

B'NAI MITZVAH TIKKUN OLAM MANUAL:

Jewish United Fund

A Guide to Making Mitzvot
a Part of Your Bar/Bat Mitzvah



How wonderful it is that no one need wait a single moment to start to improve the world. – Anne Frank



Jewish United Fund
TOGETHER for GOOD

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.

Making your Mitzvah Meaningful!

It is now time to get started working towards your mitzvah project. This guide will provide a number of different suggestions and examples that B'nai Mitzvah students have done in the past. Here are six things you should keep in mind when choosing your project!

1. Be unique!

Just because everyone has their own mitzvah project does not mean they all have to be the same. Throw yourself into your project and do something new that you have never seen or experienced before.

2. 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.

3. THINK BIG!

When thinking in terms of repairing the world, no project is too big to handle. Think in terms of what will fulfill your individual needs as a bar/bat mitzvah, but also think in terms of who you're looking to help in the process. Just because you may seem small does not mean you cannot have a big impact on society.

4. Involve your community!

The old saying goes, "the more the merrier." That goes especially for *tikkun olam*. Your community can help you succeed, and be a resource in itself. 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.



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.

Throughout the guide, possible partner organizations will be labeled with these symbols for your convenience and additional information:

❖ JUF Supported Organization ● Parent Chaperone Required ☆ Jewish Organization

Volunteering with People with Disabilities

Project Ideas:

- 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
- With your parent, 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:

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

On-Site Volunteering Opportunities

- ✧ **Keshet** (Northern Suburbs) www.keshet.org
- **Best Buddies** (Multiple locations) www.bestbuddies.org/illinois
- **KEEN** (Chicago) www.keenchicago.org
- **Friendship Circle** (Multiple locations) www.fcil.org



Helping the Sick

Project Ideas:

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

Collection Drive Ideas:

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

Monetary Donations:

- Medication
- Medical supplies

On-Site Volunteering Opportunities

- ● **Ronald McDonald House** (Multiple locations)
www.rmhccni.org
- ● **Twist Out Cancer** (Multiple locations)
www.twistoutcancer.org
- ● **La Rabida Children's Hospital** (Chicago)
www.larabida.org
- ☆ **Sharsheret** (Multiple locations)
www.sharsheret.org/bnai-mitzvah-celebrations
- **Contact your local hospital for more opportunities!**



Somewhere along the way, we must learn that there is nothing greater than to do something for others.

– Martin Luther King Jr.





Keeping the Elderly Active

Project Ideas:

- Participate in a social event with a Holocaust survivor
- Plan and participate in an event at a senior center
- Sponsor and volunteer at a holiday party
- Volunteer at a birthday party, make cards and donate gifts
- Organize an ice cream social
- Help during religious services
- 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
- DVDs
- Large print books

Monetary Donations:

- Counseling
- Groceries
- Medication
- Transportation
- Home-delivered kosher meals
- Sponsor social gatherings

On-Site Volunteering Opportunities

- ❖ ● ⬠ **CJE Senior Life** (Multiple locations)
www.cje.net
- **Brentwood North** (Northwest Suburbs)
www.brentwoodnorthrehab.com
- ⬠ **Friedman Place** (Chicago)
www.friedmanplace.org
- ● **Selfhelp Home** (Chicago)
www.selfhelphome.org
- **Little Brothers – Friends of the Elderly** (Multiple locations)
www.littlebrotherschicago.org

Working to Eliminate Hunger and Homelessness

Project Ideas:

- 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

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:

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

On-Site Volunteering Opportunities

- ❖ ● ☆ **The Ark** (Chicago) www.arkchicago.org
- ☆ **Chicago Chesed Fund** (Northern Suburbs) www.chicagochesedfund.org
- ● **Cornerstone Community Outreach** (Multiple locations) www.ccolife.org
- **Do Good, Look Great** (Chicago) www.marillacstvincent.org/home.html
- ❖ ☆ **EZRA Multi Service Center** (Chicago) www.juf.org/ezra
- ● **Feed My Starving Children** (Multiple locations) www.fmsc.org/en
- **Interfaith Action of Evanston** (Northern Suburbs) www.interfaithactionofevanston.org
- ● **Inspiration Café** (Chicago) www.inspirationcorp.org/inspiration-cafe-pages-37.php
- ☆ **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** (Multiple locations) www.maotchitim.org
- **New Life for Old Bags** (Multiple locations) www.unitedinfaith.org/newlifeforoldbags.html
- ● **Northern Illinois Food Bank** (West Suburbs) www.solvehungertoday.org
- ☆ **Temple Shalom Monday Meal** (Chicago) www.sholomchicago.org/volunteer-opportunities/monday-meal
- ● **A Just Harvest** (Chicago) www.ajustharvest.org



