



B'NAI MITZVAH PROJECT GUIDE

A GUIDE TO MAKING MITZVOT
A PART OF YOUR BAR/BAT MITZVAH



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*Follow these symbols
when looking through this guide:*



JUF-Supported Organization



Jewish Organization



Parent Chaperone Required

MAZEL TOV

on Your Bar/Bat Mitzvah!

YOU ARE ENTERING A NEW STAGE IN YOUR LIFE, and celebrating this accomplishment comes with responsibility. As your friends and family honor you, we hope that you remember the importance of *tikkun olam*: repairing the world one good deed at a time. Volunteerism comes in many different forms. We hope this manual will help guide your path towards finding the right fit. Check out the next page to learn how to use this guide.

MAKING YOUR MITZVAH MEANINGFUL!

It's time to get started working towards your mitzvah project.

Here are six things you should keep in mind when choosing your project:

1

Find something that interests you!

You will enjoy yourself and feel a greater sense of accomplishment if you pursue a mitzvah project that falls in your scope of interest. Take that interest and think outside of the box with it.

2

Think big—or small!

When thinking in terms of repairing the world, there are many big problems to address, but there are also smaller problems that need fixing. Think in terms of what will fulfill your individual needs as a bar/bat mitzvah, but also think about who you're looking to help in the process.

3

Involve your community!

The old saying goes, "the more the merrier." This is especially true when considering *tikkun olam*. Communities thrive when people are brought together for a common cause. Get your community involved and you are sure to have the support you need.

4

Be unique!

Your project should reflect you! Even if everyone you know has a mitzvah project, yours doesn't have to look like anyone else's. This is a great opportunity to do something new that you have never seen or experienced before, or something you know you love to do.

Check out the testimonials at the end of this guide to see how teens like you have made their projects unique!

5

Be proud of what you do!

Whatever you choose, keep in mind that this is a wonderful tradition that many others have participated in before you. It's an amazing opportunity and you can make a real difference in the world! Be proud of the action you're taking.

6

Have fun!

In the end, you should enjoy your time doing mitzvot and repairing the world. Make the most of your experience and know that finishing one mitzvah project will lead you to the next.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

THERE IS A LOT OF INFORMATION IN THIS GUIDE, and we understand that it might be overwhelming. The biggest piece of advice we can give you about using this guide is to set goals for your mitzvah project. Refer back to these goals often and use them to point you in the right direction. Find what best fits you, your hobbies, and passions. Flip through this guide to find unique projects and service-based activities as well as many places to consider donating money or resources. Please note, there may be a cost at some on-site volunteer opportunities. Next to an organization's name, you might also find symbols. The symbols below give you additional information about the organization, namely whether it is supported by JUF, if it requires a parent chaperone to be present while volunteering or if it is a Jewish organization.



**JUF-Supported
Organization**



**Jewish
Organization**



**Parent Chaperone
Required**

If you have questions that aren't answered by this guide, please contact us! We would love to give you even more information and advice for your mitzvah project. Either visit juf.org/teens/BM-Projects.aspx or call us at **312-444-2867**.



There are a few different stages you might be in right now as you plan for your mitzvah project, so jump to the section that you feel the strongest connection to and read more about how this guide can help you.



» ***I have no idea what I want to do for my mitzvah project.***

It can be tough to begin this process with no ideas about how to even start, so let's go one step at a time. There are many ways to help people, so start by thinking about how you want to help. For example, do you want to take the lead on organizing a collection drive? Or would you rather focus on something hands-on? You will notice that this guide is not only organized by causes, but also by the type of service you can provide to an organization. Instead of reading about every opportunity listed in here, go to the ones affiliated with the type of project you want to

complete and see if any jump out at you.

You can also go to the websites listed on each page to get a better idea of what the needs of different organizations are and build your project off that.

For more project inspiration, think about the things that you are passionate about or can relate to. Try to find connections between your hobbies and the causes and projects listed, then use these to find or create a mitzvah project that you feel excited to engage in.

» ***I have an idea of what I want to do for my mitzvah project, but I need more guidance.***

Having a general idea for a mitzvah project is a great place to start and using this guide will help you to turn that idea into a project you are passionate about. Start by considering what the goals of your mitzvah project are. Skim through the general causes in the guide and see if any of them pique your interest. If one does, look at the different ways that you can engage in service for it. Each cause has a list of ways to get involved both directly and indirectly, so there is bound to be something that excites you.

