



Volunteer Resource Bank

Synagogue & Community Wide Volunteer Opportunities

*"The Torah begins and ends with acts of caring, loving kindness."
- Talmud*

Serving others is a great way to grow, meet new friends, and discover your unique contribution to making the world more just. The selfless act of volunteering provides a **spiritual enhancement** as well. Knowing that you made a positive impact on someone is an uplifting experience. Here at Valley Beth Shalom there are many ways you can help to make a difference. Whether offering a hand in our administrative offices, schools, Shabbat services and programs, Caring Connection, or getting involved in Social Justice and Social Action - **WE NEED YOU**. We are happy and excited for you to join our team. Thank you for showing up!

To view office and school volunteer opportunities, please view pages 2-4.

For Social Action volunteer opportunities, please view pages 5-12.

Temple Administrative Offices Volunteer Opportunities

- **VBS Development Department**

Assist with large congregational mailings, High Holiday pledge cards and event details for our two major fundraisers: The Annual Campaign and Annual Gala Celebration. *These opportunities are seasonal.*

Early Childhood Center (ECC) Volunteer Opportunities

- **ECC Office Assistance**

Assist with data entry, filing, phone coverage and other light administrative duties.

- **Bi-Annual Snail Mail Packet Stuffing**

Help stuff two hard copy mailings per year for ECC families.

- **Rolling Library Cart and Classroom Story Reading**

Visit ECC classrooms and read stories to the children.

- **Furniture Building**

Help the ECC put together furniture for classrooms.

- **Microsoft Excel/Adobe InDesign Consultant**

Help ECC office staff with special projects using these two programs.

Etz Chaim Learning Center (ECLC) Volunteer Opportunities

- **ECLC Office Assistance**

Assist with filing student emergency forms or progress reports, creating files for new students, shredding documents, laminating, and copying.

- **OurSpace Program**

Volunteer on a Sunday in a classroom with students that have learning differences assisting teachers and students with art projects. Volunteers are asked to commit to coming every week as consistency is important for these students.

- **Year-End Art Gallery (OurSpace Program)**

Help organize and frame the student's various art pieces and assist with end of the year graduation materials for the ceremony.

Shabbat Services and Programs Volunteer Opportunities

- **Kiddush Hosts**

Serve lunch to the community after Shabbat services.

- **Greeters**

Provide ushering and assistance during VBS services and events

Caring Connection Volunteer Opportunities

VBS Caring Connection offers care, compassion and support during Moments of life's transitions and celebrations.

- **General Caring Connection Volunteer Opportunities**

Decorate Caring Connection cards to be sent to members with a new baby or with a “get well” or “thinking of you” message. *Open to people of any age who are interested.*

- **Trained Volunteer Opportunities**

Volunteers apply and are then interviewed and screened before going through our training program. Once trained, they do the following:

- Reach out to members with a new baby.
- Reach out to members and their immediate families with an illness, surgery or long term shut-in situation.
- Reach out to members who are bereaved at Shloshim, 6 months after their loss and at the Yahrzeit.

Social Justice and Social Action Volunteer Opportunities

VBS offers opportunities for members to engage together in the work of repairing the world, from direct service to advocacy.

Where we don't have current teams, we direct members to outside organizations to volunteer in areas of interest to them.

Volunteer Opportunities Available at VBS:

- **Knitting Needles**

This group of committed VBS members knit and crochet caps for cancer patients in local hospitals, blankets for newborn babies and knit hats for the IDF. Projects vary depending on the season. Yarn donations appreciated; open skeins accepted. **Meets the third Wednesday of the month from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. on the following dates:**

Mar 15 - Sher II

Apr 19 - Sher II

May 17 - Youth Center

Jun 21 - Sher II

- **Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) Homeless Count**

Join us on **Tuesday, January 24 from 8:00-11:00 p.m.** for the annual census of homeless people in the county. We will go out in cars with teams to count the homeless in Encino and Lake Balboa. The count is visual only. The count is extremely important to the overall effort to learn how many are homeless in the county, their demographics and distribution. The data is used to win funding and to prioritize spending and approaches to ending homelessness.

