



Temple Shalom

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Mitzvah Projects Resource Guide

*Ideas for places to volunteer
or support in the spirit of
Tikkun Olam*

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.

We hope this project will be just the beginning of a life-long commitment to helping others in the world around us. We want our students to use their talents and skills with which they have been blessed to make a positive difference in the world.

Mitzvah Projects should be completed or well underway by the date of your simcha. We want to hear about your project, what you've learned and who you've impacted during your D'var Torah speech.

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

B'shalom,

*Rabbi Mitch
and Rabbi Kevin*

To help choose a mitzvah project, ask yourself these questions:

What do I really like to do?

What am I really good at doing?

What bothers me about the world so much that I really want to change it?

*There is no such thing as a small mitzvah!
Any mitzvah, no matter how small,
changes the entire world.*

To see other ideas, things we can do every day and not specific to a particular organization, take a look at pages 17 - 18.

Before finalizing your Mitzvah Project, please fill out the *Mitzvah Project Declaration Form* found on the last page of this resource guide. Once completed, please submit to Rabbi Kevin at rabbikevin@templesholom.com.

You should declare a Mitzvah Project at least 8-9 months prior to your Simcha.

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Adopt-A-Dog

www.adopt-a-dog.org

Adopt-A-Dog is a limited admission animal shelter whose mission is to save, socialize and secure loving homes for unwanted or abandoned dogs. Youth volunteers are welcome. Projects include making shelter blankets, making dog treats and possibly volunteering at the Shelter.

(Animals & Environment)

Alex's Lemonade Stand

www.alexlemonade.org

The mission of Alex's Lemonade Stand is to change the lives of children with cancer through funding impactful research, raising awareness, supporting families and empowering everyone to help cure childhood cancer. Set up your own lemonade stand to raise money for childhood cancers. *(Health)*

Areyvut

www.areyvut.org

A non-profit organization established in 2002, Areyvut offers a variety of unique and meaningful opportunities and programs to inspire Jewish youth to get involved in their communities in ways they never imagined, while also helping them to realize the immense power they have to make their communities and the world a better place. To see their database of worldwide opportunities visit: www.areyvut.org/opportunities *(Database)*

Audubon Greenwich

www.greenwich.audubon.org

Greenwich Audubon Center's mission is to engage and educate people to conserve, restore, and enjoy nature – focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats. Volunteers help achieve this mission of environmental awareness and maintenance of a thriving and healthy environment for birds and wildlife. Volunteers under 14 must be accompanied by an adult. *(Animals & Environment)*

Backyard Sports Plus

byardsports.com/special-needs.html

The 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. *(Special Needs)*

Boys and Girls Club

www.bgccg.org

The Boys and Girls Club of Greenwich offers a safe place for local kids. Their Torch Club is a leadership service club which performs community service at the Boys & Girls Club and throughout the community. Min. time commitment is 25 hours/ year. *(At Risk Youth)*

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. *(Elderly)*

Celebrate Israel Parade

www.celebrateisrael.org

This annual event takes place in New City for the past 55 years. Thousands march showing their pride and support for Israel. Contact JCRC to find out ways to get involved. *(Israel)*

Cerebral Palsy

www.cpwestchester.org

Cerebral Palsy of Westchester relies on the support of the community to assist in providing quality services. Read to students; coach / teach sports; assist as special events; perform and more. *(Special Needs)*

Children's Hope Chest

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. *(At Risk Youth)*

Community Centers Greenwich

www.ccigreenwich.org

CCI is a social service agency dedicated to building skills that empower clients to overcome educational, social and economic barriers so that they can reach their full potential. There are lots of way to get involved. Volunteer projects vary depending on the season. Call to find out more. *(Social Service Agency)*

David's Closet at Stamford Hospital

203-276-5995 or 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.

(Health)

Dignity Grows

www.ujajcc.org

Dignity Grows provides assistance to individuals in need of menstrual products and toiletries by providing a pre-packaged, one month's supply. Dignity Grows™ is a program of the Jewish Federation of Greater Hartford and is supported by UJA JCC Greenwich *(Poverty)*

Domus

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. *(At Risk Youth)*

Don Bosco Soup Kitchen and Food Pantry

www.donboscocenter.org or [Carmen Linero clinero1963@gmail.com](mailto:Carmen.Linero.clinero1963@gmail.com)

Since 1928 Don Bosco Center has served the needs of poor immigrant youth and their families in the village of Port Chester. There are volunteer opportunities for weekday and Saturday morning shifts at the daily soup kitchen and food pantry. Food and clothing drives are always needed.