You can also think about ways to combine different aspects of the causes you care about into one service project. Grab inspiration from the ideas in the guide and try to figure out how to put them into a single cohesive project. If this doesn't seem to work, you can always think about participating in smaller volunteering opportunities for a few different organizations. There isn't a single formula for a mitzvah project, so don't be afraid to do something a little bit different.

» ***I know what I want to do for my mitzvah project.***

This is great to hear! We are here to help you through that process. If you need any support from us, feel free to contact us directly or use this guide to solidify your plans. Remember to keep an open mind and allow yourself to

be a little flexible in case a related opportunity comes up that could complement your project. There are so many ways to help, and we are so excited for you to start your mitzvah project journey!

» ***I am a parent/guardian/mentor looking to help my B'nai Mitzvah come up with their project.***

Thank you for helping! The mitzvah project can be an overwhelming experience for some teens and your support is going to be instrumental in helping make this a positive experience. As you look through the guide, remember to keep in mind that this project is for your teen and things that interest you might not interest them. See if you can find links between any of the suggestions and

past experiences that your teen has enjoyed. Keep time constraints in mind and be aware of projects that might be far away or require time that your teen does not have. Also, pay special attention to any service sites that would require a chaperone. If you or another adult is not able to volunteer with your teen, then suggest that they choose a project that can be completed independently.

VOLUNTEERING WITH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

WHY WE CARE:

"10.7% of Illinois residents have identified living with a disability. A disability according to the Census Bureau is defined as a long-lasting sensory, physical, mental, or emotional condition or conditions that make it difficult for a person to do functional or participatory activities."

DISABLED WORLD TOWARDS TOMORROW

"One billion people, or 15% of the world's population, experiences some form of disability. Persons with disabilities, on average as a group, are more likely to experience adverse socioeconomic outcomes than persons without disabilities."

DISABLED WORLD TOWARDS TOMORROW

ACT LOCALLY:

- » Arrange a friendly visit to a service organization
- » Partner with a child with special needs to play a sport or create crafts
- » Read a book with a person with special needs
- » Provide respite care for a family

COLLECTION DRIVE IDEAS:

- » Sports or aquatics equipment
- » Art supplies
- » Toys and other miscellaneous items
- » Toiletries and supplies for basic needs

MONETARY DONATIONS FOR:

- » Sports equipment
- » Funding sports activities
- » Purchasing books
- » Arts and crafts material
- » Costumes for children's plays

"How wonderful it is that no one need wait a single moment before starting to change the world."

ANNE FRANK



ON-SITE VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES:

» KEEN

(Chicago)
www.keenchicago.org



» Keshet

(Northern suburbs)
www.keshet.org



» Friendship Circle

(Multiple locations)
www.fcil.org

HELPING THE SICK

WHY WE CARE:

"Chronic disease is the major cause of death and disability in Illinois. Six common chronic diseases—cancer, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, Alzheimer's disease, and pulmonary conditions—account for the majority of the 10 leading causes of death in the state and affect more than 6.7 million Illinoisans, more than half its population."

ILLINOIS CENTER FOR HEALTH STATISTICS

ACT LOCALLY:

- » Make get well cards to send to hospital patients
- » Be a pen-pal
- » Create holiday crafts
- » Make fleece blankets or quilts
- » Write letters to those who need some support
- » Assemble chemo care kits

COLLECTION DRIVE IDEAS:

- » Books and magazines
- » Board games
- » Crossword puzzles
- » Movies

MONETARY DONATIONS FOR:

- » Medication
- » Medical supplies
- » Research relating to any disease

Did You Know?

The JUF Uptown Cafe allows volunteers to serve a meal 4 days a week. The cafe assists over 320 people a year, 84% of whom live below the federal poverty line.



ON-SITE VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES:

» IMD Guest House

(Chicago)
www.imdguesthouse.org



» La Rabida Children's Hospital

(Chicago)
www.larabida.org



» Ronald McDonald House

(Multiple locations)
www.rmhcni.org



» Sharsheret

(Multiple locations)
www.sharsheret.org/
bnai-mitzvah-celebrations



» Twist Out Cancer

(Multiple locations)
www.twistoutcancer.org

» Contact your local hospital for more opportunities!

