

**SOCIAL ACTION**

**Tikkun Olam**

**Special Edition**

# B'nei Mitzvah Projects

**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***

**“Who is wise? The one who learns from all people...**

**“Who is mighty? The one who subdues the evil inclination...**

**“Who is rich? The one who rejoices in his portion....**

**Who is honored? The one who honors other human beings....”**

*Pirkei Avot 4:1*

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# INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on becoming a *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah*! You are now “God’s partner” in making our world a better place, which is the focus of this handbook. This is so important for us, as Jews, that the daily prayers remind us three times a day that we are to engage in *tikkun olam*, the repair of the world.

## **And how can you manage to do this when you are in school...**

or on a sports field, at music lessons, doing your homework or after-school events with friends? Most likely, doing a *mitzvah* is the furthest thing on your mind. It really isn’t hard. For example, to practice the *mitzvah* of “welcoming the stranger,” you might reach out to a new student, invite him or her to sit with you at lunch or introduce the person to your friends. You could even start an initiative whereby new students are matched up with a friend on their first day. This *mitzvah* of welcoming the stranger is mentioned in both Isaiah and Deuteronomy.

## Frequently asked questions

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

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

- **Does this handbook address all of them?**

No, just the *mitzvah* of *tzedakah*.

- ***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 and 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*. But, as you will see on the following pages, it is *not* the only way.

- **What is *chesed*?**

Acts of *chesed* are deeds of loving-kindness. For example, visiting a sick friend.

- **...and *tikkun olam*?**

*Tikkun olam* literally means to fix the world, done through the *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 7 days. Figure out *when* and in *what ways* you can commit. It can be something that is part of your routine. For example, once a week, enlist friends to join you in picking up the trash (use disposable gloves!) encountered on your way home.

- **Okay, how do I begin?**

Use this handbook to look for projects that spark your interest. If you have pursuits that are not addressed in this *Mitzvah* Handbook, give some thought to how you can use them in the service of making things better. For example, if your life revolves around soccer, you could organize a drive to collect both used and new soccer equipment needed by children in a residential treatment center or other facility.

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

**“Deeds of kindness are equal to  
all the commandments.”**

**–Talmud Yerushalmi, Tractate Peah 1:1**

The information contained within is correct to the best of our knowledge. If you find any inaccuracies please contact Adria Pass at [ahp45@aol.com](mailto:ahp45@aol.com).

## AT A GLANCE...

- A** “Adopt a Grandparent”: Be a friendly visitor to someone who wants company.
- B** Book Drive: Organize a book drive for a clinic that services children.
- C** Centerpieces can be made out of items that can be reused (plants, toys, CDs, books).
- D** Donate the flowers on the *bima* used during your service to a shelter, nursing home or hospital.
- E** Environmental Efforts: Get your school, synagogue or youth group involved in a project to raise awareness in the 3 R's—Reduce, Re-use and Recycle.
- F** Food Drive: Coordinate a food drive so that WJC’s contributions to the Food Pantry are substantial. Creating a specific drive for cereals would be very helpful as it is too expensive for many families to buy.
- G** Give a certain percentage of the total amount you received in *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* gifts to a worthwhile charity.
- H** Have a tree planted in Israel in honor of each guest or each table. The Jewish National Fund ([www.jnf.org](http://www.jnf.org)) should be able to help you in this regard.
- I** In addition to or instead of a party, volunteer your time in service of your community with your friends.
- J** Just ask your guests to bring an item to donate to the homeless (socks, clothes, toiletries, toys).
- K** Know what the Hispanic Resource Center does.
- L** Leftover Food: Donate the leftover food to a food pantry or homeless shelter.
- M** *Minyan*: Upon becoming a *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah*, attend *Minyan* regularly.
- N** Nursing Home/Hospital: Bring your pet to visit.
- O** 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.
- P** Plant a vegetable/fruit garden and donate the produce to a soup kitchen
- Q** Question the status quo. Stand up for what you believe in.
- R** Read to people who have difficulty seeing or are too young to read.
- S** Shut off the lights when you leave the room.
- T** Take your outgrown sneakers to be recycled.
- U** 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.
- V** Volunteer at an animal shelter.
- W** Walk or bicycle ride when you can.
- X** Xerox a list of environmental tips and distribute them to neighbors and friends.
- Y** Young children at Blythedale Children’s Hospital need video games rated E.
- Z** Zero Waste: Learn about zero waste and what you and your family can do to be part of the solution. <http://myzerowaste.com>

**Celebrate!**  
*L'Chaim*

## TIPS FOR A GREENER *SIMCHA*

The Torah prohibits wasteful practices. Modesty in consumption is a value that Jews have held for centuries.

- As an alternative to decorating the sanctuary with flower arrangements, fill baskets with non-perishable food items and use them as decorative adornments.
- Make your table centerpieces out of items that can be donated to kids who need them, like sports equipment, books and art supplies.
- Consider using potted plants as centerpieces as they contribute oxygen, recycle carbon dioxide and are natural purifiers.
- If you have fresh flowers, donate them to a shelter, group home or nursing home to be given to someone who could use a lift.
- Ask your florist to avoid craft foams for centerpieces. These release toxins during production and when unwrapped.
- 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. Select from numerous invitation styles, ink colors and fonts in both English and Hebrew. For more information or to place an order, please call 800-700-1312 or e-mail [rplaut@jnf.org](mailto:rplaut@jnf.org).
- Make place cards out of recycled or plantable wildflower seed paper.
- Use eco-friendly *kippot*—Buy 100% biodegradable seed kippot. <http://circlesoflife.com>
- Use reusable dishware, glasses, cloth napkins, and tablecloths, or go in another direction and purchase 100% recycled paper napkins, biodegradable compostable dishes and cutlery. Use biodegradable trash bags and utensils.
- Ask the caterer to use pitchers of iced tap water rather than bottled water.
- Choose a sustainable caterer who uses sustainably sourced and organic foods.
- Minimize the amount of meat on the menu and substitute fish, pasta and veggies.
- Discourage food waste by requesting that your caterer wrap up the leftovers. Ask another B'nei Mitzvah family to bring the foods the following day to a shelter if your family can't.

- Forgo one-time-use favors. Have eco-friendly giveaways such as a reusable water bottle filled with candies.
- Avoid petroleum-based candles. They “tap” out our resources. Beeswax candles are a better choice.
- Think zero waste even with your clothes. Purchase special outfits that can be worn again after your *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*.
- Educate guests throughout service about your eco-friendly choices.
- Give donations to your favorite environmental organization.

Tips listed above are from *Simple Actions for Jews to Help Green the Planet: Jews, Judaism, and the Environment*, by Rabbi Dov Peretz Elkins and *Spirituality is When Learning Leads to Meaningful Action*, by Rabbi Goldie Milgram.

