing harm, you are obligated to speak up or be an “upstander.” Being an upstander rather than a bystander may not be easy, but practicing this *mitzvot* will serve you well in life. Bystanders are responsible for the continuation of the world's atrocities. Jewish History is a testament to that truth.

Take the Anti-Bullying Pledge [www.bullying.org/external/documents/ACF6FA.pdf](http://www.bullying.org/external/documents/ACF6FA.pdf)

Learn what you can do to help stop bullying in your school. Encourage your friends to do the same.

# Honoring the Elderly

Unfortunately, our culture often does not honor the wisdom of older people and so many elders are lonely, isolated, and unable to share their life experiences. First call your grandparents and then consider some of the possibilities listed here.

## **Sarah Neuman Center for Healthcare and Rehabilitation**

845 Palmer Avenue

Mamaroneck, New York 10543

(914) 864-5140

Contact: Jeanette Cohen

Community Volunteer Liaison /Coordinator, The New Jewish Home

[jcohen@jewishhome.org](mailto:jcohen@jewishhome.org)

<http://www.jewishhome.org/our-services/our-campuses/sarah-neuman>

### · **Adult Day Care**

Volunteers are needed to transport wheelchair bound residents to and from appointments in the facility. Also help at special events, with physical therapy appointments, and recreational activities.

**Age Minimum: 14**

### · **Friendly Visitor**

Volunteer at their senior healthcare facility and become a friend to one or more senior residents. Spend time talking, walking, or reading with a senior.

**Age Minimum: 13, Age Minimum with Adult: None**

### · **Hospitality Cart Volunteer**

Help senior residents shop at the gift and candy cart. Volunteering at the cart is also a good way to encourage residents in conversation and combat isolation.

**Age Minimum: 13, Age Minimum with Adult: None**

### · **Library and Books Volunteer**

Help residents select books and enjoy the world of reading through books on tape. Library volunteers may also bring books, magazines, and tapes that are on the library cart directly to residents' rooms.

**Age Minimum: 13, Age Minimum with Adult: None**

### · **Nintendo Wii Volunteer**

Volunteers are needed to play Nintendo Wii with residents and clients within the nursing home. Volunteers also help to transport residents by pushing wheelchairs to and from recreational activities. **Age Minimum: 13, Age Minimum with Adult: None**

### · **Office Assistance Volunteer**

Help out in the offices of this large senior care and rehab facility with filing, phone calls, data entry, creating flyers, and a newsletter. **Age Minimum: 14**

## Honoring the Elderly, Continued

- **Special Care Community Volunteer**

They are looking for volunteers to help in their Special Care Unit for residents with Alzheimer's Disease or other forms of dementia. Work in the afternoon with the tea program; noon with the Let's Do Lunch program; evening with movies and serving snacks. **Age Minimum: 13, Age Minimum with Adult: None**

- **Tea Time Volunteer**

Help short term patients at the healthcare facility by serving tea, coffee, and cookies from 3 p.m. to 4:15 p.m. daily. **Age Minimum: 13, Age Minimum with Adult: None**

- **Scrabble and Game Volunteer**

Come play a game of scrabble with a resident who enjoys the game as much as you do! Other games such as chess, checkers, and bridge are also popular. Host a weekly game between residents or play a game one on one.

**Age Minimum: 13, Age Minimum with Adult: None**

- **Shabbat Volunteer**

Join the residents to make their Friday services very special. Shabbat volunteers help escort senior residents to and from their floors as well as hold books during the service. Families are welcome to volunteer. **Age Minimum: 13, Age Minimum with Adult: None**

- **Plus:** Arts and crafts, bingo assistant, cooking, computer games, visits with your pet, dining assistance, leading lectures and book discussions, letter and card writing for residents, playing music or singing, needlework, sewing, and tailoring and many more opportunities!

## Other Ideas

Contact: Joy Avidan  
Joya914@gmail.com

- **Rosh Hashanah Baskets**

Collect apples, honey, and challahs and make pretty baskets for Rosh Hashanah to be delivered to the elderly.

- **Pesach Baskets**

Collect Passover items (Kosher for Passover), including matzah meal, matzah, gefilte fish, candy, and much more, and make beautiful baskets for Passover to be delivered to the elderly.

# Organizations Working to Help the Elderly

## **The Blue Card**

171 Madison Avenue, # 1405

New York, New York 10016

(212) 239-2251

Blue.Card@verizon.net

[www.bluecardfund.org](http://www.bluecardfund.org)

This independent organization offers stipends to Holocaust Survivors who live near or below the Federal Guidelines for poverty. There are many quality of life measures not covered by Medicare, Medicaid and Federation agencies. So that this population can live their last season with *kavod*, dignity, grants are provided for a multitude of needs. Elderly survivors with respiratory problems can now buy air conditioners, home repairs can be afforded, and mortgages can be paid. In addition, each survivor has a Personal Emergency Response System in place.