SUPPORTING THE ELDERLY



WHY WE CARE:

"According to the U.S. Census Bureau in 2017, 11 million, or 28% of people aged 65 and older, lived alone."

A PLACE FOR MOM

"Seniors who feel lonely and isolated are more likely to report also having poor physical and/or mental health."

A PLACE FOR MOM

ACT LOCALLY:

- » Participate in a social event with a Holocaust survivor
- » Sponsor and volunteer at a holiday party at a senior center
- » Volunteer at a birthday party, make cards, and donate gifts to a senior center
- » Organize an ice cream social at a senior center
- » Help during religious services at a senior center
- » Plan friendly visits with a senior (ex. play board games, make art projects, sing/play an instrument, etc.)
- » Help at a Shabbat luncheon
- » Assist with pet therapy
- » Garden at a nursing home or health care facility

COLLECTION DRIVE IDEAS:

- » Winter clothing
- » Bingo prizes
- » Large print books
- » Necessary items (lotions, Kleenex)

MONETARY DONATIONS FOR:

- » Counseling
- » Groceries
- » Medication
- » Transportation
- » Home-delivered kosher meals
- » Sponsored social gatherings

*"We make a living by what we get,
we make a life by what we give."*

WINSTON CHURCHILL

ON-SITE VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES:

» CJE SeniorLife

(Multiple locations)

www.cje.net



» Elevate Care Riverwoods

(Northwest suburbs)

elevatecare.com



» H.O.M.E. - Housing Opportunities & Maintenance for the Elderly

(Chicago)

www.homeseniors.org



» Little Brothers - Friends of the Elderly

(Multiple locations)

www.littlebrotherschicago.org



» Park Plaza

(Chicago)

www.park-plaza.org



» The Selhelp Home

(Chicago)

www.selhelphome.org



WORKING TO ELIMINATE HUNGER AND HOMELESSNESS



WHY WE CARE:

"Based on national reports, it's estimated that no less than 150 million people, or about 2% of the world's population, are experiencing homelessness. About 1.6 billion people, more than 20% of the world's population, may lack adequate housing."

YALE GLOBAL

"As of January 2018, Illinois had an estimated 10,643 experiencing homelessness on any given day. Of that total, 1,223 were family households, 84 were veterans, 684 were unaccompanied young adults, and 1,625 were experiencing chronic homelessness."

UNITED STATES INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS

"Some 795 million people in the world do not have enough food to lead a healthy active life. That's about one in nine people on earth."

FOOD AID FOUNDATION

ACT LOCALLY:

- » Volunteer at a food pantry
- » Serve meals to those in need
- » Help organize a food/clothing warehouse
- » Sort and pack emergency food packages
- » Organize a collection drive in your school, synagogue, or neighborhood
- » Deliver food boxes during Rosh Hashanah and Passover
- » Sponsor a Shabbat luncheon
- » Grocery shop for needy families
- » Create packages to benefit homeless children

COLLECTION DRIVE IDEAS:

- » Canned and non-perishable foods
- » New full and travel size toiletries
- » Bikes and sports equipment
- » Clothing
- » Furniture and housewares
- » Bedding and towels
- » Toys/presents for holidays
- » Transit cards

MONETARY DONATIONS FOR:

- » Soup kitchen meals
- » Food pantries
- » Food for holiday boxes

ON-SITE VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES:

- » **A Just Harvest** (Chicago)
www.ajustharvest.org

- » **The ARK** (Chicago)
www.arkchicago.org
  
- » **The Campus Kitchens at Northwestern University** (Northern suburbs)
northwestern.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/campuskitchens

- » **Chicago Chesed Fund** (Northern suburbs)
chicagochesedfund.org

- » **Cornerstone Community Outreach** (Chicago)
www.ccolife.org

- » **Dina & Eli Field EZRA Multi-Service Center** (Chicago)
www.juf.org/ezra
  
- » **Family Promise Chicago North Shore** (Northern suburbs)
www.fpcnorthshore.org

