

***Justice, Justice
shall you pursue,
in order to thrive.
(Deuteronomy. 16:20)***

A GUIDE TO MITZVAH PROJECTS



tzedek tzedek tirdof l'maan tichyeh

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A MESSAGE FROM THE RABBI

The Torah teaches "justice, justice shall you pursue".

According to Rabbinic tradition, the reason the word justice is repeated is to underscore our belief that justice is absolute. If justice is applicable to my people then it must be applicable to all people. Therefore, upon the entry of a young person into the adult Jewish community a commitment to give back to that community is paramount. The Prophets taught us that one of the most significant means by which we actuate our faith in God is by doing deeds of justice. Therefore, as an adult within the community in which we live, we resolve to give back to that community by performing deeds of loving kindness.

This is the reason why Congregation Shalom asks each Bar and Bat Mitzvah student to perform a MITZVAH PROJECT – a project which allows that young person to feel as if he or she has enhanced the world by the giving nature of our tradition. The reward in doing a mitzvah, whether it be for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah or any other act of tzedakah, is the fulfillment which comes in the doing of the act. We do not receive honor, merit or rewards for doing a righteous act, but rather we affirm that God commands us to join in the process of re-creation.

Included in this booklet are numerous opportunities to dedicate yourself to the privilege of being able to give goodness to others. A person becomes an adult in the Jewish community by reading Torah, by dedicating oneself to the perpetuation of Judaism and to the ongoing task of helping the world become a better place in which to be.

Congratulations on your having the privilege of doing such a mitzvah project. May it be a source of inspiration which will enable you, as a Bar and Bat Mitzvah to continue to give back to the community in which we live, our country or even globally, throughout your life. In that manner, your life will be an additional blessing to all humanity.

Shalom,

Rabbi Ronald M. Shapiro

MITZVAH MAKER

Dear Parents and B'nai Mitzvah,

The Social Action Committee of Congregation Shalom shares in the excitement of your becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, in your commitment to study, and your desire to do mitzvot. This guide will help you with ideas as well as provide you with a list of organizations both here and in Israel with whom you may want to develop a relationship. When you do select a mitzvah project, the Social Action Committee of Congregation Shalom will make a donation to the charity of your choice once you complete the attached planning guide. On the day you become a B'nai Mitzvah, we will also present you with a *Mitzvah Maker* certificate. Your name will go on a special wall at the synagogue that will demonstrate your leadership to younger children and all other members of our congregation.

We are also here to help. Please contact Bill Gartenberg if you would like planning assistance.

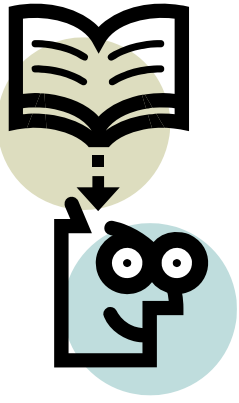
billgartenberg@gmail.com

414-962-0923 home

Mazel tov on your upcoming simcha. May this taste of Jewish life inspire you towards a lifetime of Jewish learning and mitzvot.

Sincerely,

Bill Gartenberg
Social Action Chair
2011-2012



SO YOU WANT TO DO A MITZVAH PROJECT?!?

There are two very important decisions you need to make:
What organization do you want to help?
and
How will you help?

To select a project:

The project you select should be meaningful to you and your family. Here are a few ideas to consider:

- 1) *Think about what interests you.*
- 2) *Support Israel.*
- 3) *Do something that meets peoples' basic needs for survival (food, clothing and shelter)*
- 4) *Help improve healthcare for underserved people.*
- 5) *Work with children and youth organizations.*

Please think about a few things: *

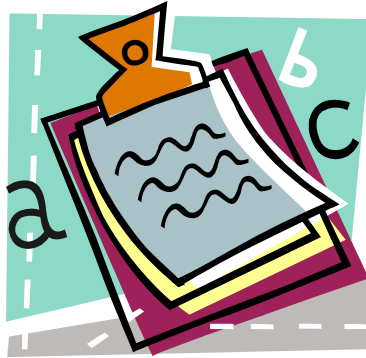
1. *What am I good at?*
2. *What do I like to do?*
3. *What bothers me so much about what is wrong in the world that it makes me angry or sad?*
4. *Whom do I know?*
5. *What can I do right now?*

*** Thanks to scholar Danny Siegel for these insights.**

To select an organization:

- Review the organizations included in this handbook.
- Think about which types of organizations help people you wish to help.
- Do some research to find out about the organization. You may be able to find information about the organization on-line. Call the agency. Explain that you wish to help in some way and ask about their needs.
- Make sure the organization takes good care of donated dollars. Look up the organization on Charity Navigator or guidestar.org. Make sure the organization you select treats the recipients of their work with dignity (*Kavod*).
- Visit the organization if possible. Decide what you can do.