## **Dorot**

[www.dorotusa.org](http://www.dorotusa.org)

DOROT's mission is to enhance the lives of Jewish and other elderly in the Greater New York City Metropolitan area and to provide education, guidance and leadership in developing volunteer-based programs for the elderly nationally and internationally.

## **Holiday Package Delivery Programs**

Deliver Food Packages and Visit with the Elderly

Grades: 6–12

Time Commitment: 3 hours

For Rosh Hashanah, Chanukah, Purim, and Passover, middle school and high school students deliver holiday packages (provided by DOROT) to seniors and stay for a visit. Orientation is provided.

If I am not for me, who will be?  
And if I am only for me, what am I?  
And if not now, when?  
–Hillel



## **Twin with a Holocaust Survivor Program**

The Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center is pleased to partner with The Holocaust Council of Greater MetroWest's Twin-With-a-Survivor program. They created this program in 2001 to provide B'nai Mitzvah students the rare opportunity to make personal connections to these extraordinary models of human courage and resilience who exemplify continued commitment to the Jewish community. We are excited to share this program with you.

**"For they were living men and women, not symbols." - Elie Wiesel**

### **Overview**

After three meetings with a Survivor the student incorporates what he/she has learned into the D'var Torah. Twin-With-a-Survivor assures that the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony is profoundly meaningful and extremely moving for the participants as well as the entire congregation.

Additionally, participating in this program ensures the fulfillment of several mitzvot, including becoming a witness and honoring the elderly.

Twin-With-a-Survivor has proven a tremendous growth opportunity for both the students and their families. Many loving friendships have resulted between Survivors and the B'nai Mitzvah families.

### **Guidelines**

- Students must agree to meet a Survivor a minimum of three times (although more than three meetings are recommended). At least one meeting should take place in the Survivor's home (or place of business). We recommend a minimum of one hour per session.
- If possible, a portion of one of these meetings should be videotaped. Three copies of the tape will be made. The copies will be distributed to the student, the Survivor and to The Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center.
- Students must agree to keep journals of their meetings. These portions should include the factual materials of the interviews that become future references for the student.

### **Minimal considerations should include:**

- Is the student knowledgeable about the Holocaust?
- Is the student stable and mature?
- Does the student have a respectable GPA?
- Will the student have parental support for this project?

# Art and Music

## Art

### Friendship Bracelets

<http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Friendship-Bracelet>

If you love to make bracelets, share your creations with other children. Make bracelets in all different sizes, styles, and colors. Then donate them to a children's hospital, after-school program, or other places where children will love wearing your beautiful creations.

## Music

### Songcatchers Inc.

44 Liberty Ave.

New Rochelle, New York 10801

(914) 654-1178

<http://www.songcatchers.org/index.html>

Songcatchers, Inc. is an organization that reaches for peace through music by providing an array of programs in the performing and visual arts. They aim specifically to provide high quality music and art education that is affordable and accessible to the neediest members of our community.

Leadership development and community building are hallmarks of all Songcatcher programs. They strive for competence in an atmosphere that fosters mutual respect, appreciation of the arts, and the conviction that peace is possible when people bring beauty into the lives of others. The population served by Songcatchers is multicultural and multigenerational. Application and interview required.

# Protecting the Environment

## Taking Care of our Earth

- Collect old phone books, newspapers, and magazines in your neighborhood for recycling.
- Turn off lights, radios, and TVs when no one is using them.
- Conserve water. Just by turning off the tap while you brush your teeth in the morning and before bedtime, you can save up to eight gallons of water! The same is true when you wash dishes. Turn off the tap! Scrape your dirty dishes into the trash—then put them in the dishwasher.
- Taking a shower uses much less water than filling up a bathtub. A shower only uses 10 to 25 gallons of water, while a bath takes up to 70 gallons of water! To save even more water, keep your shower under five minutes long. Try timing your shower with a timer next time you hop in!
- Clean up trash along a river or along your route to school.
- Bike or walk.
- Start a butterfly garden in your yard.
- Collect cans and bottles and donate the money to an environmental charity.
- Design artful conservation posters for your school and synagogue.
- Buy products made of recycled materials.
- Start a recycling center at school.
- Instead of using throwaway bags, use a lunch box or reusable bag.
- Start a compost pile and encourage your family to use it!
- Use recycled paper. Encourage your school to do the same.
- Support a ban on plastic bags. Contact your local officials to express your position.

