

PLANTING SEEDS OF DEEDS - JANUARY 2014

Recently one of our congregants shared the following story with me. Several years ago she read an article in the Science Times about a woman who decided to give a gift a day for 29 days as a way to cope with newly diagnosed MS. The article went on to describe the health benefits of "giving". The article stuck with the congregant and last year she got the notion to give it a try. She proposed to her family that for the month of December they try to do a good deed a day. They agreed that it could be as simple as holding the door for someone, but they'd also aspire to bigger things some days. So they decided to give it a whirl. In the evening, they reported back to each other what they had done; their stories were moving, funny and even ridiculous. They all found that after doing it for several days, they had a noticeable shift in how they viewed their days as well as the people with whom they had interacted. They purposefully looked for people to help, moving them away from thinking about themselves.

At a recent meeting of our Tikkun Olam ("Repairing the World") Committee, we explored the possibility of replicating this as a congregation. We all agreed that it would be great to do it in January as we come off the bounty of December. As it turns out, January contains Tu b'Shevat: the new year of the trees. And it struck me, perhaps just as we plant trees to bear fruit for the future, performing daily deeds of lovingkindness might lay the seeds for more such good deeds, thereby "paying it forward".

And here's how we plan to turn it into a community event:

As part of this project, we hope to collect any story that you would like to share about your experiences through the month (no set form or length is required). Merely tap it out and send it on to Jane Marcus who has agreed to collect them to be shared with the congregation. Her email address is janeson094@aol.com.

Rabbi Tarfon used to say: There is much work to be done. You are not required to finish the task, but neither are you free to leave it for someone else to do.

Please join us as we challenge ourselves to a month of giving. There is no right or wrong way to participate; whatever feels right to you to do is right. Join with us as we seek to repair the world, one good deed at a time.