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Mitzvah Projects

*Ideas for
B'nai Mitzvah students
and their families*

Dear B'nai Mitzvah Families:

While one becomes a Jewish adult simply by turning 13, there are many ways in which we mark this transition from childhood to the age of Mitzvah, which means commandments, opportunities and responsibilities. We mark the transition with a service and a celebration, but we also begin to contribute to the community and the world in a more robust way.

Participating in a Mitzvah Project is the beginning of a life-long Jewish commitment to Tikkun Olam, repairing the world. Projects can mean raising or donating monies, volunteering on site and/or organizing drives to benefit an organization or cause. We've compiled a brief directory of some suggested opportunities and organizations. You are of course welcome to choose something not on this list.

Please let us know if you need any guidance or assistance. We are here to help your son or daughter succeed in their first project as a Jewish adult.

B'shalom,

Rabbi Mitch

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Clearing Houses for Mitzvah Projects & Volunteer Opportunities

Areyvut

www.aryevut.org

A non-profit organization established in 2002, Areyvut offers a variety of opportunities and programs to that make these core Jewish values real and meaningful to them.

JTeen

914-328-8788

info@jteenleadership.org

J-Teen Leadership is a community service leadership development initiative for Jewish high school students who want to make a difference in the world today. What makes them unique is that teens plan and lead projects. Most of the programs are geared for 9th–12th graders, but there is a place for younger kids to get involved as well.

Jewish Family Services of Greenwich

203-622-1881

www.jfsgreenwich.org

JFS offers lots of ways for teens, bar or bat mitzvah age and older, to get involved. For example, teens can read to or play cards with a senior, help with lawn chores or shoveling, bring a friendly pet on a visit to a senior, help make and deliver holiday food packages and so much more! For a complete listing of ways to volunteer, please contact Lisa Goldberg at 203-622-1881.

Volunteer Match

www.volunteermatch.org

We believe everyone should have the chance to make a difference. That's why we make it easy for good people and good causes to connect. We've connected millions of people with a great place to volunteer and helped tens of thousands of organizations better leverage volunteers to create real impact.

At Risk Youth

Boys and Girls Club of Greenwich

203-869-3224

www.bgcg.org

The Boys and Girls Club of Greenwich offers a safe place for local kids to learn and grow. Their Torch Club is a leadership service club which performs community service at the Boys & Girls Club and throughout the community.

Children's Hope Chest

kleinman1@optonline.net

www.childrenshopechest.com

Children's Hope Chest provides help & offers hope to children in our community suffering from poverty, abuse, neglect and illness. They strive to increase social action by promoting adult and youth volunteerism.

Domus

203-324-4277

www.domuskids.org

Domus' goal is to help at risk youth get on a path toward health and opportunity so they can engage and succeed in school and ultimately have satisfying and productive lives. Volunteer your time or help run a collection drive for much needed supplies.

Kids in Crisis

203-622-6556

www.kidsincrisis.org

Kids in Crisis provides free, round-the-clock help for Fairfield County children, teens and parents dealing with any type of crisis including abuse, neglect, family conflict and more. Be a dinner hero and make a complete dinner for residents at Kids in Crisis. Hold a collection drive for much needed supplies for residents. For other ideas or to get involved, contact Kristen Tomasiewicz.

Starfish Connection

203-276-9690

www.starfishconnection.org

A comprehensive program that provides mentoring, advising and enrichment to academically talented youth from low income families in Stamford, CT. Each year Starfish Connection provides opportunities for their kids to attend overnight camp. Consider running a drive to collect camp supplies.

Elderly

Nathaniel Witherall

203-618-4200

www.thenathanielwitherell.org

The Nathaniel Witherall is a short-term rehab and skilled nursing center located just 2 miles from downtown Greenwich, owned and operated by the town. There are many volunteer opportunities at Witherall including visiting residents, assisting with weekly Shabbat services and bringing your leashed dog or cat for a visit.

Project Ezra of the Lower East Side

212-982-3700

www.projectezra.org

Project Ezra serves the frail elderly on New York's Lower East Side. They provide a variety of services to a largely homebound population. Each year Temple Sholom buses in Project Ezra to spend a Sunday afternoon with us. Volunteers are needed for serving food, mingling with guests and providing entertainment. For more information contact Lori Baden at Temple Sholom 203-542-7172.

Supermarketing for Seniors

203-622-1881

www.jfsgreenwich.org/services/supermarketing-for-seniors

Jewish Family Services of Greenwich provides weekly supermarketing for seniors who can't get to the supermarket. In addition to the shopping, volunteers usually spend time unloading groceries and visiting with the senior. This is a great opportunity for the whole family to get involved and requires only two hours a week.

Thanksgiving Cooking

Rabbi Yoni Nadiv, 203-542-7163

rabbiyoni@templesholom.com

Each year on the Tuesday before Thanksgiving, Temple Sholom teens get together to cook, prepare and package holiday meals for low income seniors. To participate or to join in other similar projects, contact Assistant Rabbi Yoni Nadiv.

Hunger & Poverty

Inspirica

203-388-0137 • www.inspicact.org

The mission of Inspirica is to break the cycle of homelessness by helping people achieve and maintain permanent housing and stability in their lives. Some ways to help include providing dinner to the women's shelter, babysitting while parents attend education classes and running collection drives.

Mazon: A Jewish Response to Hunger

424-208-7206 • www.mazon.org

Mazon works to fight hunger for people of all faiths and backgrounds in the U.S. and in Israel. There are many meaningful ways to incorporate Mazon into your mitzvah project. Contact Youth Outreach Coordinator at outreach@mazon.org.