## Friends of Read

Playland Parkway  
Rye, New York 10580  
(914) 967-8720

<http://friendsofreadwildlifesanctuary.org/>

The Friends of Read is a non-profit organization, run by volunteers, dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of the Edith G. Read Wildlife Sanctuary, a 179-acre nature preserve adjacent to Rye Playland and abutting Long Island Sound. The property includes half a mile of shoreline, an 85 acre lake as well as trails through the forest and fields of the park. In addition, it is noted as an "Important Bird Area" by the Audubon Society of New York. Work is needed to help with tasks such as their annual Read Wildlife Sanctuary Clean Up Day. This is a fun outdoor project for individuals or families looking for service opportunities. Meet fellow volunteers while being a part of improving the wildlife sanctuary. There is a quick briefing then off to do some vine cutting and other trail tasks. Check website for schedule of events.

## **Protecting the Environment, Continued**

### **Rye Nature Center**

873 Boston Post Road  
Rye, New York 10580  
(914) 967-5150

[www.ryenaturecenter.org](http://www.ryenaturecenter.org)

The Rye Nature Center offers programs to encourage the protection of our natural resources and promote environmental awareness in Rye and surrounding communities. The center is located on 47 acres of wildlife preserve, with over 2 miles of hiking trails, ponds, and streams. Check website for volunteer opportunities and application.

### **Nike's Reuse-A-Shoe**

<http://www.nikereuseashoe.com>

Clean out your closet, take a peek under your bed and ask your friends and family to do the same. Chances are, you'll find a few pairs of old sneakers lying around that have seen better days. Bring your athletic shoes to any Nike Reuse-A-Shoe drop-off location, there are more than 200 locations around the world, including most U.S. Nike stores. These old sneakers can be made into basketball and tennis courts, athletic fields, and running tracks. Nike's Reuse-A-Shoe program uses old sneakers for that purpose.

### **Soles4Souls**

[www.soles4souls.org](http://www.soles4souls.org)

Soles4Souls is a not for profit global social enterprise committed to fighting poverty through the collection and distribution of shoes and clothing. Since 2006, Soles4Souls has collected and distributed 26 million pairs of shoes to those in need in 127 countries around the world and all 50 states in the U.S. Every day children are prevented from attending school, adults are unable to work. Walking becomes unbearable. A new pair of shoes provides relief today so thousands can succeed tomorrow. In many developing nations, walking is the primary mode of transportation. Every day, millions are exposed to unsanitary conditions that lead to diseases such as hookworm, threadworm, and the dreaded Tunga Penetrans, or "jiggers". These diseases may lead to death. They also keep children out of school leaving them without an education and continuing the cycle of poverty. With your help, we can provide a life-changing solution: a good pair of shoes.

## **Recycling Electronics**

Donating used electronics for reuse extends the lives of valuable products, and maximizes the energy and resources that went into making them. By donating your used electronics, you allow schools, nonprofit organizations, and lower income families to obtain electronics that they otherwise could not afford. The companies listed below recycle old computers and electronic equipment. For more information, contact the county's Recycling Helpline at (914) 813-5425.

### **Goodwill**

(718) 777-6320  
donations.department@goodwillny.org

### **Goodwill Donation Express-Eastchester**

19 Mill Road, Eastchester, New York 10709  
(914) 347-4376

### **Goodwill-New Rochelle**

8 Joyce Road  
New Rochelle, New York 10801  
(914) 633-0964



# Helping Animals

## **SPCA of Westchester**

590 North State Road

Briarcliff Manor, New York 10510

(914) 941-2896

<http://www.sPCA914.org>

The SPCA of Westchester's mission is to find homes for every dog and cat in their care, which number about 200 at any given time. They receive no federal, state, or local funding and rely entirely on the generosity of individuals, foundations, and companies for support. Their volunteer program is geared to making the lives of homeless animals as good as it possibly can be while they are at their shelter and at the same time they are looking for loving "forever" homes. The following programs have been developed for volunteers under 18 years of age. Their insurance carrier does not allow anyone under 18 to work directly with the animals.

- **Pet Sponsorship**

"Adopt a Shelter Pet." Visit the shelter and meet and take pictures of a dog or cat. Create "Adopt Me" posters and hang them in public places in your local area. Find ways to raise money for "Wish List" items or get donations of supplies for your dog or cat and all the other shelter animals, thereby, helping with their support. Some suggestions are donation boxes and drives; bake sales, lemonade stands, or car washes. While at the shelter, take a tour, and get a brief history and educational information about the SPCA, humane care, and ways in which young people can make a difference in the lives of animals.