(Poverty & Hunger)

Dorot Westchester

www.dorotusa.org/volunteer/westchester

Volunteers can make a lasting impact on the lives of older adults. Forge new friendships through in-home visiting programs; telephone friends; holiday package deliveries; intergenerational chess and more. *(Elderly)*

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 child, donate funds or visit and spend time with the children on your next visit to Israel. *(At Risk Youth) (Israel)*

Experience Camps

www.experiencecamps.org

Experience Camps is a national network of summer camps for children and teens who have experienced the death of a parent, sibling or primary caregiver. Hands on volunteer opportunities for adults. Other opportunities include becoming an ambassador, raising awareness and helping to fundraise. *(Health)*

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. *(Eldery)(Israel)(Poverty & Hunger)*

Feeding Westchester

www.feedingwestchester.org

The goal of Feeding Westchester is to end hunger in Westchester County. They source and distribute food and other resources. Help by hosting a food drive; assembling holiday food bags and help with the mobile food pantry. *(Poverty & Hunger)*

Filling in the Blanks

www.fillingintheblanks.org

Filling in the Blanks fights childhood hunger by providing children in need meals on the weekends. Help run a food drive or volunteer at their warehouse packing bags. *(Poverty & Hunger)*

Friends of Autistic People

www.autisticadults.org

FAP was founded in 1997 with a commitment to helping families navigate the system and advocate for and intervene on behalf of their children with autism. FAP is always looking for assistance with office work, fundraising efforts, letter writing and event planning and promotions.

(Special Needs)

Friends of Karen

www.friendsofkaren.org

Friends of Karen supports critically ill children and their families. They can use volunteers of all ages. They will match your time and talents to programs, projects and needs that enable Friends of Karen to support families. Some examples include being a part of gift wrapping and packing team during the holidays; putting together birthday bags; helping at a special event and more. *(Health)*

Friends of the Israel Defense Forces

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. *(Israel)*

G'mach Zichron Chaya

201-824-5077

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

Greenwich Special Olympics

www.soct.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. *(Special Needs)*

HIAS

www.hias.org

Founded as the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, today HIAS works around the world to protect and assist refugees of all faiths and ethnicities who have been forced to flee their homelands. B'nai mitzvah projects include assisting with advocacy, distributing petitions, letter writing campaigns, volunteering with refugee children living in the area, holding a collection drive for needed goods and more. *(Immigration)*

Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center

www.hhrecny.org

The Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center enhances the teaching and learning lessons of the Holocaust and the right of all people to be treated with dignity and respect. Opportunity to “Twin with a Survivor”, where b’nai mitzvah students meet three times with a survivor, getting to know them and becoming a keeper of their story. (*Holocaust*)

Hope in Motion

www.stamfordhospitalfoundation.org

Hope in Motion is an annual (June) walk & run that raises funds and awareness for a broad range of supportive services provided at no charge to patients of Stamford Health’s Bennett Cancer Center. Join the walk, join a team. Or start a team & get friends and family to join with you. (*Health*)

Inspirica

www.inspiricact.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. (*Poverty & Hunger*)

IRIS—Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services

www.irisct.org

IRIS works to resettle refugees to Connecticut. Yearly, approximately 500 come to Connecticut. IRIS addresses the critical needs and is the primary resource for helping refugees rebuild their lives locally. There are lots of ways to help ranging from holding drives to help secure key items such as furniture, clothing or even school supplies. Participate and help spread the word about World Refugee Day or, as a family, help co-sponsor a refugee family. (*Immigration*)

JCCA Pleasantville Cottage

www.jccany.org/our-programs/residential-care/volunteering/

JCCA’s four residential programs on the Pleasantville Cottage Campus provide a highly protected and supervised environment for 300 inner-city children who have serious emotional and family problems and cannot live at home. School age volunteers, along with a parent, can provide a meal, fun activities and companionship to a child(ren). (*At Risk Youth*)

Jewish Family Services of Greenwich

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 Larry Stoogenke at 203-622-1881. *(Social Service Agency)*

Jewish National Fund

www.jnf.org

Jewish National Fund's strategic vision is to ensure a strong, secure and prosperous future for the land and the people of Israel. JNF plants trees, builds houses and parks, source water solutions, buy fire trucks and improve the lives of people with special needs. JNF boosts tourism, supports Aliyah, promotes Zionist education and engagement and so much more. JNF has many mitzvah project opportunities. Chose a JNF project that resonates with you and they will help you figure out ways to support it. *(Israel)*