- » **Feed My Starving Children** (Multiple locations)
www.fmssc.org/en

- » **Jewish Relief Agency** (Multiple locations)
www.jewishrelief.org

- » **JUF Uptown Cafe** (Chicago)
www.juf.org/tov/uptown-cafe.aspx
  
- » **Lakeview Pantry** (Chicago)
www.lakeviewpantry.org

- » **Maot Chitim of Greater Chicago** (Multiple locations)
www.maotchitim.org
  
- » **New Life for Old Bags** (Multiple locations)
www.unitedinfaith.org/newlifeforoldbags.html
- » **Northern Illinois Food Bank** (Multiple locations)
www.solvehungertoday.org

- » **Temple Shalom Monday Meal** (Chicago)
www.sholomchicago.org/volunteer-opportunities/monday-meal


GOING GREEN



WHY WE CARE:

"There has been over 322,391,695 tons of waste from households globally this year. There has been over 417,773,520 tons of waste dumped globally this year."

THE WORLD COUNTS

"Illinois generates approximately 19 million tons of garbage a year, which is 23% more waste per capita than the average state in the U.S."

ILLINOIS ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

ACT LOCALLY:

- » Volunteer at an arboretum
- » Set up a green campaign at your school
- » Pick up trash around your community
- » Beautify a local park
- » Clean up a local beach
- » Decorate and distribute reusable bags

COLLECTION DRIVE IDEAS:

- » Seeds, mulch, and gardening tools
- » Reusable shopping bags
- » Electronic recyclables

MONETARY DONATIONS FOR:

- » Carbon offsets—reduction of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases
- » Planting trees in Israel

Did You Know?

In the summer of 2019 alone, teens earned over 1,620 hours of community service through Camp TOV.

ON-SITE VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES:

» **A Just Harvest**
(Chicago)
www.ajustharvest.org



» **Alliance for the Great Lakes**
(Chicago)
greatlakes.org

» **Chicago Community Gardens**
(Chicago)
chicagocommunitygardens.org

» **Clean Up - Give Back.org**
(Multiple locations)
cleanupgiveback.org

» **Green Star Movement**
(Multiple locations)
greenstarmovement.org



» **Neighborspace**
(Multiple locations)
www.neighbor-space.org



» **New Life for Old Bags**
(Chicago)
www.unitedinfaith.org/newlifeforoldbags.html

CARING FOR ANIMALS

WHY WE CARE:

"Only 1 out of every 10 dogs born will find a permanent home."

DO SOMETHING

"Each year, approximately 2.7 million dogs and cats are killed because shelters are too full and there aren't enough adoptive homes."

DO SOMETHING

ACT LOCALLY:

- » Work with animals at an adoption center
- » Organize a group to do take-home animal care-related projects
- » Make homemade dog leashes or toys
- » Make bird feeders for trees

COLLECTION DRIVE IDEAS:

- » Animal supplies
- » Cleaning supplies
- » Any other supplies shelters may need

MONETARY DONATIONS FOR:

- » Animal rights organizations
- » Adoption programs
- » Outreach efforts

"Being human means being conscious and being responsible. By becoming responsible agents for social change, we actualize not only our humanity but also our mission as Jews."

VIKTOR FRANKL



ON-SITE VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES:

» **Anti-Cruelty Society of Chicago**
(Chicago)
www.anticruelty.org



» **Evanston Animal Shelter**
(Northern suburbs)
www.evanstonanimalshelter.net



» **PAWS Chicago**
(Chicago)
www.pawschicago.org



» **The Snuggles Project and Participating Shelters**
(Multiple locations)
www.snugglesproject.org



SPORTS AND ACTIVE OPPORTUNITIES

WHY WE CARE:

"More children and teens are overweight or obese now than ever before. Physical activity helps prevent or reduce health problems."

FAMILY DOCTOR

"Children 6 years of age or older should be active 60 minutes or more each day."

FAMILY DOCTOR

ACT LOCALLY:

- » Volunteer at a local 5K
- » Become a mentor at a YMCA for kids
- » Decorate sports sheds around the area
- » Organize a sports tournament fundraiser

COLLECTION DRIVE IDEAS:

- » Collect sports equipment for local organizations
- » Host a shoe drive for new running shoes, cleats, and everyday sneakers
- » Collect bike helmets

MONETARY DONATIONS FOR:

- » An organization hosting a race for a cause you are passionate about
- » Health awareness organizations
- » Funds to build better public-school athletic programs

Did You Know?