- **Golden Outreach**

This is a pet therapy program where adults or young people bring their dogs to the SPCA for evaluation. The dog's temperament and behavior is tested for suitability for visits to a health care facility. Once the dog passes the evaluation, the SPCA will train the human and canine team to visit health care facilities in Westchester County on a regular basis.

- **Events**

The SPCA takes part in community and animal-related events on a regular basis. Help staff our booth, give out literature and information about the SPCA and the Simpson Spay and Neuter Clinic, and the services they provide to the community. Raise money for the shelter animals through sales of pet products, and SPCA logo items.

- **Shelter Beautification**

At the shelter, there are always projects that could use help. They include planting, weeding, gardening, cleanup, painting, trail maintenance, and more.

## Helping Animals, Continued

### • **Youth Volunteers**

Here are some fun easy activities children can take part in to help raise awareness and funds for the shelter animals, such as a bake sale, lemonade stand, penny collection, can and bottle recycling, towel and blanket collection, dog and cat toy drive, car wash, creating adoption fliers and posting the fliers throughout your community. You can also post the SPCA “wish lists” throughout your community.

### • **Click and Treat**

Junior volunteers, ages 13, and up may participate in our clicker program. We train our dogs with positive reinforcement. For example, we ask for certain behaviors, click, and reward them with treats when they learn those behaviors. This is done while the dogs are in their runs and the volunteers toss the treats in to them. Parents are encouraged to take the clicker classes with their children.

## **Harrison Pet Rescue**

Contact: Paula - [nypetrescue@gmail.com](mailto:nypetrescue@gmail.com)

We always enjoy giving tours of our facility in Harrison. The tour includes the dog kennel, clinic, and playgrounds. The dogs and cats stay with us while waiting for forever homes. Please check our website, [www.ny-petrescue.org](http://www.ny-petrescue.org), for an up-to-date list of dogs and cats we have in our care.

Below is a list of activities suggested for school-aged children.

Collect supplies that we are always in need of, including but certainly not limited to, towels, blankets, treats, peanut butter, and even cleaning products.

- Some students have set up collection baskets in schools, synagogues, churches, and community centers. Some have gone house to house (with an adult) asking for a particular item. (A flyer can be designed and posted beforehand to alert people that there is a need for household items they no longer want.)
- Hold sales of items at sporting or community events. Two children sold bottled water at a soccer tournament, another group sold bracelets they made, others sold baked items, and still others have placed our dog house shaped banks in strategic and safe locations to collect change.
- Have a birthday or holiday party with the gifts designed for the dogs or cats. Create a page on our website to accept donations in your name to go to Pet Rescue.
- Create a presentation to a school, religious or community group about the importance of rescuing critters and the plight of animals in puppy mills.
- Gather friends to make toys for the animals waiting for their forever homes.
- Provide a foster home for a dog or cat.
- Help socialize cats and kittens at our cat space during open houses.

We are also very happy to discuss ideas that you may have.

## Helping Animals, Continued

### Guiding Eyes for the Blind

[www.guidingeyes.org](http://www.guidingeyes.org)

Guiding Eyes is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides superbly bred and trained guide dogs to men and women who are blind or visually impaired. Dogs not suited for guide work may become service dogs for children on the autism spectrum. All Guiding Eyes dogs expand horizons for people to achieve their goals. All services are offered free of charge to people who are blind or visually impaired and to families with children with autism. Guiding Eyes is dependent upon contributions to fulfill its mission. The headquarters and training center is located in Yorktown Heights, NY and the Canine Development Center is in Patterson, NY. Guiding Eyes is an accredited member of the International Guide Dog Federation, the organization establishing worldwide standards for the breeding and training of guide dogs.

Here is a summary of the journey of a Guiding Eyes dog:

- Guiding Eyes for the Blind has their own breeding program.
- When the pups are just a few weeks old, volunteers come to begin the socialization process.
- When the pups are 8 weeks to 12 weeks old, they are placed in a home with a Raiser. Raisers need to teach the pups basic commands and make sure they develop good habits in the home; they also give the pups a variety of experiences out in the community. Raisers are trained by professional trainers in the local community.
- After about a year, the pups return to Guiding Eyes to be tested to determine their aptitude for guide work. At this point, they may become a brood or stud; trained to become a guide dog, a Heeling Autism dog, a chemical detection dog, or they may become a cherished pet.

Young people can provide valuable services by:

- Raising a pup with their families.
- Organizing a newspaper drive to donate to the whelping kennel at Guiding Eyes for the Blind. (There is a certain way to fold the newspapers.)
- Collecting old (clean) towels to donate to the whelping kennel.
- Organizing a fundraiser to benefit Guiding Eyes for the Blind.