JTeen

www.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. *(Volunteer Org)*

Kids Helping Kids

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. *(Volunteer Org)*

Kids in Crisis

www.kidsincrisis.org

Kids in Crisis provides free, 24/7 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. Contact them for other ideas. *(At Risk Youth)*

Mazon: A Jewish Response to Hunger

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. *(Poverty & Hunger) (Israel)*

Meals-On-Wheels

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. *(Elderly)*

Meir Panim

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. *(Poverty & Hunger)(Israel)*

Midnight Run

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. Organize a drive, volunteer to pack toiletry kits, sign up to make sandwiches. Temple Sholom holds several Midnight Runs a year. Contact Temple Sholom’s Social Action Chair, Scott Kramer at skramer175@gmail.com. *(Poverty & Hunger)*

Mothers for Others

www.mothersforothers.org

Since 2011, Mothers for Others has served over 1,000 families, mostly from Greenwich and Stamford, through donations for children from birth through age five. Run by twenty-five active mothers, the group has more recently concentrated its efforts towards collecting and distributing diapers, wipes and baby equipment, which are not covered by government aid programs. *(Poverty & Hunger)*

Nathaniel Witherall

www.thenathanielwitherell.org

The Nathaniel Witherall is a short-term rehab and skilled nursing center in Greenwich, owned and operated by the town. There are many volunteer opportunities at Witherall including letter writing, visiting residents, assisting with weekly Shabbat services and bringing your leashed dog or cat for a visit. *(Elderly)*

Neighbor to Neighbor

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. *(Poverty & Hunger)*

Netanya Hoops for Kids

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. *(At Risk Youth) (Israel)*

Pass it On Kid's Kloset

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. *(At Risk Youth) (Poverty & Hunger)*

Pediatric Cancer Foundation

www.pcfweb.org

The Pediatric Cancer Foundation's mission is to develop a cure for childhood cancer. Start an event to help raise awareness about Pediatric Cancer and help in its mission to eradicate childhood cancer. Sponsor a toy drive; host a walk-a-thon; donate gifts; hold a car wash or bake sale. *(Health)*

Project Sunshine

www.projectsunshine.org

Project Sunshine volunteers spread sunshine, restoring a crucial sense

of normalcy to the pediatric health care environment. B'nai mitzvah volunteers participate in sending Sunshine projects, creating craft kits, surgi dolls and Sunny Grams to hospitalized children. B'nai mitzvah volunteers can also by fundraising; organizing book, toy and other collection drives; and hosting Sunshine Giving celebrations. *(Health)*

River House Adult Day Care

www.theriverhouse.org/get-involved/volunteer

River House welcomes volunteers of all ages to use their unique skills and talents to provide their clients with new experiences. Volunteers help with arts and crafts, games, exercise or come and perform. *(Elderly)*

Sharsheret

www.sharsheret.org/bnai-mitzvah-celebrations

This national organization supports Jewish women and families facing breast and ovarian cancer – those who have been diagnosed and those who are at high risk. Volunteers have organized Shabbat awareness programs in their communities, hosted bake sales in support of Sharsheret, organized toy collections for Sharsheret's Busy Box program, coordinated Pink and Teal Challah Bakes and so much more. Sharsheret will work with the b'nai mitzvah to determine a meaningful project that meets their specific needs and interests. *(Health)*

SPCA of Westchester

www.sPCA914.org

The SPCA is a no-kill, not-for-profit animal welfare organization dedicated to saving homeless, abused and abandoned animals and to protecting animals from cruelty and neglect through education and enforcement of humane laws. Volunteers participate in the daily walking and training of shelter dogs and cat care program. Volunteers can foster animals, groom them, greet visitors and assist with the adoption process, shelter beautification, photography and more. *(Animals & Environment)*

Stamford Museum and Nature Center

www.stamfordmuseum.org/about-us/volunteers

The Stamford Museum & Nature Center is dedicated to the preservation and interpretation of art and popular culture, the natural and agricultural sciences and history. They seek to inspire creativity, foster self-discovery, promote environmental stewardship and nurture an appreciation for learning. SMNC relies on commitment of volunteers at both the museum and the nature center. *(Animals & Environment)*

Starfish Connection

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. (*At Risk Youth*)

Supermarketing for Seniors

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

Jewish Family Services of Greenwich provides weekly shopping 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. (*Elderly*)

Temple Sholom

www.templeholom.com

Temple Sholom has a number of mitzvah projects you can get involved in. Sponsor and deliver Shabbat Bags; participate in Midnight Run; Support our Toy Drive. Many other options available.