- ENJOY THE EXPERIENCE OF HELPING!



Submit Your Project

Now that you have decided on your project and what organization you will help, complete the *My Mitzvah Project* sheet which can be found at the back of this handbook. The form should be sent in at least three months prior to your Bar or Bat Mitzvah. The form can be mailed or emailed to the individual listed below.

Your *Mitzvah Project* sheet will be reviewed and someone will contact you within a couple of weeks.

Finally when you complete your *Mitzvah Project*, fill out the second sheet and return it to Bill Gartenberg c/o Congregation Shalom. The form should be sent in at least two weeks prior to your Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

If you need additional help just contact us to discuss further!

Bill Gartenberg: billgartenberg@gmail.com or home 414-962-0923

EMAIL PREFERRED

Agency Description

These are descriptions of agencies and a few thoughts on their needs (which change often). There are over 1.5 million non-profit organizations in the US, 3,500 in the Milwaukee area and over 2,000 in Israel. This list represents organizations that our Congregation, our rabbinical staff and Social Action Committee have developed partnerships with over the years. If you develop a new relationship with an organization, we'll add it to the list! If you want your organization to receive the donation in your honor, it must be a 501C (3) charitable organization.

Serving Israel and the Jewish Community

American Friends of Alyn Hospital: Israel's leading hospital for children. 212-869-8085
www.alynus.org

Amudah for the Girlfriends of Fallen Soldiers: Support group for girlfriends and boyfriends of Israeli soldiers killed in action. Information can be found on www.girlfriendsidf.org.il

A Package from Home-started by Barbara Silverman, an American Israeli, this group sends soldiers packages of goodies and letters written in either English, Hebrew, Ethiopian or Russian. You and your friends can raise money, write letters and even go to Israel and help! Information on www.apackagefromhome.org



Helen Bader Center: Housing for elderly Alzheimer clients offering independent, assisted or residential care.

Chai Point: Senior Complex for dependent and assisted living. 1400 N. Prospect Ave., 414 289-9600, www.jewishseniorliving.org.

Habush House: Independent living residence for adults with developmental disabilities. Opportunities exist to assist Jewish Family Services with social and religious opportunities. For more information, please call 414-390-5800.

HAMA (Humans and Animals in Mutual Assistance): Using dogs and cats, HAMA therapists help children victimized by abuse and terrorism to find peace through the care and love of these special animal helpers. Information can be found on [www.geocities.com/hama Israel](http://www.geocities.com/hama_Israel)

Jewish Community Food Pantry: Always under-funded, the Jewish community's response to hunger in Milwaukee is a way for all of us to demonstrate our care for the underserved among us, both Jewish and gentile. Contact Dorene Paley 414-967-8727, dpaley@jccmilwaukee.org website: www.milwaukeejewish.org

Jewish Family Services: Provides a variety of services to strengthen families and supports elders in our community, all within the context of Jewish values. 1300 N. Jackson 414-390-5800. www.jfsmilw.org.

Jewish Home and Care Center: Residential facility for Jewish Seniors. 1460 North Prospect Ave, Milwaukee, 53202. 414-276-2627, www.jewishseniorliving.org.

Jewish National Fund: Helps Israel add forestland, find and conserve water, and build the helps Israel add forestland, find and conserve water, and build the land of Israel. www.jnf.org

Magen David Adom: The Jewish Red Cross, helping to meet the needs of our Israeli brothers and sisters during times of natural disasters and terrorist attacks. www.afmda.org

Mazon: Jewish response to hunger on a national level. www.mazon.org

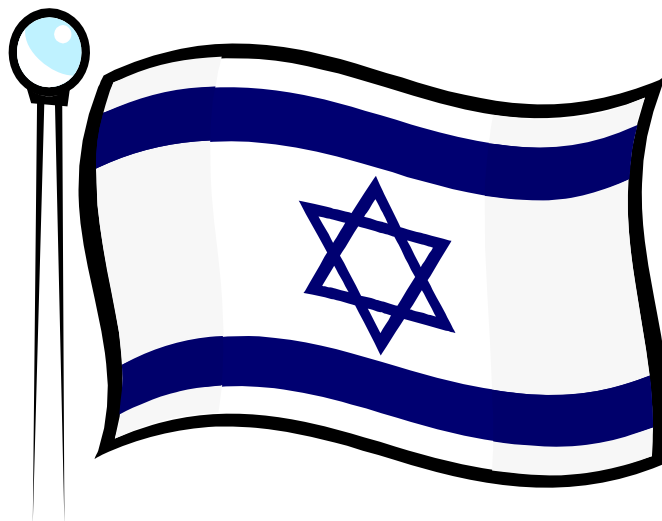
Milwaukee Jewish Federation: Can direct your donation to our sister city of Tiberius in Israel, Gulf Coast relief or to assist victims of the 2007 fires in Southern California. www.milwaukeejewish.org.