# Donations and Drives that Make a Difference

## **Afya Foundation of America: Supplies for Life**

140 Saw Mill River Road  
Yonkers, New York 10701  
(914) 920-5081

[info@afyafoundation.org](mailto:info@afyafoundation.org) & <http://afyafoundation.org>

The Afya Foundation collects medical and humanitarian supplies that people would otherwise throw out. They sort, inventory and package these items and send them abroad to the world's most neglected people. It's win-win; they don't contribute to our landfills, and they bring good health to people who otherwise would never have access to such things. When you go to their warehouse, they will set you up with a table full of supplies that need to be sorted and packed, and teach you how to do it! Sorting is possible while standing or sitting. This is a really satisfying, hands-on volunteer opportunity, and you'll know that the supplies you touch with your hands will finally get into the hands of someone who will use it to bring good health to someone in need.

## **WJCS Kids' Kloset**

845 North Broadway  
White Plains, NY 10603  
(914) 761 -0600  
(914) 831-7616  
Stephane Roth

[www.wjcs.com/children-youth-families/kids-kloset/](http://www.wjcs.com/children-youth-families/kids-kloset/)

WJCS Kids' Kloset is a volunteer-driven program that provides Westchester County children and families in need with donated clothing and related items free of charge. Children, newborn to 18 years of age, receive "bags of love" with clothing assembled into outfits that are free of rips, stains, and missing buttons. The bags represent more than clothing. We believe they boost the confidence and esteem of the youth, potentially helping to improve grades at school and reduce stress in the household. And parents can be assured their children have clean, appropriate, well-fitting clothing. Kids' Kloset is always in need of volunteers to organize a drive, and to sort and pack clothing.

## **Harrison Food Pantry**

Local food pantry located in downtown Harrison where over 100 Harrison families rely in getting non-perishable and non-food related items.

Nina Marraccini  
(914) 670-3026

**Donations and Drives That Make a Difference, Continued**

## **The Sharing Shelf**

47 Purdy Avenue

Port Chester, NY 10573

(914) 937-2320

[www.fsw.org/our-programs/the-sharing-shelf](http://www.fsw.org/our-programs/the-sharing-shelf)

The Sharing Shelf collects new and gently used clothing as well as basic necessities, such as shoes, school supplies, strollers, and other items. At The Sharing Shelf, the community comes together to help clothe children in need. Volunteers are welcomed and needed in their warehouse to help sort and package clothing for children in need. No special skills are required. Volunteers are also needed in the community to organize clothing drives at their schools, churches, synagogues, and even through after school programs such as ballet or karate studios or local businesses such as hair salons and sports clubs. Speak with those at your place of employment and arrange a week in the fall and spring when your colleagues can bring in donations of their children's hand me downs. You can also send an email to your friends and offer your home as a drop-off site; then bring The Sharing Shelf your carload of donations. There are countless ways to help. The Sharing Shelf welcomes teen volunteers over 14 in its warehouse during regular volunteer hours. Children under 14 may volunteer with a parent.

# Camps

## **Sunrise Day Camps**

Jessica Kamens

(516) 634-4171 and [jessica.kamens@sunriseassociation.org](mailto:jessica.kamens@sunriseassociation.org)

[www.sunriseassociation.org](http://www.sunriseassociation.org)

Providing memorable summers since 2006 for children ages 3½ to 16, Sunrise Day Camps bring the simple pleasures of childhood back to children struggling with cancer, changing months of loneliness and isolation into summers filled with sunshine, laughter, and happiness. And because Sunrise is a *day camp*, it does all this while allowing the children to continue their medical treatment and enjoy the comfort and safety of their own homes at night. Today, Sunrise Day Camps are located on Long Island and in Pearl River, New York, and in Israel, and are affiliated with 21 renowned hospitals and medical centers. Sunrise Sundays and Fun-days offer children exciting activities and events when school is not in session. Sunrise on Wheels is a one-of-a-kind program that provides hours of Sunrise-fun to children undergoing treatment in pediatric oncology units of participating hospitals. Contact Jessica for volunteer opportunities and ways to help.

## **TheSummerCamp.org**

Michele Gershwin in partnership with Joanne Paltrowitz

(914)514-9144 office, (917)929-9906 cell, and Skype: Campgirl914

[Michele@campexperts.com](mailto:Michele@campexperts.com)

[www.campexperts.com](http://www.campexperts.com)

**Mission** - The Summer Camp is a nonprofit, fully funded, residential summer camp for inner city and rural girls, ages 6 to 18, from low-income and foster homes. We provide a safe, fun, supportive environment in which campers explore new, challenging and educational experiences, learn from positive role models, and have the opportunity to build skills for life year after year.