Email rabbikevin@templeholom.com for more information or ideas.

The Sharing Shelf

www.sharingshelf.org

Westchester's clothing bank for children, addresses clothing insecurity.

Many children/teens lack access to sufficient and appropriate clean

clothing. Consider hosting a clothing drive. Call for other ideas. (*Poverty & Hunger*)

United Synagogue Fuchsberg Center Gemilut Hesed Project

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. (*Israel*)(*Database*)

Volunteer Match

www.volunteermatch.org

Volunteer Match is a national database of non profit volunteer opportunities. Volunteer Match has connected millions of people with a great place to volunteer and helped tens of thousands of organizations better leverage volunteers to create real impact. Search engine includes opportunities by location, virtual opportunities and type of organizations. *(Database)*

WIZO, The Women's International Zionist Organization

www.wizousa.org

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. *(Social Services) (Israel)*

World Federation of Jewish Child Survivors of the Holocaust & Descendants

www.holocaustchild.org/index.php/twinning

To help remember the Jewish children who were murdered during the Holocaust, choose to twin with someone who did not survive and did not have a b'nai mitzvah.

Zichron Menachem

www.zichron.org/en/about

Zichron Menachem provides support for any young person in Israel under the age of 25 living with cancer, as well as their parents and siblings. *(Health)*

Other Mitzvah Ideas You Can Do Every Day

1. Send an anonymous donation to someone you know who is struggling financially.
2. Ask for forgiveness- Make a list of ways in which you have wronged others. Spend time asking forgiveness for your actions.
3. Call someone on their birthday. Facebook post is great but personal outreach can make all the difference.
4. Bring gently used board games and decks of cards to a local homeless shelter.
5. Run a Bone Marrow drive in your community.
6. Go through your book shelves and collect books to donate to a local school; library; detention center or hospital. Ask friends to do the same.
7. Learn a card trick or two and then visit a senior center to entertain.
8. Return a shopping cart for someone at the grocery store.
9. Say thank you to cashiers and those packing your bags.
10. Go through your closets and fill 2 bags with clothing that you no longer wear. Donate these gently worn items.
11. Do the dishes without being asked
12. Donate blood.
13. Hold the door open for those who enter after you go through it.
14. Engage in conversation with one person who you would normally overlook.
15. Collect used eyeglasses and donate to an organization that recycles them for the needy.
16. Deliver flowers, pizza or cookies to your local police or fire station to thank our first responders.
17. Foster or adopt a shelter animal.
18. Write a handwritten letter to a grandparent or elderly friend. Share what is going on in your life and ask about theirs.
19. Check in with isolated seniors and offer to run errands for them. To combat isolation teach them how to do video calls.
20. Learn how to knit and then donate blankets or scarves to people in need.
21. Shop at and support a small local business.
22. Shovel your neighbor's walkway or roll out / in their garbage cans on garbage day.
23. Organize a neighborhood clean up day.
24. Let someone with fewer items than you go ahead of you at the supermarket.
25. Pay for the person's coffee in line behind you.

26. Offer to take someone's dog for a walk.
27. Collect pet food, toys or blankets for an animal shelter.
28. Plant a garden.
29. Send 5 postcards of gratitude to friends.
30. Take a moment to pray for those suffering from Covid-19 or in need of healing.
31. Resist the urge to gossip.
32. Make sandwiches to give to a local shelter or soup kitchen.
33. Spread love and cheer in your neighborhood with sidewalk art.
34. Write thank you notes to doctors, nurses and other first responders.
35. Send a care package to deployed troops.
36. Collect coins in a tzedakah box. When full donate to a local charity.
37. Create and decorate a bird feeder.

Adapted from Areyvut.com list of resources

MITZVAH PROJECT DECLARATION FORM

B'nai Mitzvah's Name:

B'nai Mitzvah's Email:

Parent Email:

Phone:

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Date:

Name of Organization / Mitzvah Project Proposed:

Describe the volunteer work you will be doing and who will you be helping:

What do you hope to learn/get out of this Mitzvah Project?

Why is this Mitzvah Project meaningful to you?

If you are unsure about any of the answers to the questions above, please contact Rabbi Kevin who will work with you in developing your Mitzvah Project. Email rabbikevin@templesholom.com or call (203) 869-7191 ext. 112.

Parent: I/we have reviewed this project proposal with my/our child and give them permission to carry it out.

Parent Signature

Date