Since 2016 JUF has engaged nearly 5,300 volunteers through Good Deeds Day, an international day of service that was founded in Israel in 2007.



ON-SITE VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES:

» All Star Abilities

(Multiple locations)

www.jccchicago.org/programs/special-needs-autism/star-abilities



» Best Buddies

(Multiple locations)

www.bestbuddies.org/illinois

» Girls on the Run

(Multiple locations)

www.girlsontherun.com

» YMCA

(Multiple locations)

www.ymcachicago.org

CHILDREN AND YOUTH



WHY WE CARE:

"Nearly 40% of children in the United States live in low-income families."

SOCIAL SOLUTIONS

"There are nearly 1.8 billion young people in the world. Nearly 87% of the world's youths live in developing countries."

SOCIAL SOLUTIONS

"Children from low-income families are more likely to become a gang member, attack someone or get into a fight, steal something, and run away."

SOCIAL SOLUTIONS

ACT LOCALLY:

- » Put together goodie bags for underprivileged youth's birthday parties
- » Volunteer at a YMCA and spend time with kids of all ages
- » Organize a fundraiser for supplies for a youth organization
- » Read books to young kids and have them illustrate the story
- » Create packages to benefit homeless children in your local area

COLLECTION DRIVE IDEAS:

- » Sports equipment for a local youth organization
- » Books for children's libraries
- » Dolls and doll clothing for young children

MONETARY DONATIONS FOR:

- » After school programs for youth
- » Local parks
- » Scholarship funds for overnight camps

"Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart."

ELIZABETH ANDREW

ON-SITE VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES:

- | | |
|--|---|
| » Bernie's Book Bank
(Northern suburbs)
www.berniesbookbank.org | » JCFS Chicago
(Chicago)
www.jcfs.org |
| » The Birthday Party Project
(Chicago)
www.thebirthdaypartyproject.org | » KEEN
(Multiple locations)
www.keenchicago.org |
| » Cradles to Crayons
(Multiple locations)
cradlestocrayons.org/chicago | » Keshet
(Multiple locations)
www.keshet.org |
| » Ethiopian Community Association of Chicago
(Chicago)
www.ecachicago.org | » Share our Spare
(Chicago)
www.shareourspare.org |
| » Girls on the Run
(Multiple locations)
www.gotrchicago.org | » YMCA Chicago
(Multiple locations)
www.ymcachicago.org |

ARTS AND THEATER

WHY WE CARE:

"Several studies find that participation in or appreciation of the arts increases happiness."

NATIONSWELL

"There is strong support that artistic practice is associated with higher levels of life satisfaction, a more positive self-image, less anxiety about change, a more tolerant and open approach to diverse others, and, in some cases, less focus on materialistic values on the acquisition of goods."

NATIONSWELL

ACT LOCALLY:

- » Create posters and wall decorations for shelters or nursing homes
- » Make centerpieces for soup kitchens
- » Make jewelry and sell it to raise money for an organization
- » Hold a silent art auction with pieces you create
- » Paint a mural

COLLECTION DRIVE IDEAS:

- » Art equipment for schools
- » Costumes for a local theater
- » Props for a local theater

MONETARY DONATIONS FOR:

- » After school day cares with art programs
- » Art therapy organizations
- » Local theater organization

Did You Know?

JUF partners with more than 60 organizations each year to offer volunteer opportunities throughout Chicagoland.

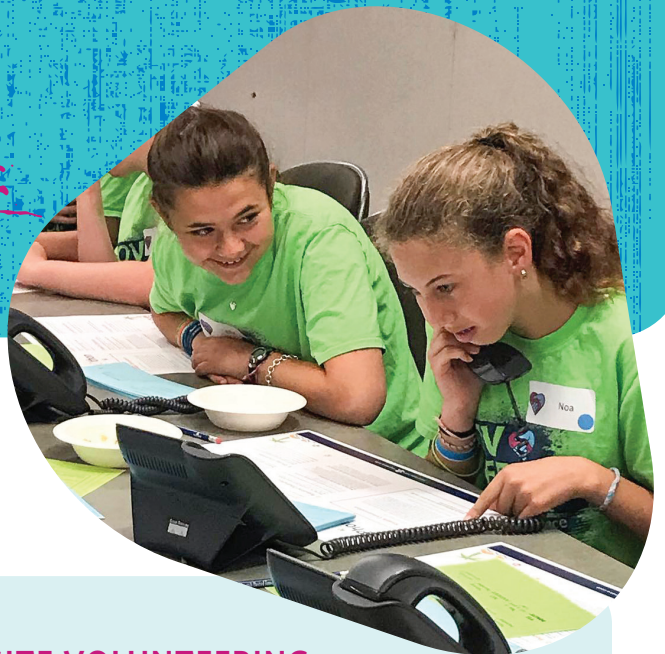


ON-SITE VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES:

