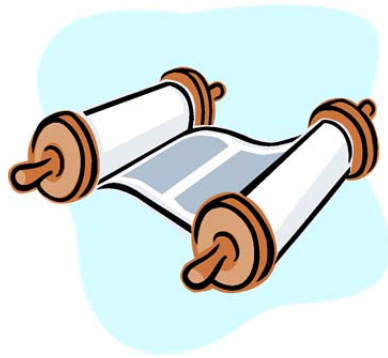


COMMUNITY SERVICE



1. GEMILUT CHASADIM/ACTS OF LOVING-KINDNESS

Community service is at the very core of our temple life. Many individuals, groups or committees at Beth Haverim Shir Shalom actively engage in it and during your Bar or Bat Mitzvah preparation you will be required to devote a **minimum** of 18 hours of volunteer work to such places as the temple, religious school, a nursing home, hospital, or any other community service organization dedicated to helping others. You or your family may have your own very special area of interest or concern. Whatever you choose, remember that the purpose of community service is to help others in need and you should take pride in whatever mitzvah project you choose. If you need help selecting a project, you are invited to reach out to Whitney Speer of our Social Action Committee at 201-825-2441 or email at whitneyspeer@msn.com or Steve Simon of our Michelle Mitzvah Group at 201-995-1177 mmgbhss@gmail.com .

Center for Food Action (Mahwah)

The Michelle Mitzvah Group has an ongoing year round collection effort for the Center for Food Action located in Mahwah. There are baskets and poster signs located in the front entrance and education wing of the temple for this campaign.

One of our efforts is a **monthly “theme” campaign**. Beginning in September and running through the following May, we will choose a food “theme” and ask every child in our religious school to bring at least one item relating to that particular theme to religious school during that month. Some of the monthly themes will include “Peanut Butter and Jelly”; “Breakfast Cereals”; “Paper Goods”; “Baby Diapers and Formula”; & “Juice Boxes”.

We could use a few assistants to help grow and promote this program. You can expand this idea to your school as well and get teachers, friends, neighbors, and relatives involved too. Contact Whitney Speer Social Action chair at whitneyspeer@msn.com .

Soup Kitchen in Suffern, NY

We have a strong relationship with the Christ Episcopal Church in Suffern. For many years they have been serving the community by providing a soup kitchen, thrift shop and food pantry for the needy. Volunteers are needed there to help serve lunch in the soup kitchen on pre-designated Sundays. What a great idea for a family to do community service together. Contact Steve Simon of the Michelle Mitzvah Group for more information or to sign up for a date steveoum@verizon.net or call at 201-788-6755.

Community Garden at Beth Haverim Shir Shalom

Volunteers are needed on Sunday mornings to tend to the BHSS Community Garden during the Spring, Summer and Fall months. Last year the garden generated over 220 pounds of produce that was donated to either the soup kitchen in Suffern, NY or to The Center for Food Action in Mahwah, NJ. This is a great mitzvah opportunity to fulfill community service requirements. For more information, contact Whitney Speer, the social action co-chair at whitneyspeer@msn.com

Pascack Valley Meals on Wheels, Inc.

Volunteers are needed there to help stock the shelves and make deliveries on pre-designated days. What a great idea for a family to do community service together. They are also looking for volunteers to make tray favors (cards, cookies, etc.) for their clients. A great opportunity for youth organizations, scouts and service clubs. Contact Lisa Glick for more information eslspan@aol.com or Jeanne Martin, director at 201-358-0050 . You can check out their website at: www.pvmealsonwheels.org

Organize a “Talent Show” for Elders or Children

If you play a musical instrument, like to sing, perform magic tricks or do art work, this is a great opportunity to show off your talents and fulfill your community service requirements at the same time. Volunteers are needed to perform or demonstrate your talent at local nursing homes, assisted living facilities and children’s hospitals. You can perform solo or get together with a small group of friends with similar talents. For more information contact Steve Simon of the Michelle Mitzvah Group, steveoum@verizon.net .

People to People, Inc.

People to People is Rockland County’s largest food pantry working to help struggling Rocklanders through difficult times with dignity through its programs including Food pantry, clothes closet, back to school with Dignity and Project J. Last year, People to People provided assistance to nearly 14,000 Rockland households. The single mother, the senior citizen, the veteran who comes to People to People – they all could be someone you know. Life’s circumstances can change quickly – the loss of a job, the sudden death of a spouse, a tragic accident – and can cause a drastic change in one’s ability to put food on the table and make ends meet.