Mitzvah Heroes Fund, Inc: Started by students and followers of Danny Siegel, to collect and distribute to various Tzedakah projects along with educating the community and schools of Tzedakah both here and in Israel. www.mitzvahheroesfund.org.

Sela: Helps anyone anywhere in the world deal with the aftermath of terrorism.

Sharsharet- Linking young Jewish women in their fight against breast cancer. www.sharsharet.org

URJ: The Union for Reform Judaism can direct you to an Israel based mitzvah project. www.urj.org



Serving Low Income People and Neighborhoods:

Agape Community Center: Provides primary health screenings, serves community meals, and operates after school programs. 6100 N. 42nd St., Milwaukee 414-464-4440
www.ministryhealth.org.

Cross Lutheran Church: Offers clinic services, a meal program, and clothing supply area for those in need of those services. 1821 N. 16th St., Milwaukee 414 344-1746.
www.lutheransonline.com/crosslutheranchurch

Family House: Elderly, residential group home and services for children. 3269 N.11th St., Milwaukee. 414-264-1682 www.familyhouseinc.com.



Lenscrafters/Lion's Club: Collecting and redistributing eyewear for people in need.
5900 N. Port Washington Rd. 414-967-7764
www.lenscrafters.org

Milwaukee Christian Center: Provides a safe and nurturing environment open to people of all cultures, faiths, and walks of life. 2201 S. 7th St., Milwaukee.
414-645-8440 www.mccwi.org.

Silver Spring Neighborhood Center: Strengthens and enriches the Westlawn and neighboring communities by providing comprehensive and collaborative services. 5460 N. 64th St.
414-463-7950 www.ssnc-milw.org

Help Meet People's Basic Needs Here and Overseas:

Bottomless Closet: Provides “gently used” clothing for women who are entering the workforce and offers supportive services so women can become more self sufficient and confident.
6040 W. Lisbon Suite 206 414-875-9290 www.bottomlessclosetmilwaukee.org.

Heifer International: Purchase animals to support sustainable agriculture in developing countries (www.heifer.org)

Hunger Task Force: Food bank which advocates for comprehensive anti-hunger legislation, collects donated food throughout Milwaukee and delivers to local pantries and meal projects.
201 S. Hawley Ct. 414-777-0483 www.hungertaskforce.org.

SOIL (Sustainable Organic Integrated Livelihoods): helps develop ecological sanitation in Haiti, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. www.oursoil.org. For more information the Milwaukee area, contact Gigi Pomerantz, 414-351-2141 or gigipomerantz@yahoo.com

Verizon Hope Line: Collecting old cell phones and reprogramming them to be distributed to women and children for emergency or support purposes. <http://www.verizonwireless.com/hopeline>

Serving the Disabled and Elderly:

Vision Forward Association: Helps thousands of blind and visually impaired people each year lead productive independent lives. 912 N. Hawley Rd., Milwaukee 414-615-0120
www.visionforward.org

Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing: To provide and promote state of the art services and technologies that enhances the quality of life of individuals with hearing loss. 10243 W. National Ave. 414-604-2200
www.cdhh.org



Community Care for the Elderly: Alternative to nursing home care for elderly who wish to remain at home. Center provides health care assistance. 5228 N. Fond du Lac Ave. 414-536-2117

Golda Meir House: Provides independent living apartments for approximately 130 low-income older adults. Social services for residents are provided by Jewish Family Services. 414-390-5800 www.jfsmilw.org

Grand Avenue Club: Provides people who have suffered mental illnesses, opportunities of employment, education, housing and recreational activities. 210 E Michigan St 414-276-6474
www.grandavenueclub.com

Habush House: Independent living residence for adults with developmental disabilities. Opportunities exist to assist Jewish Family Services with social and religious opportunities. For more information, please call 414-390-5800.

Special Olympics: Special Olympics is a statewide organization providing persons with cognitive disabilities year round sports training and competition. 10224 N. Port Washington Rd. 262-241-7786 www.specialolympicswisconsin.org

Maurice S. Surlow Senior Residence: Provides independent living apartments for approximately 50 low-income older adults. Social services for residents are provided by Jewish Family Services. 414-390-5800 www.jfsmilw.org



Helping Heal the Sick: Bikkur Cholim

Gilda's Club WI: Provides activities, education, and respite for women with cancer. Contact Program Director: Susan Mingesz 414-962-8201 www.gildasclubsewi.org.