- » **Chicago Street Theatre**
(Chicago)
www.chicagostreet.org
- » **Green Star Movement**
(Multiple locations)
www.greenstarmovement.org



SUPPORTING THE JEWISH COMMUNITY



WHY WE CARE:

"Each year, The ARK alone "cares for 4,000 Jews in need who come from all facets of the Chicagoland Jewish Community."

THE ARK

"At any given moment, there are as many as one in five IDF soldiers whose families' financial difficulties weigh heavily on their shoulders."

FRIENDS OF THE IDF

ACT LOCALLY:

- » Write letters to IDF soldiers
- » Deliver food packages on the Jewish holidays to local families in need
- » Organize a fundraiser to support local agencies
- » Serve a meal at a local Jewish organization

COLLECTION DRIVE IDEAS:

- » Sleeping bags for camps
- » Swimming supplies
- » Toiletries

MONETARY DONATIONS FOR:

- » Raise money for the JUF Annual Campaign: www.juf.org
- » Scholarships for Jewish overnight camp and Israel experiences
- » Sponsor an Israeli child to go to camp
- » Raise money to help support programs for Jews around the world

"Whoever practices charity and justice fills the world with loving kindness."

TALMUD: SUKKAH

ON-SITE VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES:

» **The ARK** (Chicago)
www.arkchicago.org



» **Chicago Chesed Fund**
(Northern suburbs)
chicagochesedfund.org



» **CJE SeniorLife**
(Multiple locations)
www.cje.net



» **Dina & Eli Field EZRA Multi-Service Center**
(Chicago)
www.juf.org/ezra



» **JCFS Chicago** (Chicago)
www.jcfs.org



» **Jewish Relief Agency**
(Chicago)
www.jewishrelief.org



» **JUF Uptown Cafe**
(Chicago)
www.juf.org/tov/uptown-cafe.aspx



» **Keshet**
(Multiple locations)
www.keshet.org



» **Maot Chitim of Greater Chicago**
(Multiple locations)
www.maotchitim.org



» **Race For Humanity**
(Northern suburbs)
ilholocaustmuseum.org/raceforhumanity



» **Sharsheret**
(Multiple locations)
www.sharsheret.org/bnai-mitzvah-celebrations



» **Temple Shalom Monday Meal**
(Chicago)
www.sholomchicago.org/volunteer-opportunities/monday-meal



SUPPORTING ISRAEL

Connecting with teens in Israel, especially in our Partnership Together region of Kiryat Gat, Lachish and Shafir, is a truly meaningful experience. Many teens want to support wonderful organizations such as Smiles Club and the Elem bus. These organizations and many others are valuable resources to the communities they serve, and many have a genuine need for supplies and equipment. However, we do not recommend collecting items for donation to Israeli organizations.

Why not? It is extremely expensive to ship items to Israel (often more than the cost of the items that are being sent). Once in Israel they are processed through customs, often incurring a duty fee or tariff. Customs is located near the Ben Gurion airport, which is a long drive from our region. This means the organizations must send a staff person during business hours to drive a minimum of 90 minutes round trip, and they often must pay a significant fee to pick up the items that have been shipped.

HOW TO HELP:

Raising money to support specific programs is a great way to provide organizations with the equipment and supplies they need while making your dollars and time go the furthest. By sending a designated monetary gift, you also support the Israeli economy because the items are purchased there!

To learn more about the organizations mentioned above, find out about our current needs and more, please email Partnership@juf.org.



ANNUAL OR BI-ANNUAL OPPORTUNITIES



» The ARK (Chicago)

www.arkchicago.org

- Deliver Purim packages to those in need.
- Unload and unpack Rosh Hashanah packages and Passover packages.