**Vision** - To create a rich, multifaceted, continually evolving program where girls learn about themselves, develop vital skills, and realize their intellectual potential and leadership abilities.

**Impact** - Many of our campers struggle with adult issues and responsibilities on a daily basis. Camp offers a ten-day reprieve for children to escape personal burdens, such as parental divorce, domestic violence, or neglect. Girls can forget about "real life" for a while, and just have fun and make friends. Through our unique curriculum, The Summer Camp provides a safe and supportive atmosphere; values each girl as an individual; offers affirmative guidance and encouragement; builds personal power and self-esteem. Our counselors create a wonderful camp culture based on caring and a true sense of community. Summer Campers learn to communicate with their peers and authority figures. We strive to help each child discover her talents and learn to share them with the larger community. The social, emotional, academic, and athletic skills acquired at The Summer Camp enable girls to believe in themselves and contribute to making choices that provide them with opportunities for self-advancement.

**Community** - We proudly serve 350 girls from low-income and foster families each summer, providing fully paid camper scholarships for all participants and transportation for those living outside the state of Maine. Partnering with 75 social service agencies and school guidance counselors from urban and rural areas of New England and New York State, we have welcomed over 8,255 campers since 1986.

## **What They Need**

Student Service Projects - Young donors often raise funds as part of a school community service project or in preparation for a religious milestone. Sponsoring a camper provides children with an opportunity to help others in a meaningful way.

# UJA

## **What is the Give a Mitzvah- Do a Mitzvah Program?**

The Give a Mitzvah - Do a Mitzvah program helps match Bar/Bat Mitzvah students with those needing a helping hand. To participate, you contribute your time, energy, and a part (or all) of your gifts to your own specially designed mitzvah project. The best part is that each project is unique and tailored exclusively to your interests and hobbies.

## **How do I choose a project?**

To get started, you'll meet with a UJA- Federation mitzvah coordinator to talk about your interests and hobbies in order to plan what you can do to make a difference for people in need.

## **Where can my project take place?**

We invite you to design a project to be carried out in New York, Israel, the former Soviet Union, or any number of other places around the world - wherever your imagination takes you.

## **When do I start planning my project?**

It's best to start thinking about your project well in advance - a minimum of three months before this special milestone in your life. That way, you'll be able to include information about your mitzvah project in your invitation. And the more involved your project, the longer it will take to design it. In some cases, it makes sense to begin envisioning your project up to a full year before you become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

## **How much should I contribute?**

It's really up to you. Contributions can start at as little as 10 percent of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah gifts you receive. Some participants choose to give half of what they receive. Others decide to donate all their gifts. To make sure your project has a big enough impact on the people you want to help, a minimum donation of \$2,500 is encouraged.

## **How can I get my friends and family involved?**

You can tell people about your mitzvah project by including a special insert in your invitation. Then you can ask friends and family members to make gifts in your honor - and, if you like, you can make your own gift in honor of your guests and loved ones.

## **How many hours should I volunteer?**

It's totally up to you. Some participants design a one-time volunteer project. Others choose to volunteer on a regular basis, such as once a week or once a month during the year of their Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

## **Is there a participation fee?**

No. One hundred percent of the money you contribute will be distributed by UJA- Federation of New York to fund the program or project you choose.

## **How do I get started?**

For more information or to set up a meeting, contact 212.836.1257 or [mitzvah@ujafedny.org](mailto:mitzvah@ujafedny.org).

# Israel

## IsraelGives

[www.israelgives.org](http://www.israelgives.org)

IsraelGives.org is the world's main website for supporting Israel. They help you to support the causes you care about in Israel. Donate or fundraise for any nonprofit in Israel.

## Friends of the Israeli Defense Forces

1430 Broadway

New York, New York

(212) 244-3118

<http://www.fidf.org/>

Friends of the Israel Defense Forces (FIDF) supports social, educational, cultural, and recreational programs and facilities for the young men and women soldiers of Israel. They also provide support for the families of fallen soldiers. FIDF is committed to providing soldiers with love, support, and care in an effort to ease the burden they carry of defending Israel's borders and guaranteeing the safety of its people.

## A Package from Home

[www.apackagefromhome.org](http://www.apackagefromhome.org)

A Package from Home offers the opportunity for B'nai Mitzvah to perform a mitzvah by helping the soldiers of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). By adopting an army unit of *Chayelim Bodedim* (soldiers with no family in Israel), each *Chayal Boded* will receive a care package filled with such items as a t-shirt, antifungal socks, snacks, candy, chocolates, toiletries and in the winter, a two-piece long underwear set, warm hat, and gloves. A B'nai Mitzvah may include a letter with their invitation telling their guests about their project or ask guests to donate directly to A Package from Home, or the B'nai Mitzvah can decide to personally adopt an army unit.