Meta House: Residential care for women and children with alcohol and drug related treatment. 2625 N. Weil Ave. 414-962-1200

Ronald McDonald House: Provides housing for families of terminally ill children, while being treated at the hospital. 8948 Watertown Plank Rd. 414-475-5333 www.rmhcMilwaukee.org

Family Peace Center: Operates a hotline for victims of domestic abuse and also provides shelter to victims. Shelter is provided for women and children. 414-933-2722
www.familypeacecenter.org.

Serving Children:

COA Youth and Family Centers: Provides education, guidance and support for children and and parenting instruction for central city parents. 909 E. North Ave. 414-263-8383
www.coa-yfc.org

Hope Network (Hope House): Specializing in programs for troubled children, young women, and families. 209 W. Orchard 414-645-2122. www.hopehousemke.org

KidsMatter: An agency that provides services to children in foster care and their foster families. 1850 N. Dr. Martin Luther King Drive, Suite 202 414-344-1220 www.kidsmatterinc.org

La Causa Family Center: to provide children, youth, and families with quality, comprehensive services to nurture healthy family life and enhance community stability. 804 W. Greenfield Ave 414-647-5971 www.lacausa.org

Our Next Generation: Focuses on education, life skills, parenting, professional and mentoring skills by pairing low income kids up with tutors. 3421 W Lisbon Ave 414-344-2111
www.ongkids.org

Pearls for Teenage Girls: With the support of caring women, helps nurture and sustain girls in girl-only safe space to talk, to be heard, to express fear, joy, and anger, and to dream big. 2100 N Palmer St. 414 265-7555 www.pearlsforteengirls.com

Penfield Children's Center: Provides rehabilitation for young children with disabilities, including therapy and family programming. 833 N. 26th St 414-344-7676
www.penfieldchildren.org

St. Aemilian's Lakeside: Residential treatment center for children with emotional disabilities. 8901 W Capitol Drive 414-463-1880 www.st-al.org

St. Rose Youth and Family Center: Provides early intervention for children with developmental delays, outpatient therapy programming, family services providing education and support. 3801 N. 88th St. 414-466-9450 www.strosecenter.org



United Cerebral Palsy: Assists children, adults, families affected by cerebral palsy and other disabilities. Helping families and individuals reach a goal of independence. 7519 W Oklahoma Ave 414-329-4500 www.ucpsew.org

Unity in Motion: The goal of Unity in Motion is to develop youth physically, mentally, and emotionally by building strong literacy skills, teaching discipline, installing solid core values and promoting an attitude of service to others. www.unityinmotion.org

Environment



Schlitz Audubon Society: Bayside acreage devoted to nature and conservation. 1111 E. Brown Deer Rd. 414-352-2880
www.schlitzauduboncenter.com.

Urban Ecology Center: Brings nature to the city and the city to nature. Urban based environmental organization with a focus on education for people of all ages.
1500 E. Park Place 414-964-8505 www.urbanecologycenter.org

Milwaukee RiverKeeper: Advocate for the Milwaukee, Menomonee and Kinnickinnic Rivers. Patrol, monitor and organize yearly river clean-up. 1845 N Farwell Ave, Suite 100
414-287-0207 www.mkeriverkeeper.org

MY MITZVAH PROJECT

*Form should be submitted three months prior to your Bar or Bat Mitzvah to Mr. Bill Gartenberg
c/o Congregation Shalom · 7630 N. Santa Monica Blvd, Fox Point, WI 53217 or fax to 414-352-9280.
Feel free to copy this information and email to billgartenberg@gmail.com*

Your Name: _____ **Bar/Bat Mitzvah Date:** _____

The organization I will work with is: _____

Address of organization: _____

This is why I chose to work on this mitzvah: (use additional paper if you wish)

I believe this mitzvah helps me partner with God to repair the world because:

Your signature: _____ **date** _____

Parent signature _____ **date** _____

Reviewed and Approved by: _____ **date** _____

MY MITZVAH PROJECT LESSONS LEARNED

Please complete this sheet four weeks prior to your Bar or Bat Mitzvah. Mail to Mr. Bill Gartenberg c/o Congregation Shalom · 7630 N. Santa Monica Blvd, Fox Point, WI 53217 or fax to 414-352-9280. For fastest response and results, please copy and email to billgartenberg@gmail.com

Your Name: _____ **Bar/Bat Mitzvah Date:** _____

The organization I will work with is: _____

DESCRIBE WHAT YOU DID.

CONSIDER ANSWERING THESE QUESTIONS: What did you do? Who did it help? When and where did you do this project? How long did it take? Was your experience different than you expected? Was this project what you expected it to be? What did you learn about helping others?

Your Signature _____ **Date** _____

Parent Signature _____ **Date** _____

Reviewed and Approved by _____ **Date** _____