» Childserv (Chicago)

www.childserv.org

Sort, organize, and package presents for Childserv's Holiday Gift Drive in early December.

» Chicago Christmas Cheer Foundation

www.christmascheer.org

Deliver a packaged meal to those in need on Christmas.



» Good Deeds Day

(Multiple locations)

www.juf.org/gooddeedsday

An international day of service



» JCFS Chicago (Chicago)

www.jcfs.org

Help staff pick out coats, scarves, hats, gloves, and more to fulfill clients' warm weather clothing wish list.



» Maot Chitim of Greater Chicago

(Multiple locations)

www.maotchitim.org

Deliver Rosh Hashanah or Passover food packages to those in need.



INSPIRATION FROM PAST B'NAI MITZVAH PROJECTS

» *Looking for a Lasting Impact with Kaboom!*

When Marc was deciding what to do for his Bar Mitzvah project, he knew that he wanted to do something that would make a lasting impact. After talking to a family friend, they decided to pair up and work with KaBoom!, an organization that creates and builds playgrounds for kids living in low income communities. Before their B'nai Mitzvot, Marc and his friend spent time raising money from others in their community and beyond to fund the playground. They also met with the kids at Bright Star Church in Bronzeville, where the playground was being

built, to discuss what they wanted the playground to look like. The day of the party, friends and family gathered at the church and spent the day building the playground. During this time, the partygoers were able to interact with the families at the church and enjoy food, music, and some impromptu dancing. This experience was one that showed both Marc and his community what was possible when teenagers were given an opportunity to go beyond typical expectations.

» *Serving Dinner and Showcasing The Night Ministry*

Rachel had always been interested in food and hunger. She used this passion when shaping her project. She spent time before her Bat Mitzvah volunteering at different community kitchens serving dinners to people in need and decided to expand on this idea for her party. She partnered with The Night Ministry, an organization that sets up on street corners to serve meals to families in need. Her party consisted of getting her friends together and making food to serve to 200 community members the following day.

Rachel prepared a video in advance to show at her party which explained what The Night Ministry was and give a preview of the task at hand. While preparing their menu that included macaroni and cheese, vegetarian chili, and, of course, desserts, guests also had time to dance and celebrate with one another. The power of community was really highlighted to Rachel when she was able to see the incredible amount of food that was able to be given out after just a few hours of work.

» *Creating Sydney's Stuffing*

Sydney's parents always told her she had "good stuffing," meaning she was full of compassion and sensitivity. In particular, she was bothered by homelessness. She used her good stuffing to create Sydney's Stuffing, a nonprofit to make and distribute pillows to at-risk children. The pillows are designed to be portable—they have a clip to attach them to bags. And they are emblazoned with an

appropriate inspirational message: "It's what's inside that counts." In addition to homeless children, Sydney is distributing the pillows to kids in hospitals, as well as kids generally going through tough times. She also gave pillows to children she met in Israel, at an absorption center for Ethiopian immigrants in Kiryat Gat.

» *Volunteer Bat Mitzvah "Service" at Cradles to Crayons*

Hannah* and her family invited all their guests to do a volunteering session at Cradles to Crayons. Cradles to Crayons was founded with the mission of providing children in need some of the most important basics of life for free. Children are provided all the physical goods that they need to be safe, protected from the elements, and ready to learn. Volunteers helped sort and put together KidPacks: packages filled with clothing, shoes, books, and other

essential items children need to thrive. Hannah had done her Bat Mitzvah service in Israel, so the volunteering session was that morning's "service". There was a girl power playlist, pizza and salad, and even a flash mob. The family had sent guests a short video teaching them the dance moves and they all danced at the end of the volunteering session. They had another party that night at a different venue.

**name has been changed*

OPPORTUNITIES TO CONTINUE GIVING

The Fun Doesn't Stop Here!

GET INVOLVED AFTER YOUR B'NAI MITZVAH:

» JUF's Teen Volunteering Network: TOV Teens

The Tikkun Olam Volunteer Teens (TOV Teens) Network is JUF's connection point specifically for teens who want to donate their time to help others in need. In accordance with tikkun olam, the Jewish concept of repairing the world one good deed at a time, TOV Teens connects members of the Jewish community with Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation-affiliated agencies and with community service projects that need volunteers. Whether you are interested in volunteering once a week or once a year, in the city or in the suburbs, with elderly or with children, by tutoring or by serving food to the homeless, TOV Teen's volunteer advisors will work hard to find the best match to meet your needs and interests.