**Use recyclable materials, or landfills will retain  
memories of your event for generations to come.**

## ***SIMCHA* FOOD DONATIONS**

To avoid throwing out food after your *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* party, bring it to people in shelters who would appreciate it! Have your parents make arrangements with the caterer to package the perishables.

In the beginning of the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* year, organize a chain, or simply ask the family that just had their *simcha* to perform this *mitzvah* on your behalf. Then you can do the same for a friend the following week, once your big day has passed. Bring foods to one of the following place, but please call beforehand to let them know you're coming.

### **Volunteers of America**

395 Webster Avenue  
New Rochelle, New York  
(914) 636-8689  
<http://www.voa.org>

### **Oasis**

19 Washington Place  
New Rochelle, New York  
(914) 633-0101  
<http://www.foodclothingshelter.org>

### **Open Arms Shelter**

86 East Post Road  
White Plains, New York  
(914) 948-5044  
<http://www.gracecommunitycenter.org>

### **Providence House**

89 Sickles Avenue  
New Rochelle, New York  
(914) 632-4177  
<http://providencehouse.org>

**Although you are covered by the Good Samaritan Law  
in Westchester, please donate food no more than  
a day or two after your simcha.**

# **Social Action at WJC**

## ONE-DAY *MITZVAH* ACTIVITIES

### Community Day

Families work together for the synagogue's annual Community Day. We make a meal for the Hope Soup Kitchen in New Rochelle, including baked ziti, salad and a fruit dessert. We also bake cookies, decorated by our volunteers and put them into decorated bags. Those are also given to the Hope Soup kitchen. In addition, we make 400-600 sandwiches for the Don Bosco shelter in Port Chester. Volunteers have an opportunity to cook, chop, bake, decorate and design crafts. There are usually 50-75 volunteers on this day, of all ages. Contact Sondra to help develop other meaningful projects. **Sondra Levy (914) 833-1568 or sklevy@aol.com.**

### Project Ezra Passover Food Drive

Before Passover, WJC has a drive for holiday foods for the elderly serviced by Project Ezra. We need you to contribute to the drive, or even organize one yourself so we have a sufficient amount of food. *B'nei Mitzvah* volunteers are also needed to help box it all up. If a group of kids are interested, a fun, guided tour of the Lower East Side can be arranged. **Contact Sharon Silver (914) 698-9662 or sraplata@msn.com** to find out which foods are needed

### Project Ezra comes to Westchester

Help set up and provide hospitality at our yearly luncheon held at WJC for the elderly living on the Lower East Side. They look forward to their yearly WJC "day in the country" and the delicious lunch they share with our own seniors. If you are musically inclined, or can entertain the group with an instrument, singing, either alone or with others, please share your talents, or just be a friendly lunch companion. **Contact Janice Malett (914) 834-1344 or apple2@optonline.net.**

### Special Passover Visit in the Bronx

This is an ideal volunteer opportunity for all family members, regardless of age, to meet people you otherwise would not and bring smiles to their faces. On a Sunday morning a week prior to Passover, you and your family can perform the *mitzvah* of *bikkur cholim*. Distribute food packages directly to homebound elders in the North Bronx, Co-op City and Pelham Parkway areas. Staying a few minutes to visit is equally appreciated! These seniors are all screened and will be waiting for your visit. You will be able to pick up the food packages and be given maps and the names and addresses of as many people as you wish to visit. Car caravan as a group from WJC or meet at the *Bnai Brith* Center on Bartow Avenue in the Bronx. **Contact Ruth Obernbreit (914) 834-3905 or ruthie6851@gmail.com** to receive a reminder and instructions several weeks beforehand.

### Mitzvah Day

On WJC's Mitzvah Day, which is in the fall, you can clean out your closet to donate clothes that are given to other kids who can't afford new clothes. You can organize a drive for over-the-counter medicine, which we send to a Jewish community in Ternopil, Ukraine. The population there is impoverished and has multiple health problems. **Contact Eve Russ (914) 834-4691 or eruss143@aol.com.**

## Hispanic Resource Center (HRC) December Drive

The WJC is committed to welcoming the stranger and reaching out to the new immigrant community in our midst. One way we do this is to have a gift card and toy drive every December for those families serviced by the HRC who are struggling financially. We need your help that day to wrap gifts and collect the cards and toys that day, but most importantly aiding us by having drives of your own for either toys or the gift cards will ensure that no family will be deprived. The HRC community is always extremely appreciative and it is important that these families feel remembered by their Jewish neighbors at this time. **Contact Judy Yavitz [jyavitz@deyblp.com](mailto:jyavitz@deyblp.com)** to find out what is needed this year and the day of the collection.

### **Yes She Can, Inc.**

Marjorie Madfis  
35 Hubbard Drive  
White Plains, NY 10605  
914-428-1258

Yes She Can Inc. is a new local non-profit organization dedicated to developing job skills and employment opportunities for teen girls and young women with autism. Their first venture is Girl AGain, a boutique selling gently used American Girl dolls, clothes, furniture, accessories, and books. The store will employ both people with and without disabilities in an inclusive setting.

Yes She Can needs American Girl brand merchandise in good condition to sell in their boutique. Employees will clean the dolls and the clothes, arrange complete outfits, determine prices, display the products, and work on inventory management, marketing, and customer service in the store. The goal is to develop skills and confidence so that employees can then move on to employment with other retailers.

The person selecting this Mitzvah project will need to:

1. Create a plan to advertise and promote their local, regional or national collection drive for Yes She Can Inc.
2. Determine how donations will be collected
3. Run collection
4. Attend a work session with Yes She Can Inc. employees and volunteers

This should be a fun and rewarding mitzvah, an opportunity to not only provide the basis for work but to also have first hand experience in working side by side with their employees.

**You shall not oppress a sojourner. You  
know the heart of a sojourner, for you  
were sojourners in the land of Egypt.**

**–Exodus 23:9**

# **Feeding the Hungry**

*Ma'achil R'eivim*

## HOW WE CAN HELP IN OUR COMMUNITY

**When you are asked in the world to come, “What was your work,” and you answer, “I fed the hungry,” you will be told, “This is the gate of the Lord, enter into it, you who have fed the hungry.”**

*–Midrash Tehillim 118:17*

### **Larchmont-Mamaroneck Hunger Task Force**

134 Center Avenue  
Mamaroneck, New York 10543  
Phone: (914) 698-3558  
<http://www.lmfoodpantry.org>

The Larchmont-Mamaroneck Hunger Task Force is looking for individuals to work at the Food Pantry on an ongoing basis. They need your help, but it is important that you contact them before you come! Due to limited space they can only accept a certain number of volunteers at a time to pack groceries into bags at 5:15 - 6:30 pm on Tuesday evenings.