- **Homelessness Task Force Advocacy Group**

Our advocacy team working with nonprofit and faith partners to seek public policy solutions to our city's homelessness crisis. The team has advocated successfully for city and county measures in the last year to build more permanent supportive and affordable housing. This group meets on the

second Monday evening of each month, 7:00 pm- 8:30 p.m. in Bernstein Balcony Seminar on the following dates:

2/13/17

3/13/17

No April meeting scheduled due to Passover Seder.

5/8/17

6/12/17

- **Food Bank**

Working in conjunction with JFS/SOVA, the food bank offers a 24-48 hour supply of food for the hungry. Always cognizant of a balanced diet, included in the grocery bag is a variety of canned meats and/or fish, canned soup, canned or dried fruit and vegetables, pasta, rice, dried milk, cereal and peanut butter. Guests of the food bank are referred to us from SOVA, the city's 211 emergency line and a number of local shelters. Weekly or bi-monthly shifts of sorting and bagging groceries for our guests.

VBS Social Justice and Social Action also recommends volunteer opportunities with the following organizations in the wider Los Angeles community:

ANIMALS

- **Pet Orphans**

Help animals in need of training and/or safe homes by becoming a Socializer, Coach, Trainor, or Adoption Counselor. Apply through the online application and attend a volunteer orientation to find which project is best for you.

- **Ride On Therapeutic Horsemanship**

Assist both adults and children with cognitive and physical disabilities in riding horses as a form of therapy. Groom, tack, lead, and walk alongside the horses and riders to form a bond with both the animals and those receiving therapy. No experience with horses necessary!

ELDERS

- **Atria Senior Living Tarzana & Vintage Encino Hills**
Spend time with the elderly by engaging in conversation, doing art projects, and walking. Times are flexible and families with children are welcome!
- **Jewish Family Service**
Use this extensive database to find a volunteer opportunity in Los Angeles that fits you! There are tons of options for people of all ages and interests.
- **Skirball Hospice**
Assist the elderly at the Skirball Hospice either through visits that may incorporate sharing music, memories, and pictures or through office work or by providing emotional support to families.
- **The Jewish Home**
Assist residents with their monthly Bingo game night on fourth Tuesday of the month.

ENVIRONMENT

- **Heal the Bay**
Clean the Santa Monica beaches to save our oceans, beaches, and marine life. Young children, families, and individuals are all welcome with the online waiver.
- **Tree People**
Plant trees and learn about the ecosystem in an attempt to create a greener Los Angeles, and eventually a healthier environment for everyone.

HUNGER AND HOMELESSNESS

- **Habitat for Humanity**
Help build homes for those in need of a place to live, even if you have zero building experience! Or help sell new and old furniture and building materials at discounts to the public and assist customers.

- **Imagine LA**
A range of opportunities to help end homelessness.
- **LA Family Housing**
Volunteer opportunities for people 16 years and older in the cafeteria, providing homework help, organizing birthday parties, sorting donations and more.
- **Midnight Mission**
A range of opportunities to serve downtown shelter, from meals, to tutoring to job-skills coaching.
- **PATH**
Prepare and serve a meal at this westside transitional housing center for the homeless.
- **Piece by Piece**
Help low-income and formerly homeless individuals build self-confidence and develop marketable skills to generate income by assisting in the creation of mosaics and art. No artistic experience necessary!
- **Project Angel Food**
Help prepare meals for delivery to people who are suffering from serious illness at this Hollywood location, or sign up to volunteer in one of their urban gardens that grows food for their meal program.
- **Project Chicken Soup**
Cook kosher meals for delivery to the sick on Sunday mornings in Culver City. Children, ages 12-14 may volunteer in the kitchen with parental supervision, younger children may pack bags with a parent and deliver, but are not allowed in the kitchen.
- **SOVA**
Sort and pack groceries at the SOVA Valley food pantry, Monday-Wednesday, Friday and Sunday mornings.