Learn more: www.juf.org/teens

» Camp TOV

Camp TOV is about making a difference while having fun. It's a week-long, interactive service-oriented day program on wheels sponsored by JUF. Each day, campers head off on a new adventure, immersing themselves in volunteer projects that focus on poverty, hunger, environmental concerns, caring for the elderly, and more. In the process, they discover new issues, develop leadership skills, learn first-hand about giving back, and make new friends. Camp TOV is offered at the end of the summer, in July and August, for rising 7th-12th graders.

Learn more: www.juf.org/camptov

» Mini Camp TOV

Mini Camp TOV is the same great experience as Camp TOV, in a smaller package! It is a jam-packed two-day session of hands-on volunteering. Mini Camp TOV is offered in early June for rising 7th-12th graders.

Learn more: www.juf.org/minicamptov

» Good Deeds Day

Locally, Good Deeds Day, run by the JUF Tikkun Olam Volunteer Network (TOV), is designed for volunteers of all ages. It is an international day of service that was founded in Israel in 2007. In 2018, 3.5 million volunteers from 100 countries around the world came together on one day to do good and prove that anyone can make a difference. All are welcome to participate in volunteer projects in partnership with agencies across the Chicagoland area. Past projects included bringing food to the needy, helping in homes for the elderly, and cleaning up beaches and parks. No matter where you are from or what you are interested in, there is sure to be an opportunity for you.

Learn more: www.juf.org/gooddeedsday

» Mitzvah Mania

Mitzvah Mania is another program run by TOV. Mitzvah Mania offers one-time volunteer opportunities throughout Chicagoland. These projects are the perfect way for individuals, families, groups, and teens to perform the mitzvah of tikkun olam without a long-term obligation.

Learn more: www.juf.org/tov/mitzvah-manias.aspx

Email TOV@juf.org to join the Mitzvah Mania email list.

» Voices: The Chicago Jewish Teen Foundation

Voices: The Chicago Jewish Teen Foundation is a prestigious, ten-month program for Jewish High School students from across the metro Chicago area. Together, they learn the ins and outs of professional philanthropy and grant-making through a Jewish lens and allocate at least \$25,000 each year to affect real change in the causes they care about most. Applications typically opens in April, and the program starts in September.

Learn more: www.juf.org/teens/Voices_Apply.aspx

OPEN A B'NAI MITZVAH FUND:

Here at JUF we have a team of professionals working to manage Donor Advised Funds, an easy-to-use charitable fund that can be established for a minimum of \$1,000 with all charitable dollars invested tax free. A B'nai Mitzvah Fund is a type of Donor Advised Fund established in honor and celebration of this significant life milestone.

How does a B'nai Mitzvah Fund work? The fund can be named in honor of the B'nai Mitzvah and family and friends can contribute to the fund as a gift. In addition to helping teach the value of tzedakah, donors receive an immediate charitable tax deduction. Teens are then able to make distributions of at least \$100 to both Jewish and secular charities that they care about. Additional contributions to the fund can be made at any time, allowing the B'nai Mitzvah to continue charitable giving into adulthood.

To find out more about Donor Advised Funds and B'nai Mitzvah Funds, please contact legacy@juf.org or **312-357-4853**.



Did You Know?

Since its creation in 2004, Voices: The Chicago Jewish Teen Foundation has awarded over \$650,000 to local, national and international nonprofits.

*"Those who can, do.
Those who can do more, volunteer."*

UNKNOWN



STAY INVOLVED WITH TOV TEENS AND TOV!



TOV Teens-Volunteering
TOV Volunteer Network (JUF)



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Visit www.juf.org/subscriptions to receive the TOV or JUF Teens monthly newsletters.

Need some more ideas?

For extra help planning your mitzvah project, visit www.juf.org/teens/BM-Projects.aspx or call **312-444-2867**.

**JUF amplifies our collective strength
to make the world a better place — for everyone.**

Community powered, we consider the totality of local
and global Jewish needs and how to address them.
From generation to generation, we help people connect
to Jewish life and values, fueling a dynamic, enduring
community that comes together for good.



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