At WJC we collect the following to donate to the food pantry:

September	Cereal /Parmalat
October	Tuna fish
November	Dried Beans
December	Coffee/Tea
January	Canned Soup
February	Cereal /Parmalat
March/April	Passover Food for Project Ezra
May	Canned Veggies/Fruits
June	Bottled Juice (not refrigerated)
July	Tuna fish
August	Cereal /Dried Milk

### **Meals-On-Wheels of White Plains**

12 Ridgeview Avenue  
White Plains, New York 10606  
(914) 946-6878  
[www.mowwp.org](http://www.mowwp.org)

Meals-on-Wheels of White Plains is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to delivering nutritious meals to homebound residents of White Plains. Dedicated volunteers deliver meals. They have two routes on the weekend that can be filled by kids and their families who are interested in making delivered together.

## **Hope Community Services**

50 Washington Avenue  
New Rochelle, New York  
(914) 636-4010

<http://hopecommunityservices.org/volunteers.html>

Dinner is served every Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, and the last two Mondays of the Month. Volunteers generally are needed between the hours of 4:30 and 6:00 PM 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.

**If among you, one of your brothers should become poor, in any of your towns within your land that the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not harden you heart or shut your hand against your poor brother, but you shall open you hand him and lend him sufficient for his need, whatever it may be.**

**–Deuteronomy 15:7-11**

## SOME ORGANIZATIONS WORKING TO FIGHT HUNGER WORLDWIDE

### ***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.

### **America's Second Harvest**

<http://www.secondharvest.org>

This is a network of over 200 food banks in the United States, distributing food to 26 million hungry American each year.

### **Center on Hunger and Poverty**

<http://www.centeronhunger.org>

Located at Brandeis University's Heller School, this organization provides advocacy groups and other organizations the latest research on how to help improve the lives of low-income children and families.

### **Heifer International**

<http://www.heifer.org>

Heifer International helps alleviate hunger worldwide by providing livestock, training and other services to small-scale farmers with the goal of making them self-sufficient.

**“Let us launch a Jewish campaign against hunger. Drawing on all our resources—our wealth and our wisdom, our customs and our competencies, our memories and our dreams—let us create an old/new tradition. Henceforward, as in olden times, let us set aside a portion—of our joy to feed the hungry.”**

**—Leonard Fein, Founder, MAZON**

# **People to People**

*Ben Adam L'Chavero*

## ***CHESED***

The *mitzvah* of Ben Adam l'Chaveiro commands us to reach out to people with *chesed*, deeds of loving kindness. It is these acts that sustain the world and connect people to one another.

### **Bullying**

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

An area where such teachings are sorely needed concerns itself with bullying. We trust that your parents and teachers have touched upon this subject, but you should know that there are *mitzvot* that speak to this directly. Ben Adam l'Chaveiro reminds us to, "love others as you love yourself (Leviticus 19:18.) and in cases where someone is getting hurt, "...you must not stand idly by..." (Leviticus 19:16)

So, it is important to not speak poorly about others (*lashon hora*). 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 (<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.

### **Reach Out and Read**

<http://www.reachoutandread.org>

Reach Out and Read is a nonprofit organization that promotes early literacy and school readiness in pediatric exam rooms nationwide by giving new books to children and advice to parents about the importance of reading aloud. They need donations new or gently used books for children ages 6 months to 4 years old. They also need board books, picture books, and soft baby books.

Open Door Family Medical Centers along with local hospitals have a Reach Out and Read program. Volunteers read aloud with young children and help them select a book to take home. Become a volunteer reader to help build childhood literacy. Min. Age: 14

- Open Door Family Medical Center  
**Volunteer Coordinator, (914) 502-1468**
- Sound Shore Medical Center  
**Volunteer Coordinator, (914) 365-4987**
- Westchester Medical Center  
**Reach Out and Read Coordinator, (914) 493-8011**
- White Plains Medical Center  
**Reach Out and Read Coordinator, (914) 493-8011**

## HONORING THE ELDERLY

**The test of a people is how it behaves toward the old.**

**–Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel**

The *mitzvah* of *Ben Adam l'Chaveiro* is emphasized in yet another *mitzvah*, that of *Kibud z' Kenim*, which means to honor 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. Multiple *mitzvot* take place when you attend to an older person.

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

845 Palmer Avenue

Mamaroneck, New York 10543

Amy Lionheart, (914) 864-5140, ALionheart@jewishhome.org <http://www.jewishhome.org/our-services/our-campus/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, physical therapy appointments and recreational activities.  
Age Min: 14

- **Friendly Visitor**

Volunteer at their senior healthcare facility and become a friend to one or more senior residents. Spend time talking, walking, and/or reading with a senior. Age Min: 13, Age Min with Adult: None

- **Hospitality Cart Volunteer**

Help senior residents of their healthcare facility 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 Min: 13, Age Min 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 on the library cart directly to residents' rooms. Age Min: 13, Age Min 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 pushing wheelchairs to and from recreational activities. Age Min: 13, Age Min 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 Min: 14
- **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 Lets Do Lunch program; evening with the movies and serving snacks. Age Min: 13, Age Min with Adult: None
- **Tea Time Volunteer**  
Help short-term patients at the healthcare facility by serving tea, coffee and cookies from 3PM-4:15PM daily. Age Min: 13 Age Min with Adult: None
- **Scrabble & 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 Min: 13, Age Min 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 and hold books during service. Families are welcome to volunteer. Age Min: 13, Age Min with Adult: None

## **United Hebrew**

391 Pelham Road  
New Rochelle, New York 10805  
<http://www.unitedhebrewgeriatric.org>  
(914) 632-2804

- **Friendly Visitors**  
Many of the senior residents at their residences have no relatives or friends who are able to visit. Friendly visits make a world of difference to these individuals. Age Min: 13, Age Min with Adult: 10
- **Game Player**  
The residents of this senior residence enjoy group games and board games. You can call a bingo Number or play a board game with their residents. Age Min: 13
- **Strollers and Rollers**  
Many residents of this senior's facility would enjoy a walk around the facility. They could use a friend to accompany or assistance in transport to activities. Age Min: 14
- **Computer assistant**  
If you love to use a computer than why not work with a senior? Be matched with one of their residents and help them enhance their computer skills. Age Min: 13.
- **Movie Day**  
Do you or your friends have used videos/dvds to donate? Start a video/DVD collection in their library, and share a movie afternoon with their residents.

- **Care packages**  
Ask friends, family and neighbors to donate airline and hotel giveaway soaps, shampoos, and lotions. Create your own gift packages and give them to their residents.
- **Customized Birthday Cards**  
Take pictures of the birthday residents, make a card for them and deliver it to their rooms.
- **Reading**  
Read aloud to a visually impaired resident
- **Concerts**  
Do you play an instrument, sing, write, or act? Show your talent and create a concert or show.
- **Pillows**  
Decorate a pillow with the resident's name on it.
- **Karaoke Night**  
Lip sync with the residents to their favorite music.
- **Oral History**  
Interview residents, write an oral history and display it with their picture. This can also be bound in a book or a notebook.