SOLDIERS

- **Operation Gratitude (American)**

Create packages to send to the U.S. Military by preparing clothing, toiletries, snacks, games, and toys or packaging the items in individual boxes. You can also write letters to the soldiers, which are included in each package - **great for kids!** This is a great way to help your country and soldiers especially for families with children, just be sure to fill out the online waiver and bring it with you. Consider donating candy, stuffed animals, socks, water bottles, knitted scarves and hats, and other needed items.

- **Project Hollywood Cares (American)**

Create packages including videos, CDs, DVDs, and other items from the entertainment industry to send to U.S. soldiers! You can help assemble packages or do other jobs in the facilities or even donate needed movies, CDs, t-shirts, prepaid phone cards, and more.

- **Veteran's Administration (American)**

Join a variety of programs to aid American veterans, whether it be medically in a hospital through visits, office work or transportation. Age requirements are strict for hospitals, but there are opportunities for younger people. Donations are also welcome, both cash and items such as clothing, cookies, magazines, and phone cards.

- **A Package from Home (Israeli)**

Help Israeli soldiers by donating items such as new clothing, toiletries, candy, lip balm, and more or money at www.aaci.org.il. If you are personally making a trip to Israel, take a package with you on the airplane as a carry-on to donate.

- **Project MOT (Israeli)**

Donate religious items to be sent to Jewish soldiers during the year and particularly near Jewish holidays. Assemble boxes to be sent as well.

Needed items for donation include: prepaid phone cards, kosher snacks and candy, letters of thanks, kippot, games, blank holiday cards, religious CDs and DVDs, scarves, “cool ties”, and travel sized toiletries.

SPECIAL NEEDS

- **Etta Israel Residence**

People ages 20-45 can join ETTA Young Professionals to raise money and host volunteer events for the Etta Israel Center, which helps Jewish people with special needs. Younger people ages 14-19 can join the ETTA Youth Board to plan fun recreational and social activities and events for ETTA clients and families.

- **Shaare Tikva (OurSpace)**

Assist VBS members with special needs in their monthly experiences to explore Judaism and the community through music, art, and more.

- **Special Olympics**

Teach, train, and coach people with disabilities in 12 different Olympic sports. Help with support and the learning of skills or volunteer at day events.

YOUTH

- **Koreh LA**
A reading tutoring program run by the Los Angeles Jewish Federation. Tutors meet weekly with a student in an LAUSD school who needs extra support in their development as readers.
- **JBBBS Max Straus**
Help Jewish children and teens by mentoring, doing arts and crafts, and playing with them. Teens ages 16-17 can be counselors in training over the summer.
- **Jewish Big Brothers Big Sisters**
Volunteer one-to one with youth who could use the care and support of another adult in their lives.
- **Milk and Bookies**
Either attend a big event at which the organization needs help OR organize a book drive to provide books for libraries and schools in need of new books. In addition, organize and host a "book-raiser" where kids can come choose, inscribe, and donate books to be given to children, libraries, and schools in need of books.
- **Operation School Bell**
Help fit underprivileged children with new clothing, shoes, school uniforms, backpacks, and school supplies so they can be successful in school and confident in themselves.

- **Oscar Litwak Foundation**
Create a mobile playroom for seriously ill children in hospitals that have no access to toys and entertainment during their long stays. Collect NEW toys, board games, stuffed animals, and other fun items for children spending time in the hospital.
- **School on Wheels**
Volunteer as a tutor for homeless youth.
- **West Valley Boys and Girls Club**
Play with, talk to, and create friendships with underprivileged children that need a mentor. Tutor children and play games with them while acting as a positive mentor and role model.

WORLDWIDE

- **Jewish World Watch**
JWW, founded at VBS, organizes the Jewish Community to stand up against genocide around the world. Many opportunities to help with fundraising, advocacy, education and service work with refugees being resettled in Southern California.

For more information on volunteer opportunities or for contact information for these organizations, please inquire with:

- **Brooke Wirtschafter, Social Justice Program Manager**
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- **Natasha Benzaken, Membership Coordinator**
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