Volunteers are needed for all sorts of things including organizing a food or clothing drive, stocking pantry shelves, packing grocery bags for distribution to clients, organizing and displaying donated clothing, and more. Contact Lisa Glick for more information eslspan@aol.com or Betsy Rodman, co-director at 845-623-4900 . You can check out their website at: <http://www.peopletopeopleinc.org/>

Mahwah Youth Baseball All-Star Program

The Mahwah Baseball and Softball Recreation Programs have joined together to offer an “All-Star” Program designed for special needs children between the ages of 6 through 18. This is a non-competitive co-ed program to introduce the basic skills of the game and work on fundamentals in a safe environment while having lots of fun. There are no strikes and outs and children hit a ball off a tee or pitched by a coach based on the child’s skill level. “Buddies” from ages 12 to 21 and adult volunteers work with your child and adapt the program based on the individual child’s needs. Open to both Mahwah and No-Mahwah residents. Contact: www.mahwahyouthbaseball.org/all-star-program-for-special-mnnd.html.

Tomorrows Children Fund at Hackensack University Medical Center

The Tomorrows Children's Fund was founded by a group of dedicated parents to help their children and others like them with cancer and serious blood disorders. With the help of friends like you, today, TCF provides a warm, healthy and loving environment for children in treatment; a full scope of services to relieve families' emotional and financial stress; the very best possible medical care; and funding for research on these diseases. All of which confirms our belief that through hope, hard work and heartfelt generosity, extraordinary things are possible

- **“Art Kits” Project**

There are several projects that can be done for the children with cancer and blood disorders at Hackensack Medical Center.

One idea is to organize and assemble “art kits” for the children. All that you need to do is to buy or make inexpensive boxes and fill the boxes with fun stuff for the kids. These kids need things to keep them busy and occupied while they sit and get their treatments.

Some of the items needed are crayons, puzzle books, a deck of cards, small bottles of bubbles, books, craft items, etc. All items must be “new” and unopened. Many of these items can be inexpensively purchased at your local dollar store.

- **“Cartoon Band-Aid” Collection**

It has come to our attention that the hospital uses a large amount of colorful cartoon Band-aids for the children while they are being treated. These band-aids are always needed. All boxes must be *new* and unopened.

One idea is to design a flyer describing your project to collect cartoon band-aids. You can distribute the flyer to neighbors, friends, and relatives and ask them to donate them to your collection.

Another idea is to set up collection boxes around town. Perhaps you can contact the local library, post office, schools to allow you to set up a box for the collection of the band-aids. Or approach the local supermarkets and ask if they are willing to donate the band aids for the children at the hospital

There are so many creative ways for you to coordinate this effort.

For more info, please contact Lisa Lamster of the Michelle Mitzvah Group at 201-760-1935 or e mail Lisa at lisalams@optonline.net Visit the TCF website at www.atcfkid.com for more information about this wonderful organization.

Children's Aid & Family Services – Paramus

Founded in 1899 by a group of volunteers, CAFS preserves, protects and provides to vulnerable children and their families, young adults, and the elderly. They provide high quality and innovative services that meet their social, educational and emotional needs.

CAFS has several group homes throughout Bergen County filled with children who otherwise do not have a home to live in. There are numerous volunteer opportunities available ranging from collection of much needed essentials to visiting with the children. Some of these children have participated in the planting of the Beth Haverim Shir Shalom community garden. What a nice way for our b'nai mitzvah kids to assist with these most vulnerable children. Contact Steve Simon of The Michelle Mitzvah Group at steveoum@verizon.net or Erica West at CAFS for volunteer ideas and more information, 201-261-2800 or e mail at ewest@cafsnj.org.

Oasis – For Women and Children

In the past year, the various social action groups at BHSS have supported this wonderful organization located in Paterson. Oasis is dedicated to feeding and clothing needy women and children and to offering them educational resources and skills to obtain meaningful employment and to break the cycle of poverty. There are different volunteer opportunities available - from collection of much needed essentials (clothing, gift cards etc.) to helping serve lunch to the women and children. Contact Steve Simon of the Michelle Mitzvah Group for more information at mmgbhss@gmail.com.

Other Community Service Ideas.....

- **Insert a letter in your invitations** to your guests encouraging everyone to bring a “donation” with them to services on the morning of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah. You can ask them to bring a non-perishable food item for the Center For Food Action or a box of cartoon bandages or art supplies for the kids with cancer. If your community service project involves working with animals, you could ask your guests to bring a toy for a dog or cat. You can then make a sign that you can display in the front lobby of the temple and direct your guests to place their items in baskets provided. This is a great and easy way to get everyone that you have invited involved in your community service work. An example of a letter follows on the next page. Remember, this letter can be modified for any item that you want to collect. There are many ideas you can get involved with.