## **My Second Home**

95 Radio Circle Drive  
Mount Kisco, New York 10549  
Gerry Goldberg, (914) 305-6834  
ggoldberg@fsw.org

- **Friendly Companion**  
On the weekend, at this adult day program seniors need friendly and patient young people to socialize with. They appreciate good listeners and someone to work with in the garden or on an art project or share a meal. The Saturday routine generally includes breakfast, exercises, joke and trivia time, lunch, music and afternoon tea. There are often special guests and programs. The hours on Saturday are 9:00 am to 3 pm. Age Min. 14
- **“Adopt a Grandparent”**  
The seniors welcome friendly caring individuals of all ages to share moments and warmth. Ways to ‘adopt a grandparent’ are to regularly visit with them at My Second Home, write a letter; send homemade ‘gifts’ such as a child’s painting or other art creation, call them at home, share a meal, participate in a yoga or art class or listen to music together, make a special birthday celebration or create your own event. Age Min. 14

## 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

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.

### **Project Ezra**

465 Grand Street, 4th floor  
New York, New York 10002  
(212) 982-4124  
<http://www.projectezra.org/>

We at WJC already have a connection to Project Ezra, an independent grassroots social service agency. In one of their programs, the frail elderly who still live on the Lower East Side, visit suburban synagogues such as ours for a "day in the country." These visits lift everyone's spirits and combat the social isolation plaguing this population. We also collect Passover foods for Project Ezra clients each year. Project Ezra also strives to provide a *havurah* for the Jewish population that still lives in this neighborhood, once the center of Jewish life in New York City.

### **Roots and Branches**

Director, Arthur Strimmling  
315 Hudson Street  
New York, New York 10013  
Tel: (212) 366-8032  
<http://rootsandbranchestheater.org>

Roots and Branches is an intergenerational theatre company that builds understanding and respect between generations by challenging stereotypes about aging by means of improvisational theatre workshops. Working on a shoestring budget, this unusual troupe provides performances for seniors in different venues throughout the boroughs.

### **Second Wind Dreams:**

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

Similar to the "Make A Wish Foundation," this organization works to provide hope and uplifting experiences to elderly individuals across the United States.

## **Grandparents' Coalition**

### **Westchester Pubic/Private Partnership for Aging Services**

Nine South First Avenue  
10th Floor  
Mount Vernon, New York 10550

There are almost 5000 grandparents in Westchester County who have sole responsibility for raising their grandchildren. Frequently this is a huge financial burden, and many must leave retirement to provide for them. The Grandparents' Coalition, through the Westchester Pubic/Private Partnership for Aging Services will help provide one of these students with new notebooks, pens and other basic tools of learning. Please send your tax-deductible contribution to the address above.

### **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.

**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**

# **Art and Music**

*Hiddur Mitzvah*

# ART

## Friendship Bracelets

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

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

## The Hiddur Mitzvah Project

c/o The Gary Rosenthal Collection  
4218 Howard Avenue  
Kensington, Maryland 20895  
(301) 493-5577  
<http://www.hiddurmitzvah.org>

*Hiddur mitzvah* is a commandment to make things beautiful while doing good. Jewish ritual pieces required in *Mitzvot* should be as aesthetically pleasing as possible in order to glorify God and his commandments.

The *Hiddur Mitzvah* Project makes it possible for anyone to create his or her own Judaica in the style of artist Gary Rosenthal. The process of creating fused glass is simplified so that anyone at all can make his or her own. Using white craft glue, participants create mosaics of tumbled glass pieces on precut glass templates. Those mosaics are sent back to the Gary Rosenthal Collection studio where they are fired and become part of a finished piece of Judaica. The project is committed to helping others perform *Hiddur Mitzvot* through the *Hiddur Mitzvah* Project-a fun way to perform a service and, at the same time, teach invaluable lessons about arts enrichment and community service.

## Willow Towers Assisted Living

The Beverly and Alfred J. Green Pavilion  
355 Pelham Road  
New Rochelle, New York 10805  
(914) 636-6565 Ext. 109  
<http://www.willowtowers.com>

### Art Assistant

Assist with giving out art supplies, organizing supplies for the instructor, clean up and present the artwork. Needed four days a week. Wednesday, 3:00 p.m. and Sunday 2:00 p.m. Minimum Age: 14

## Sarah Neuman Center for Healthcare and Rehabilitation

845 Palmer Avenue  
Mamaroneck, New York 10543  
Gail Koller, (914) 698-6036 or [gail.koller18@gmail.com](mailto:gail.koller18@gmail.com)

### Art Therapy Assistant

Visit a group of alert and friendly elders and interview a senior by asking them questions about their life. For example, what is your proudest moment? Then you will write or draw the answers, all under the guidance of an art therapist. A group of four interviewers and four seniors works best, so invite your friends.

## MUSIC

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

845 Palmer Avenue

Mamaroneck, New York 10543

(914) 864-5140

Amy Lionheart, (914) 864-5140, [ALionheart@jewishhome.org](mailto:ALionheart@jewishhome.org) <http://www.jewishhome.org/our-services/our-campuses/sarah-neuman>

They have several grand pianos and need musical volunteers to play music for the residents to enjoy. Age Min: 13, Age Min with Adult: None

### **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 arts 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 multi-cultural and multi-generational.

**Music . . . can name the  
unnamable and communicate  
the unknowable.**

**–Leonard Bernstein**

# **Protecting the Environment**

*Ba'al Tashkhit*

## TAKING CARE OF OUR EARTH

Once, while the sage, Honi, was walking along a road, he saw an old man planting a carob tree. Honi asked him: “How many years will it take for this tree to give forth its fruit?” The man answered that it would require 70 years. Honi asked: “Are you so healthy a man that you expect to live that length of time and eat its fruit?” The man answered: “I found a fruitful world because my ancestors planted it for me. So, too, will I plant for my children.”

—(Babylonian Talmud, *Ta’anit* 23a)

- Collect old phone books, newspapers and magazines in your neighborhood for recycling.
- Shut off lights, radios, and TV's 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 8 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, while a bath takes up to 70 gallons! To save even more water, keep your shower under five minutes long—try timing yourself with a clock 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.
- Clean up a beach—Harbor Island, Larchmont's Dog Beach, Manor Park.
- 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.

Observing the Sabbath is a way to begin to engender this sense of love and humility before Creation. It is also a way to living a sustainable life. For one day out of seven, we limit our use of resources. We walk to attend synagogue. We do not cook and we do not shop. We can use the day for relaxation, contemplation and to ask ourselves: what is the real purpose of human life? Are we here on earth only to get and to spend?