## Pizza IDF

[www.pizzaidf.org](http://www.pizzaidf.org)

[tanya@pizzaidf.org](mailto:tanya@pizzaidf.org)

Send a pizza to an Israeli soldier. Since 2002, Pizza IDF has delivered many thousands of pizzas and other gifts to thousands of soldiers. It is hard to describe how happy the soldiers are to receive your "special treats". It goes well beyond getting a hot pizza late at night at a lonely post. They love to know that people everywhere support and care for them.

## Israel, Continued



## **The Israel Tennis Centers**

### **“Children to Children”**

**Peter Wayne, Development Director**

**The Israel Tennis Centers Foundation**

**57 West 38<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 605**

**New York, NY 10018**

**(212) 784-9203 or [pwayne@israeltenniscenters.org](mailto:pwayne@israeltenniscenters.org) or [www.israeltenniscenters.org](http://www.israeltenniscenters.org)**

The Israel Tennis Centers benefits more than 20,000 Israeli children each year. The Israel Tennis Centers Foundation will work together with you and your family to plan a special project suited to your interests. Here are some ways you can get involved:

- Donate a portion of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah gifts to enable an underprivileged child to participate in ITC programs.
- Request that donations be made in your honor to the Israel Tennis Centers Foundation in lieu of gifts.
- Organize a tennis tournament in your community and donate the players' entry fees to ITC.
- Sponsor “goody bags” of new tennis equipment for ITC children in-need who are also celebrating their own Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
- Help arrange an ITC Tennis Exhibition in your community when ITC youngsters from Israel will come to display their tennis talents and raise awareness and funding for underprivileged Israeli children to attend ITC programs.
- If you are celebrating your Bar/Bat Mitzvah in Israel, visit one of the 14 Israel Tennis Centers!
  - Play tennis with Israeli youth.
  - Help teach an English Language lesson to an immigrant child.
  - Volunteer in one of the afternoon social impact programs and enjoy a meaningful experience.

**One may do more, another may do less.  
Both are acceptable, as long as the heart  
is directed to heaven.**

**-Berahkot 17a**

# Don't Forget the Children

## The Children's Hope Chest

The mission of **The Children's Hope Chest** is to provide help and offer hope to children in our community suffering from poverty, abuse, neglect, and illness. We strive to increase social action by promoting adult and youth volunteerism.

**Mitzvah Project:** Please contact Dina Fisher at [dinafish1@gmail.com](mailto:dinafish1@gmail.com)

To learn more about The Children's Hope Chest, go to [www.childrenshopechest.com](http://www.childrenshopechest.com)

## Hope for the Summer

If you go to sleepaway camp, you know how much is needed from warm clothing, flashlights and batteries, sleeping bags, toiletries, and more. Many of the children who go to the YMCA Camp of Greater New York often arrive at the camp for their 2 to 8 week stay with just the clothes on their backs and maybe a few basics. We are always in need of children to help collect basic summer items (list to be provided). In addition to collecting these items, teens are invited to help bring the items to the camp and set up the Hope Chest Store where campers "shop" for the items that they need most. If you are home over the summer, your teen is invited to visit the camp and spend the day with the campers.

## Coats for Hope

So many of us take for granted the certainty of having a warm winter coat, a hat and gloves to wear when the weather turns frigid. Reach out to friends and family to collect **new** winter coats of various sizes and colors to help keep children warm. Teens have the opportunity to then distribute the coats directly to those in need at a Thanksgiving dinner event at the Port Chester Carver Center. (The event is traditionally the Sunday before Thanksgiving.) At the event you will not only be able to give children a new coat but also serve a meal and play games as well as do crafts with the children and their families.

## Hope for the Holidays

A holiday wish list for many of the children at the Bronx YMCA may not include toys but rather the basics, such as socks, underwear, warm clothing, and PJs. We will help you determine what is most needed and you can reach out to friends and family to collect these items. Bring these items and see the joy on parents' faces as they choose them for their children at our Hope for the Holiday event. The Bronx YMCA is transformed into a "store" where parents shop for their children. This provides families with the dignity to choose what they think their child will want and need the most. And best of all, the gifts are wrapped before they leave!

**Don't Forget the Children, Continued**

### **Backpacks for Hope**

There is nothing like starting the school year off right with new supplies and a backpack.

The Children's Hope Chest collects and distributes more than 800 backpacks each year to children. Assist us with collecting these items or raising money to purchase the items. (You'd be amazed at what a bargain shopper you can become!) Then join us for various events to "stuff the backpacks" or distribute them directly to children in need.