Meals-On-Wheels

203-869-1312

www.mealsonwheelsofgreenwich.org

Meals on Wheels delivers nutritious meals to those in need. Meals are delivered Mon–Fri to each client's door by caring volunteers. Volunteer with a parent and help deliver meals throughout the Greenwich community.

Midnight Run

914-693-7817

www.midnightrun.org

Midnight Run volunteers distribute food, clothing, blankets and personal care items to the homeless poor on the streets of New York City. Midnight Run needs donations in each of these categories.

Neighbor to Neighbor

203-622-9208

www.ntngreenwich.org

Greenwich's food and clothing pantry is housed at Christ Church. Volunteer opportunities include holding food and clothing drives; sorting food and clothing donations; stocking the shelves.

Pass it On Kid's Kloset

914-831-7616 • www.wjcs.com

This program of Westchester Jewish Community Services provides Westchester County children and families in need with donated clothing and related items free of charge. Children receive "bags of love" with clothing prepared into outfits free of rips, stains and missing buttons. Volunteer by holding a clothing drive or help sort and pack donated items.

Israel

Emunah Afulah

www.emunahafula.org

A residential and afterschool therapeutic day care facility serving children at risk aged 5-18 in Afula, Israel. Twin your bar/bat mitzvah with one of Emunah Afulah's children, sponsor a specific child, donate funds or visit and spend time with the children on your visit to Israel.

Ezrat Avot

www.ezratavot.org

Ezrat Avot has been caring for Jerusalem's needy elderly for nearly thirty years. With poverty increasing, the aged are among the hardest hit. Ezrat Avot prepares over 800 hot meals a week and distributes over 200 dry food parcels to needy families. Visit the senior citizen center on your visit to Israel and help cut vegetables and prepare a hot food meal which is then delivered to elderly's homes.

Friends of the Israel Defense Forces

646-274-9645

www.fidf.org

Friends of the Israel Defense Forces (FIDF) is a not-for-profit dedicated to the mission of providing and supporting social, educational, cultural and recreational programs and facilities for the young men and women soldiers of Israel.

G'mach Zichron Chaya

201-824-5077

This organization provides formalwear for those in need. Hold a collection drive for gently used formal wear. Drop off in New Jersey and they will take care of delivering to Israel.

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Israel (continued)

Meir Panim

877-736-6283

deborah@meirpanim.org

www.meirpanim.org

Established to help alleviate and diminish the harmful effects of poverty on thousands of men, women and children across Israel. Project Connect is a great opportunity to connect with a boy or girl in Israel and perhaps help them celebrate their own b'nai mitzvah.

Netanya Hoops for Kids

973-996-8112

www.netanyahoopsforkids.org

Netanya Hoops for Kids works with at risk children in Netanya providing them life skills, basketball clinics, sports equipment, tickets to basketball games and school supplies. Donate school supplies, basketball equipment and visit and volunteer alongside professional Israeli basketball players, helping to coach, when visiting in Israel.

United Synagogue Fuchsberg Center Gemilut Hesed Project

972-2-625-6386

Israel@uscj.org

While visiting Israel, the Fuchsberg Center will connect you with a choice of meaningful volunteer opportunities based on interest and time availability. Additionally, they collect supplies for distribution in various social service agencies in Israel. Contact them for a full list of needed items.

WIZO, The Women's International Zionist Organization

212-751-6461

www.wizousa.org

www.facebook.com/WIZONY

WiZO is a worldwide non-profit organization that operates over 800 social welfare projects in Israel, including child care centers, schools, shelters for battered women, homes for girls in distress and programs providing services for the elderly.

Local Community Service Organizations

Call-A-Ride

203-661-6633

The organization provides free door-to-door transportation for Greenwich's ambulatory senior citizens, who lack other means of transportation. While drivers must be over the age of 25, providing rides could become a family project.

David's Closet at Stamford Hospital

203-276-5995

bfoster@stamhealth.org

This special toy closet was originally set up by a Temple Sholom family who lost a child to leukemia in 2000. Any child admitted to the hospital receives a free toy from David's Closet. Volunteers help keep their shelves stocked. Additionally, Temple Sholom runs an annual Toy Drive to support David's Closet. Contact Lori Baden, 203-542-7172 for more information.

Kids Helping Kids

203-253-3400

www.kidshelpingkidsct.org

KHK's mission is to develop leadership skills through youth-led service projects. They empower students to take their passion and turn it into action to make a difference in the lives of other kids. KHK has hosted birthday parties for children living in homeless shelters. They have created a "handled with care" boutique to provide a dignified shopping experience. They have collected over 24,000 pairs of shoes. Call to see how you can get involved.

Meals on Wheels

203-869-1312

www.mealsonwheelsofgreenwich.org

Meals on Wheels delivers meals to those in need. They provide nutritious, home cooked meals that are then delivered Monday–Friday to each client's door by volunteers. Volunteer together as a family. All it takes is one to two hours, one day a week. Additionally Meals on Wheels relies heavily on contributions.

Special Needs

Backyard Sports Plus

914-304-4052

byardsports.com/special-needs.html

Backyard Sports Plus program offers special needs children, ages 5-15 a safe and appropriately competitive program to learn and enjoy team sports. Backyard Sports is looking for young athletes and student leaders to volunteer as peer mentors.

Cerebral Palsy

914-937-3800

www.cpwestchester.org/contact.html

Cerebral Palsy of Westchester relies on the support of the community to assist in providing quality services. Teens can volunteer and assist with coaching.

Greenwich Special Olympics

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

Special Olympics provides year round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual or physical challenges. Our volunteers serve as partners, coaches and counselors to the athletes. By sharing in the athletic training, they are inspired by witnessing the courage and fortitude our athletes exhibit.