*Ba'al Tashkhit* and the *mitzvah* of observing *Shabbat* can go hand-in-hand. One way is to devote a *Shabbat* to walking or hiking in the woods. You do not need to go far. The Marshlands Conservancy in Rye, the Weinberg Nature Center or the Leatherstocking Trail and Manor Beach are all places within walking distance.

## **Project Regeneration–Invasive Removal Workdays**

(914) 967-5150

Volunteers are needed to help the reforestation project that will preserve our forest. You will be removing invasives and planting native trees in their four-acre deer enclosure. Volunteers must be at least 12 years old and must be accompanied by an adult if younger than 14. Please call to sign-up.

### **Weinberg Nature Center**

455 Mamaroneck Road

Scarsdale, New York 10583

(914) 722-1289

<http://www.weinbergnaturecenter.org>

- ***Adopt a plot***

Adopt a plot of the sanctuary that needs tending and care. Age Min: None

- ***Adopt-an-Animal***

Do you love animals, but can't have one at home? Adopt one of the Center's furry, scaly or feathered friends, clean cages, feed animals and change water and help give them the care they need. Minimum Age: 14

### **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 and trails through the forest and fields of the park. In addition the Audubon Society of New York notes it as an "Important Bird Area".

Work is needed 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.

### **Rye Nature Center**

873 Boston Post Road

Rye, New York 10580

(914) 967-5150

[info@ryenaturecenter.org](mailto:info@ryenaturecenter.org)

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

The Rye Nature Center offers program 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 two miles of hiking trails, ponds, and streams.

## **The Nicodemus Wilderness Project**

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

[mail@wildernessproject.org](mailto:mail@wildernessproject.org)

The Apprentice Ecologist Initiative™ has engaged tens of thousands of young volunteers from around the world in environmental cleanup and conservation projects since 1999. The goals of the Apprentice Ecologist Initiative™ are to:

- Elevate youth into leadership roles by engaging them in environmental cleanup and conservation projects
- Empower young people to rebuild the environmental and social well-being of our communities
- Improve local living conditions for both citizens and wildlife through education, activism, and action

How to become an official Apprentice Ecologist and be considered for a scholarship:

- Conduct your own environmental stewardship project in 2012
- Take a few digital photos of your project in action
- Write an essay about your project and what it meant to you
- Register and upload your favorite project photo along with your essay

Examples of projects that other Apprentice Ecologists have completed in the past include:

- Removing and recycling trash from a local park, river, beach, or other natural area
- Planting native trees at a school, local park, or in a deforested area
- Starting a community or school recycling program
- Protecting a terrestrial or aquatic area for native wildlife
- Promoting the conservation of an endangered species or area
- Educating others about wildlife or conservation issues
- Removing graffiti from natural areas
- Taking steps to prevent pollution/contamination locally
- Removing nonnative vegetation so that native vegetation can flourish
- Improving awareness about the importance of using renewable energy sources
- Reducing soil erosion by maintaining established trails and closing off short-cuts
- Assisting the elderly with their yards by planting/maintaining vegetation that provides native wildlife habitat
- Building a rain garden that utilizes roof runoff to grow vegetation that provides native wildlife habitat

After uploading your project photo and essay, they will publish your work on their Global Registry of Apprentice Ecologists. The deadline for uploading your Apprentice Ecologist project essay is midnight GMT on December 31, 2012.

Important tips for writing an award-winning essay about your Apprentice Ecologist project:

- Briefly describe your personal background and why you chose to do an Apprentice Ecologist project on behalf of the Nicodemus Wilderness Project
- Name and describe the area where you conducted your project
- Provide details about what you did and accomplished during your project
- If your project was part of a multi-year effort, focus your essay on the work that you conducted in 2012
- Describe why you think it is important to take care of the area where you conducted your project
- Explain how your project helps benefit your community and the environment
- Describe how your Apprentice Ecologist Project has helped to enrich your life and what has inspired you to do in the future

**It is forbidden to live in a town that does not have a green garden.**

**–Talmud Kiddushin 4:12**

### **TerraCycle**

<http://www.terracycle.net>

TerraCycle's goal is to help eliminate the idea of waste. They do this by creating collection and solution programs for all kinds of typically non-recyclable waste. In essence turning the non-recyclable recyclable. They do this by creating waste collection programs, "brigades," and turning the collected waste into new products, ranging from recycled park benches to upcycled backpacks.

To start collecting please sign up and join a brigade. There are brigades for many different waste streams ranging from candy wrappers to pens. While some brigades have a cost, many are free, where they pay the shipping and for every unit of waste you send to them at least \$0.02 goes to a charity or school of your choice. If you are interested in signing up, you can download the free Collection Kit to get started.

TerraCycle upcycles and recycles traditionally non-recyclable waste (including drink pouches, chip bags, tooth brushes and many more) into a large variety of consumer products. These products keep waste out of our landfills and contribute to a cleaner world.

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

<http://www.nikereuseashoe.com/get-involved/individual-shoe-recycling>

Clean out your closet, take a peek under your bed and ask your friends and family—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.

## 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.

### **Cerebral Palsy of Westchester**

1186 King Street  
Rye Brook, New York 10573  
(914) 937-3800  
<http://www.cpwestchester.org>

They need computers and electronic games for young adults.

**The companies below recycle old computers and electronic equipment. For more information contact the county's Recycling HelpLine at (914) 813-5425.**

### **Brookfield Resource Management**

25 Lamont Street  
Elmsford, New York 10523  
(800) 464-0616 or (914) 592-5250  
E-mail: [info@brookfieldco.com](mailto:info@brookfieldco.com)  
<http://www.brookfieldco.com>

### **We Recycle!**

249 East Sandford Boulevard  
Mount Vernon, New York 10550  
Tel: (877) 937-3292  
<http://www.werecycle.com>

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

19 Mill Road  
Eastchester, New York 10709  
(914) 347-4376  
Note: This location accepts items. It is not a retail outlet.

### **Goodwill-New Rochelle**

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

### **Goodwill**

(718) 777-6320  
[donations.department@goodwillny.org](mailto:donations.department@goodwillny.org)

Goodwill locations accept all electronics, working and non-working, including those covered under the NYS Electronic Equipment and Recycling and Reuse Act, from any individual or business in New York. Special arrangements must be made if electronic equipment exceeds what can fit into the back of a small van. Stores have to plan to accommodate larger donations, which can be coordinated by contacting Goodwill's Donation Department

# **Animals**

*Tzar Ba'alei Chayim*

**But ask the beasts and they will teach you; the  
birds...will tell you...the fish...will inform you.**

**Job 12:7-9**

The mitzvah of *tzar ba'alei chayim* demands that we take the care of animals seriously. The laws of *Kashrut* is a daily reminder of the preciousness of 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 your 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/drives; bake sales, lemonade stands, or car washes. While at the shelter, take a tour, and get a brief history and educational information re: 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 and/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/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/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**

There are always projects that need help going on at the shelter. They include planting, weeding, gardening, cleanup, painting, trail maintenance, and more.