### **Food for Hope**

Food pantries are always in need these days given the growing number of clients. Run a food drive from your home and have friends and family drop off, for example, canned goods, cereal, pasta, rice, and beans, and then we will coordinate with one of two pantries for you to bring the food, stock the shelves, and even help clients purchase what they need.

### **Your Love of Sports = Helping Kids**

Regardless of the sport, you can create an opportunity to raise money for Children's Hope Chest and direct the funds to one of our many programs or partners most basic needs. Here are some examples.

**Soccer, Hockey, Baseball:** Use the season to get your friends and family to donate \$1 for every goal or run you make (or stop if you play goalie). At the end of the season, you will be surprised how much money you raised and how much harder you worked for your team.

**Basketball:** Conduct a Round-Robin event at school gymnasium or other sports facility (Hooperstown might be at option) and play three on three games. Each team would pay a small fee to participate and the money would be donated to The Children's Hope Chest. You can increase the money you raise by also doing a bake sale at the event.

### **Create Your Own**

Several of our partners often turn to us for other items that they need. For instance, the Pleasantville Cottages needed new comforter sets for the children at the institutionalized foster care facility. To help collect these sets, we held a "Have a Party/Give a Party" event where the entrance to the party was a comforter set. More than 250 comforter sets were collected and the children who organized the party then hosted a party at the Cottages and helped the children pick out their new comforter set. We will be happy to work with you on creating an event like this and identify a specific need.

### **Other Ideas**

Connect with a teacher, at school or activity, and use your hobbies, talents, interests, and passions to create a unique program or mitzvah project that is perfect for you!

# Tips for Organizing Great Drives

Putting together a drive for needed goods, be it for food, clothing, books, or DVDs, is a great way to perform an act of *zedakah*. It not only speaks to being sensitive to the economic and material balance, among people, but addresses the issue of waste. Collecting things we no longer use should be easy.

- First, speak with the organization as to what their needs are. As an example, local food pantries are always very short on dry cereal.
- Learn about the cause so you can be informed.
- Enlist your family, neighbors, and friends through email, flyers or through personal one-on-one requests.
- Spearhead this alone, or invite your class or team to solicit donations from their contacts as well.
- Have specific times, place and receptacles for donations.
- Donating items that are shabby, broken, or dirty undoes the deed because such a donation demeans the self-worth of the receiver. So, state clearly that items should be in very good or like-new condition.
- Although families really do mean to go through their garages, it is common to forget. Send reminders.
- If it would move things along, offer to pick up donations.

# B'nai Mitzvah Twinning Program

## **Remember Us - The Holocaust B'nai Mitzvah Project**

Samara Hutman

LAMOTH

100 South The Grove Drive

Los Angeles, CA 90036

(415) 265-9801

[www.remember-us.org](http://www.remember-us.org)

Remember Us: The Holocaust B'nai Mitzvah Project offers an invitation for children preparing to become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah to connect with the memory of children lost in the Holocaust before they could be called to the Torah. The Project provides the student and the Bar/Bat Mitzvah teacher with the name of a lost child, information about him/her, and suggestions for simple acts of remembrance, such as doing mitzvot b'shem (in the name of the child), mentioning the child in the D'Var Torah or speech from the bimah, taking on the mitzvah of saying Kaddish, lighting a yahrzeit candle yearly. There is no fee to participate in the program but a donation is required. See the website for more details.



A unique Mitzvah project opportunity for passionate baseball and softball players with a nonprofit organization, Pitch In For Baseball & Softball (PIFB/S).

Founded in 2005, PIFB/S collects new and gently used baseball/softball equipment and redistributes it to under-resourced communities and children in the United States and around the world. For the last 13 years, over 600 kids have chosen PIFB/S as their Mitzvah project, collecting equipment and/or raising funds, to ensure that other children around the world have an opportunity to play ball. Our mission resonates with many children who play baseball or softball who want to help other kids around the world feel the same joy of being on the field as they do.

Here is a link to Pitch In For Baseball & Softball's [mitzvah brochure](#). Should you need additional materials or have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to our Development & Communications Manager, Bri Kuhn, at [briannak@pifb.org](mailto:briannak@pifb.org).

**We hope that this handbook, with  
its listing of many ideas,  
will inspire you to make the  
performance of mitzvah a natural  
part of your life.**

The information contained within is correct to the best of our knowledge. If you find any inaccuracies or have any questions, please contact Dina Fisher at [dinafish1@gmail.com](mailto:dinafish1@gmail.com) or the Executive Director, Eric Nussbaum at [enussbaum@jcch.org](mailto:enussbaum@jcch.org)