Dear Friends and Family:

For my Bar/Bat Mitzvah project, I am collecting much needed items for children who have cancer. I am working with an organization called the Tomorrow's Children Fund at Hackensack University Medical Center. Please help to put smiles on the faces of these children by donating Band Aid brand character bandages with fun designs printed on them. Please bring one new box of bandages with you to my Bar/Bat Mitzvah service where I will have baskets set up for collecting these items. Thank you for participating in this very worthwhile cause. I'll see you at my Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Thanks. Joey

- Get involved in making craft items to donate to sick children, people in nursing homes etc. You can make quilts, dolls, hand painted t-shirts, hats etc for those in need.
- Take the coins that you have collected in a *tzedakah* box to the TD Bank or supermarket coin counting machines. The bank or supermarket will give you the money back in bills. Then go with your family to your local supermarket to purchase much needed items for the Center for Food Action in Mahwah. To make the experience even more meaningful, you can arrange to bring the items that you purchase directly to the Center for Food Action. You will then see first-hand how these much needed items are distributed to people in need.
- Another idea is to contribute your *tzedakah* monies to **The Good People Fund** (www.goodpeoplefund.org) The Good People Fund, is about Mitzvahs - Fixing Up the World with whatever talents and resources we have as individuals. The Good People Fund is a non-profit organization dedicated to the collection and distribution of funds to various little known Tzedakah projects. It provides money and support for individuals and programs in the US and Israel that offer direct, significant, and immediate services with a minimum of overhead and bureaucracy. They are also involved in bringing the educational message of Tzedakah to communities and Jewish schools throughout the United States, Canada and Israel and empowers ordinary people to become Mitzvah heroes.
- **Gift Cards for Charity Campaign:** There is an ongoing need for “gift cards” to local supermarkets, Target, Walmart, Bed Bath Beyond, Old Navy etc. (Big Box Stores). Order your gift cards directly from the temple because a percentage of the purchase goes back to the synagogue. Call Lisa Lamster at 201-760-1935 for details. The Michelle Mitzvah Group donates these gift cards to The Tomorrow Children’s Fund at Hackensack Hospital to be used for patient aid and birthday gifts. Many of the families to these sick children are financially strapped and have trouble meeting their financial obligations due to the burden of paying extraordinary medical bills. We also donate these gift cards to The Center For Food Action in Mahwah to be used for families in desperate need of groceries. There are two collection boxes in the temple for these gift cards. You can reach out to family, friends and neighbors to collect the gift cards.
- Help a classmate or friend who is sick by keeping him/her company, and bringing homework or books from school.
- Make a contribution to a temple fund in honor or in memory of someone you care about.
- Participate in the MAZON program by giving 3% of the cost of your Bar/Bat mitzvah to MAZON, a Jewish organization that feeds the hungry. www.mazon.org
- Donate your centerpieces from your bar/bat mitzvah celebration to a worthwhile place. For example, if they are flowers, send them to a senior citizen’s residence; if they are baskets of food or toys, donate them to a hospital, food center, or animal shelter.
- Organize a letter writing campaign to your local senator, congress person, Mayor or other elected official about important social or political issues of concern to you. For instance, you might be concerned about environmental issues, bicycle helmet laws, people driving

while talking on their cell phones, gun safety laws or something else happening in your town or community you feel needs change.

- Join the Michelle Mitzvah Group throughout the year when they visit The Children's Specialized Hospital in Mountainside (check Temple Topics for dates) Visit with the children and staff at the Wanaque Convalescent Center on Christmas Day morning; Participate in the Coat & Clothing Drive at the temple (year round) ; Help at the Soup Kitchen in Suffern on pre-designated dates, etc. These events are great to do as a family. For more information contact Steve Simon at mmgbhss@gmail.com.
- Contact the **Volunteer Center of Bergen County**, your one-stop shop for anything and everything related to being a volunteer or involving volunteers to get things done in Bergen County. No matter who you are or what your situation is, we can help link you to the perfect volunteer job! We work with more than 500 private and public non-profit agencies in and around Bergen County and maintain a database with hundreds of volunteer opportunities suitable for individuals and groups of every description

Volunteer Center of Bergen County
64 Passaic St., Hackensack, NJ 07601
Tel: 201-489-9454
www.bergenvolunteers.org

These are just a few of the many organizations we help on a daily basis. When selecting a project we suggest you look in a mirror. What are your own personal skills and interests? How can **you** best help? Do you like animals? Lots of organizations in Bergen and Rockland Counties are desperately in need of "hands-on" volunteer help and/or fund-raising ideas. Musical skill? Maybe arrange a visit to a home for the elderly or a hospital ward. Artistic? Maybe design something that can cheer up a child's hospital room. Like to write? There are lots of people, who might love to hear from you. Like to cook? We've had great success baking cookies for our soldiers overseas. Are you a joiner? Our Youth Group does some amazing things you may enjoy participating in.

***Additional ideas can be found on the
Social Action page of the BHSS website
www.bethhaverim.org/social-action***