### **Therapy Dogs International**

[Www.tdi-dog.org](http://www.tdi-dog.org)

Therapy Dogs International is a volunteer organization that tests and registers dog and owners to visit nursing homes, hospitals, schools, libraries, and anywhere else a visit from a dog will brighten someone's day. Your dog must be evaluated to make sure that he or she is a candidate. You'll need an adult to accompany you and your dog.

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

845 Palmer Avenue  
Mamaroneck, New York 10543

### **Pet Visiting Volunteer**

Residents enjoy visiting and playing with a pet, often reminiscing about having a pet of their own. On the first interview please bring only the photographs of your pet. For the application they require a letter from your veterinarian stating that your animal is gentle, well behaved and would make a good pet visitor with the elderly. Age Min: 13, Age Min with Adult: None

### **Willow Towers Assisted Living**

The Beverly and Alfred J. Green Pavilion  
355 Pelham Road  
New Rochelle, New York 10805  
(914) 636-6565 Ext. 109  
<http://www.willowtowers.com>

Bring your small- or medium-sized pet to a meet and greet with the residents. They love the company of a furry friend. Saturday, Sundays and Tuesdays. Minimum Age: 14

### **United Hebrew**

New Rochelle, New York  
<http://www.unitedhebrewgeriatric.org>  
(914) 632-2804 x1224

Do you have a loving pet? Animals and their friends make regular visits to the residents of this senior residence. They invite volunteers to bring their own furry friend and join the program. Minimum Age: 13 and must be accompanied by an adult.

**One must not put any food in one's  
mouth, until the animals have been fed.**

**–Gittin 62a**

**Donations and  
Drives That Make a  
Difference**

## 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 *tzedakah*. It not only speaks to being sensitive to the economic and material balance, among people, but also 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, our local food pantry is always very short on dry cereal.
- Learn about the cause so you can be informed.
- Enlist your family, neighbors, and friends via email, flyers or personal appear
- Spearhead this alone, or invite you class or team to solicit donations from their contacts as well.
- Have specific times, place and receptacles for donations.
- Donating things 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.

**Whoever gives a coin to the needy  
is blessed with six blessing;  
but one who comforts the needy with kindness  
is blessed with twelve blessings.**

**–Bava Batra 9b**

## **ORGANIZE A DRIVE**

### **Early Head Start/Head Start**

Main/Corporate Office

One Gateway Plaza, 4<sup>th</sup> floor  
Port Chester, New York 10573  
(914) 937-2320  
<http://www.fsw.org>

The children and families in this program struggle to meet daily living needs. They fall below the federal poverty guidelines. Through a stimulating and enriching curriculum the children are prepared for elementary school by learning academic fundamentals and developing their social and emotional skills.

You and your family can:

- Organize a winter coat drive to keep the children warm
- Organize a hat and mittens drive to protect heads and hands from the winter cold
- Collect children's books and educational toys to be used in classrooms and for children to take home
- Have a diaper drive for Early Head Start children (sizes 4 and 5)
- Make 'Boxes of Basics' for Head Start families (sugar, flour, can goods, breakfast foods, pasta)

### **Blythedale Children's Hospital**

95 Bradhurst Avenue  
Valhalla, New York 10595  
(914) 592-7555  
<http://www.blythedale.org>

Blythedale needs cause and effect toys, puzzles, games, Fisher Price and musical toys, Playskool tricycles and children's books. The hospital would welcome computer hardware and software as well. Please note that Blythedale has the following donation guidelines:

- New, unwrapped items only
- No stuffed animals or toys containing latex
- No violent toys (guns, knives, etc.)
- Video games should be rated "E"
- Movies should be rated "G", "PG" or "PG-13"
- Only music without parental advisories

They strongly encourage donating toys and items for children less than 3 years of age as well as items for teenagers.

## **Camp Viva**

Gerry Goldberg, (914) 305-6834

ggoldberg@fsw.org

<http://www.fsw.org/our-programs/hivaids-services-partnership-for-care/camp-viva>

Camp Viva is a one-week sleep-away camp for children, families and individuals affected or infected by HIV/AIDS. The mission is to provide needed respite to needy Westchester families. Help make Camp Viva a reality for children and their families by raising funds and/or collecting needed items for camp (clothing, snack food and drinks, arts and craft supplies, medical/first aid supplies, towels, hats, sports equipment, etc.). You can organize a bowl-a-thon; host a dance-a-thon; send email/letter to friends and family seeking donations; do a bake sale; or create a different kind of fund raiser. The staff of FSW will assist you.

## **Family-to-Family**

6 Circle Drive

Hastings on Hudson, New York 10706

(914) 478-0756

[www.family-to-family.org](http://www.family-to-family.org)

famtofamily@aol.com

Family-to-Family is a non-profit hunger relief organization dedicated to providing food and other basic life necessities to profoundly poor, rural American families. Through their Birthday Buddies program, kids can create shoebox-sized boxes filled with birthday goodies (small gifts, goody bag, a gently used book, cake mix and a card) to be given to families in the receiving communities who cannot afford to celebrate their children's birthdays. They also have a Books for Life program that involves collecting gently used books and shipping them to outreach workers in our receiving communities to distribute to families.

### **Books for Life**

If you're like many kids today, you have shelves or boxes full of books in your house that you've outgrown and never even look at any more. But imagine being a kid who didn't own any books. Or who didn't have a library nearby. Sadly, there are lots of kids just like that... because when people are poor, they can't spend money on extras like books. But you can help these kids by collecting and sending used books to one of our needy communities.

Contact Family-to-Family at [books@family-to-family.org](mailto:books@family-to-family.org) and they will give you the name and address of an outreach worker in one of the communities where you can ship the books. Some outreach centers have set up lending libraries in extra rooms (or closets) for donated books. Some give the books out at home visits, or when the families come to pick up their food boxes.

You can send your own books, or collect books from neighbors.

You can organize a book drive through your school. Ask your principal if you can send home a flyer to all the families at your school asking for book donations. Ask people to bring them to the school. Label a few boxes so people will know where to drop them. Ask your local bookstore, or library, to donate books.

Pack your books in a sturdy box and mail them. It will cost some money to send them—you can ask neighbors for donations, or have a bake sale or a yard sale to raise the money. Note that the U.S. Postal Service has a book rate, which is significantly cheaper than sending a 1st-class package.

Remember, the books can look used, but shouldn't be dirty or falling apart. And not every single book will be useful – so we've included a list of the best kinds of books to send.

### **Useful Books To Send**

- Baby (soft, chewable)
- Toddler (board books)
- Picture Books/ First Readers
- Chapter Books
- Teen Non-fiction
- Teen Fiction
- Brain Quests and Flash Cards
- Workbooks
- Dictionaries
- Children's Videos

### **Cell Phones for Soldiers**

Organize a drive to help our soldiers serving overseas call home. Our local fire departments are collecting used cell phones to be recycled and sent to our soldiers.

The Larchmont Fire Department  
120 Larchmont Avenue  
Larchmont, New York

The Mamaroneck First Department  
205 Weaver Street  
Larchmont, New York

### **Hopeline**

[www.verizonwireless.com/hopeline](http://www.verizonwireless.com/hopeline)

A Verizon initiative, HopeLine puts technology and Verizon's wireless network to work in communities by turning no-longer-used wireless phones into support for victims of domestic violence and helps protect the environment by disposing of wireless phones in an environmentally sound way. Verizon Wireless will provide a postage-paid shipping label. Download the postage-paid shipping label here: <http://aboutus.vzw.com/communityservice/Shipping.html>.

## Getting Started

- Print a few copies of Verizon's HopeLine Overview note to share with friends and family to get a phone drive started.
- Decide on a date and location for your drive, and determine the length of your collection. Send an email to [info@joypromotionsinc.com](mailto:info@joypromotionsinc.com) to request HopeLine materials to help promote and host your drive.
- Publicize your drive in advance to maximize participation. Use community newspapers, flyers, newsletters, bulletin boards, Facebook, Twitter, and more.
- Place the collection boxes in a visible but secure location.
- Pack your collected phones, batteries and accessories securely for shipment.
- Mail them to HopeLine using our postage-paid label or...
- Drop them off at any Verizon Wireless Communications Store. Visit Verizon's Store Locator to find a store near you.

## **Before donating old wireless phones to HopeLine® from Verizon advise donators to follow these steps:**

- Turn the phones' power off.
- Make sure the phones' batteries are installed in the phones you are returning. Please do not include any loose batteries.
- Please remove storage cards and SIM cards from phones prior to donation. Also be sure to include any travel chargers or other accessories that came with the devices.
- Erase any personal data on the phones before donating it.

## **My Sister's Place**

345 Maple Avenue  
Mamaroneck, New York 10543  
(914) 381-1666  
<http://mysistersplaceny.org>

My Sisters' Place strives to end domestic violence so that all relationships can embrace the principles of respect, equality, and peacefulness. They support the abused, primarily women and their children, in seeking safety, self-determination, and justice.

They accept:

- packages of diapers in all sizes and baby wipes
- large and extra-large duffel bags
- NEW towels in all sizes
- NEW twin sheet sets
- Spanish children's books
- new, unopened full-size toiletries (especially hair and skin care products for women of color)
- gift cards (VISA, Target, etc.)
- notebooks and all other school supplies
- art supplies

## **Open Door Family Medical Center**

Jenny Palacio [palacio@ood.org](mailto:palacio@ood.org)  
Charlotte Baughman [cbaughman@ood.org](mailto:cbaughman@ood.org)  
(914) 502-1358  
(914) 502-1355

They need new or gently used board books, picture books, and soft baby books for children ages 6 months to 4 years.

## **Books For Soldiers**

<http://booksforsoldiers.com>

Send troops books, DVDs, games and relief supplies that they request. You will also have access to their Pen Pal area and Post Card Jamboree. On average their volunteers fill thousands of requests a month.

The following two organizations need you to collect for them, but they also NEED YOU.

## **The Sharing Shelf**

47 Purdy Avenue  
Port Chester, New York 10573 <http://www.fsw.org/our-programs/the-sharing-shelf> [thesharingshelf@fsw.org](mailto:thesharingshelf@fsw.org)

After hours donations of CLOTHING ONLY may be dropped at:

### **My Healthy Fit**

1000 East Boston Post Road  
Mamaroneck, New York 10543  
(914) 670-0600

The Sharing Shelf collects new and gently used clothing as well as other basic necessities such as new school supplies, shoes, strollers, car seats and pack-n-plays for children and youth. The clothing is sorted by quality, size, season and gender, packaged in a week's worth of clothing, then distributed through social service agencies to children and youth in need at no cost to the children or their families.

The Sharing Shelf collects these items in various ways: individual donations, clothing drives organized in the community, retail donations and corporate donations. They need volunteers to help organize donated clothing. Volunteers are needed on an ongoing basis to sort clothing for quality, size, gender and season and help create outfits and packages of clothing for children so they can fill pending orders. The Sharing Shelf serves various agencies in Westchester County, including among others My Sister's Place, Sound Shore Medical Center, Children's Village, the Department of Social Services and Mental Health Advocates. Youth volunteers are welcome. However, youth under 16 years old needs to be accompanied by an adult.

They prefer donations be brought directly to their site. Please contact them by email to arrange drop-off.

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

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

**No one is lonely when doing a *mitzvah*.  
For a *mitzvah* is where God and man meet.**

**–Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel**

**Israel**

*Ahavat Tziyon*

*Ahavat Tziyon* is a deep attachment to the land of Israel and the Jewish state. You can be a loving critic and stay engaged advocate for Israel.

## **Write or e-mail your Representatives and Senators**

Speaking up in support of Israel makes a big difference. Write letters or e-mails to your representative and senators in Washington, D.C. when you hear about current events that affect Israel. For instance, ask your public officials to condemn terrorist attacks against Israel or vote against legislation that you believe is not in Israel's best interest. Reach out to friends and relatives to do the same.

### **Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand**

<http://www.gillibrand.senate.gov/contact>

Washington, D.C. Office:  
478 Russell Senate Office Building,  
District of Columbia 20510-3204  
Phone: (202) 224-4451  
Fax: (202) 228-0282

New York Office:  
780 Third Avenue, Suite 2601  
New York, New York 10017  
Phone: (212) 688-6262  
Fax: (212) 688-7444

### **Sen. Charles Schumer**

<http://www.schumer.senate.gov/Public/contact.htm>

Washington, D.C. Office:  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
District of Columbia 20510-3203  
Phone: (202) 224-6542  
Fax: (202) 228-3027

New York Office:  
780 Third Avenue, Suite 2301  
New York, New York 10017  
Phone: (212) 486-4430  
Fax: (212) 486-7693

### **Congresswoman Nita Lowey**

<http://lowey.house.gov>

Washington, D.C. Office:  
2365 Rayburn House Office Building  
District of Columbia 20515-3218  
Phone: (202) 225-6506  
Fax: (202) 225-0546

White Plains Office  
222 Mamaroneck Avenue, #310  
White Plains, New York 10605  
Phone: (914) 428-1707  
Fax: (914) 328-1505

## **Israel Gives**

<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.

## **JChoice.org**

75 2nd Avenue, Suite 200  
Needham, Massachusetts 02494  
781-433-9080  
<http://www.jchoice.org/Causes.aspx>

Search for nonprofit organizations by Jewish value, location or name. Find causes that interest you with their search tool. Browse the results, and go to an individual cause page to make a donation.

## **NACOEJ**

North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry  
255 West 36th St. Suite 701  
New York, New York 10018  
Twinning: Miriam Weissman 212-233-5200 x 222 or [mweissman@nacoelj.org](mailto:mweissman@nacoelj.org)  
Additional Mitzvah Projects: Judy Dick 212-233-5200 x 230  
212-233-5200  
[nacoelj@nacoelj.org](mailto:nacoelj@nacoelj.org)  
[http://www.nacoelj.org/bar\\_batmitzvah.htm](http://www.nacoelj.org/bar_batmitzvah.htm)

The NACOEJ *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* Twinning Program provides a terrific opportunity for Jewish youth to get to know, and help, their Ethiopian-Israeli peers. As a twin you will get a photo and bio of your Ethiopian counterpart and if you visit Israel, arrangements can be made for you to meet your twin. As a twin you will receive handmade embroidery, made in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia by Ethiopian Jews.

Your twin will receive:

- a special Bar or Bat Mitzvah gift
- a gift to his/her school in Israel to help buy essential supplies such as books (textbooks and reading), computers, and other educational materials.

A donation of \$280 is required at least two months prior to becoming a *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah*.

## **HAMA (Humans and Animals in Mutual Assistance)**

[hama-israel@bezequint.net](mailto:hama-israel@bezequint.net)

The principle aim of this organization is to design and implement a short-term Animal Assisted Therapy program (ATT) for children with AD(H)D (Attention Deficit [Hyperactive] Disorder), their parents and their educators. The therapeutic goal of the program is to discover and develop long-term coping strategies for the children, their families, and their schools challenged by this widespread and misunderstood developmental disorder.

## **Dental Volunteers for Israel (DVI)**

dvi@internet-zahav.net

<http://dental-dvi.org.il/donate-to-dvi>

DVI is the largest free dental clinic in Israel. They offer free state-of-the-art treatment to Jerusalem's at-risk children and youth, ages five to eighteen, regardless of race or religion thanks to volunteer dentists from all corners of the world.

## **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) support 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 as items as a t-shirt, anti fungal 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 and/or ask guests to donate directly to A Package from Home, or the *B'nai Mitzvah* can decide to personally adopt an army unit.

## **Write a Letter to an IDF Soldier**

<http://www.chabad.org/special/gazawar/letter.htm>

Show these soldiers that all of us across the world are in awe of their heroism and brimming with admiration for their courage and praying for their safety. Write your thoughts to an IDF soldier, or an Israeli living in an area where rockets are falling. They will hand-deliver your words of encouragement, and if you choose, your picture as well.

## **Buy Israeli Products**

<http://www.buyisraelgoods.org>

A consumer guide for the retail purchase of Israeli products. Use this site to identify Israeli products likely to be available in retail stores near you, and the stores that carry them in stock.

Products from Israel meet highest quality standards, and many have unique features or designs not available in competing products. Many of these products can easily be incorporated into your regular shopping needs, while others are great for gifts. The frequent purchase of Israeli products will have a broad and significant impact on the Israeli economy and Israeli citizens.

## **Pizza IDF**

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

## **E-trash**

<http://www.israelenvironment.net/donate.htm> <http://www.israelgives.org/amuta/580383909>  
<http://israelnonprofitnews.com/directory/environment/green-course/> <http://www.teva.org.il/english/>

Raise money and help your friends and neighbors get rid of stuff they no longer need. Contact an organization like ecophones (<http://www.ecophones.com>) to earn cash for cell phones, ink cartridges, laptops, PDAs. Not only will you earn cash, but you'll also keep hazardous materials out of landfills. Consider donating proceeds from your recycling campaign to environmental agencies in Israel.

## **The Israel Guide Dog Center for the Blind**

[info@igdcb.org](mailto:info@igdcb.org)  
<http://israelguidedog.org>

Become a Puppy Sponsor and learn about the everyday obstacles that make life difficult for visually impaired Israelis, and how you can help them gain independence, mobility and freedom through the use of a guide dog. Donate money to raise a puppy, but more importantly, help raise awareness of the growing needs of the visually impaired.

## **Darca Schools & Friends of Darca**

Sharon Block, [sharon@friendsofdarca.org](mailto:sharon@friendsofdarca.org)  
[http://www.darca.org.il/default\\_EN.asp](http://www.darca.org.il/default_EN.asp)

Darca is a network of seventeen high schools established to strengthen the schools in Israel's geo-social periphery and support them on their way to becoming high quality institutions of post-primary education. The Darca network caters to Israel's highly diverse communities, with the aim of strengthening the country's social fabric. They combine quality education with advanced educational methods, a learning environment that encourages curiosity and exploration, and educational work based on imparting social values of leadership and responsibility to the community.

## **Make a Wish Israel**

<http://www.makeawish.org.il/>  
Neta, [maw@makeawish.org.il](mailto:maw@makeawish.org.il)

Create a fundraising page on JRaise.com to benefit this charity at  
<http://my.jraise.com/en/userregistration>

Make-A-Wish Israel's mission is to grant wishes to children between the ages of 3-18 with life-threatening medical conditions, to enrich the human experience with Hope, Strength and Joy. Wish children can dream To be...To have...To meet...or, To go. Private donations, corporate contributions, gifts and fundraisers support the activities of Make-A-Wish Israel.

### **Israeli B'nei Mitzvah Twinning Program**

**Amit:** [amitchildren.org](http://amitchildren.org) (serving underprivileged children)

**Aleh:** [aleh.org](http://aleh.org) (serving children with physical/cognitive disabilities)

**North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry:** [nacoj.org](http://nacoj.org) (serving underprivileged Ethiopian children)

**Migdal Ohr:** [migdalohrusa.org](http://migdalohrusa.org) (serving underprivileged children)

An Israeli twinning program is an option which will offer your child the opportunity to make a meaningful connection with Israel at the time of their Bar or Bat Mitzvah. In honor of your child's special day, he or she can pair with a child in Israel who is also becoming Bar or Bat Mitzvah, and help them to make their day special as well.

The organizations below can connect your child with a child who is either underprivileged or has challenging disabilities. These organizations have been approved by the Westchester Community Shaliach, a program coordinated by the Rosenthal JCC and the Westchester Jewish Council.

Please note that should you decide to participate, each of these programs requires a monetary donation.

**America and Israel share a special bond. Our relationship is unique among all nations. Like America, Israel is a strong democracy, a symbol of freedom, and an oasis of liberty, a home to the oppressed and persecuted.**

**–William J. Clinton**

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

*–Berahkot 17a*