My piece of bread only belongs to me when I know that everyone else has a share, and that no one starves while I eat. – Leo Tolstoy



Going Green

Project Ideas:

- 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:

- Carbon offsets
- Planting trees in Israel

On-Site Volunteering Opportunities

- ❖ ⚡ **Pushing the Envelope Farm** (West Suburbs)
www.pushingtheenvelopefarm.org
- **The Gaia Movement USA** (Chicago)
www.gaia-movement-usa.org
- **Nature Conservatory/Chicago Park District** (Chicago)
www.nature.org/?intc=nature.tnav.logo
- **Drake Gardens** (Chicago)
www.facebook.com/DrakeGardens



If you want happiness for an hour, take a nap. If you want happiness for a day, go fishing. If you want happiness for a year, inherit a fortune. If you want happiness for a lifetime, help somebody.

—Chinese Proverb





Caring for Animals

Project Ideas:

- With a parent, work with animals at an adoption center
- Organize a group to do take-home animal care-related projects
- Make homemade dog leashes
- Make bird feeders for trees

Collection Drive Ideas:

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

Monetary Donations:

- Animal rights organizations
- Adoption programs
- Outreach efforts

On-Site Volunteering Opportunities

- ● **Anti-Cruelty Society of Chicago** (Chicago)
www.anticruelty.org
- ● **PAWS Chicago** (Chicago)
www.pawschicago.org
- ● **The Snuggles Project and Participating Shelters** (Multiple locations)
www.hugssociety.org/directories/animal-shelters/united-states/illinois.html
- ● **Orphans of the Storm** (Multiple locations)
www.orphansofthestorm.org

Sports and Active Opportunities

Project Ideas:

- Run a bike-wash at Bike the Drive
- Volunteer at a Chicago 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 kids who run
- Collect bike helmets for those who don't have

Monetary Donations:

- Donate to an organization who host local runs
- Health awareness organizations
- Funds to build better public school athletic programs

On-Site Volunteering Opportunities

- **Bike the Drive** (Chicago) www.bikethedrive.org
- **Go Run Chicago** (Chicago) www.cararuns.org/gorun
- **Girls Love to Run** (Multiple locations)
www.girlslove2run.com
- **YMCA** (Multiple locations) www.ymcachicago.org
-  **Race For Humanity** (Northern Suburbs)
www.ilholocaustmuseum.org/raceforhumanity



Children and Youth

Project Ideas:

- Put together goodie bags for underprivileged youths birthday parties
- Volunteer at a YMCA and spend time with kids of any age
- Organize a fundraiser for supplies for a youth organization
- Read books to young kids and have them illustrate

Collection Drives:

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

Monetary Donations:

- After school programs for youth
- Fundraise and donate for local parks
- Scholarship funds for overnight camps

On-Site Volunteering Opportunities

- ● **The Birthday Party Project** (Chicago) www.thebirthdaypartyproject.org
- ● **Cradles to Crayons** (Chicago) www.cradlestocrayons.org/chicago
- **Bernie's Book Bank** (Northern Suburbs) www.berniesbookbank.org
- **KaBOOM** (Chicago) www.kaboom.org
- **YMCA Chicago** (Multiple locations) www.ymcachicago.org
- ⚡ **Keshet** (Multiple locations) www.keshet.org
- **Ethiopian Community Association of Chicago** (Chicago) www.ecachicago.org
- ● **Share our Space** (Chicago) www.shareourspace.org



If you're not making someone else's life better, then you're wasting your time. Your life will become better by making other lives better. — Will Smith





Arts and Theater

Project Ideas:

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

Collection Drives:

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

Monetary Donations:

- After school day cares with art programs
- Art therapy organizations
- Contribute to a local theater organization
- Donate to a standup comedy group

On-Site Volunteering Opportunities

- ● **The Green Star Movement** (Multiple locations) www.greenstarmovement.org
- **Chicago Street Theater** (Chicago) www.chicagostreet.org
- **Contact your local theater for more opportunities**

Supporting the Jewish Community

Project Ideas:

- Write letters to IDF soldiers
- Deliver food packages on the Jewish holidays to local families in need
- Organize a fundraiser to support local agencies
- Volunteer in your community at JUF's Israel Solidarity Day
- Serve a meal at a local Jewish organization

Collection Drive Ideas:

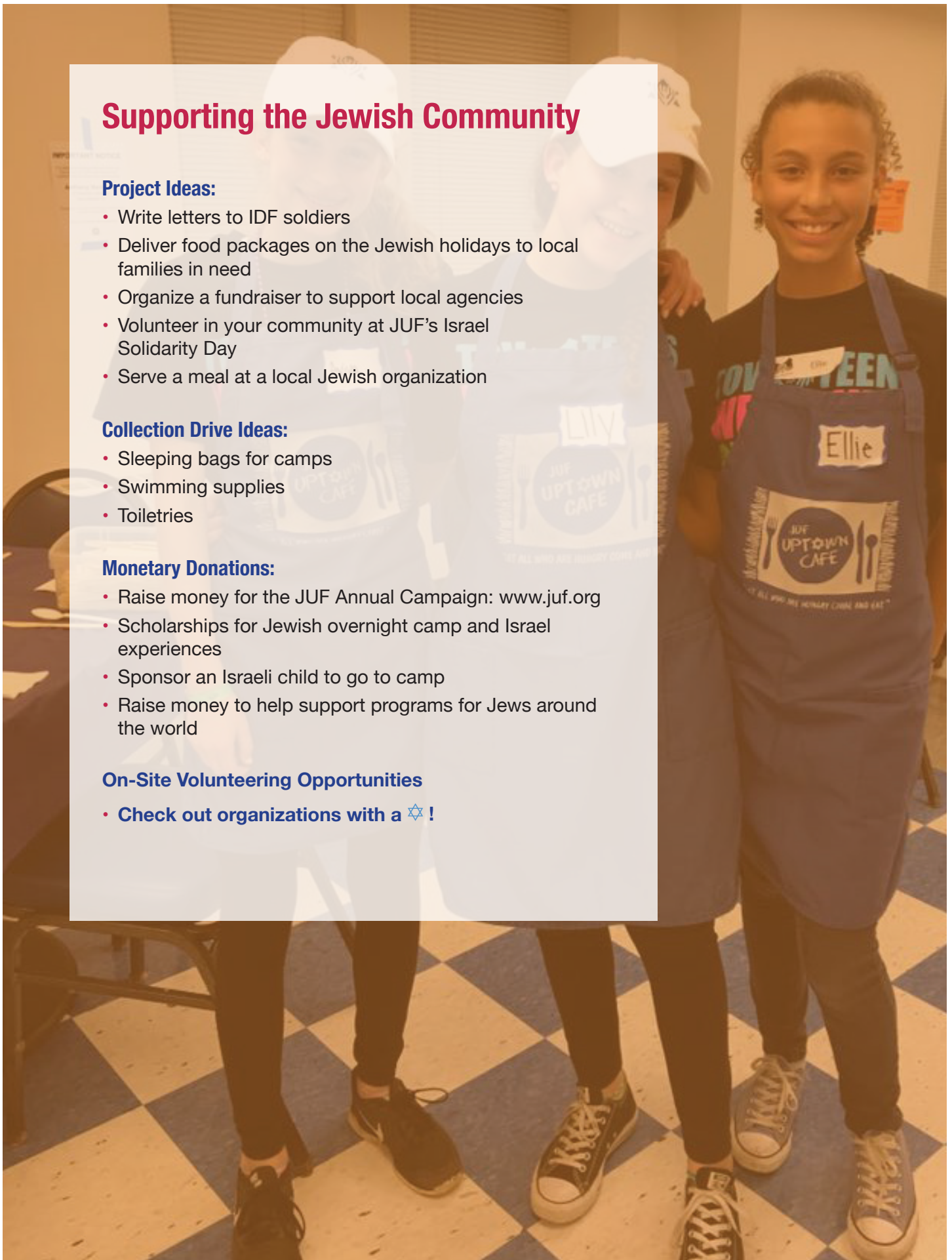
- Sleeping bags for camps
- Swimming supplies
- Toiletries

Monetary Donations:

- 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

On-Site Volunteering Opportunities

- Check out organizations with a ✨ !





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 donations to Israeli organizations.

Why Not?

It is extremely expensive to ship items to Israel (often more than the cost of items 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.

Opportunities to Continue Giving!

Open A Donor Advised Fund.

By opening a Donor Advised Fund at the Jewish Federation you can repair the world long after your mitzvah project is over.

Open a fund: Open a fund at the Jewish Federation with an initial contribution of \$1,000 before or after your bar/bat mitzvah.

Name your fund: Name the fund after yourself or give it a name that's meaningful to you, such as "Repair the World Fund."

Spread the word: Put an insert into your B'nai Mitzvah invitation telling your friends and family about your fund. Ask them to contribute to your fund for your B'nai Mitzvah project so you can donate money to the causes you are most passionate about.

Brainstorm causes: Before you start to use your fund make a list of charities you'd like to give to. Work with your parents, grandparents and friends or call your own personal contact at the Federation to help you do research in areas that interest you!

Repair the world: Your funds can be distributed all at once or a little at a time. You can recommend grants of \$100 or more from your fund to multiple organizations, Jewish or secular, and the Federation staff will do the rest, including send out checks every month.

To find out more about the Donor Advised Fund program, contact legacies@juf.org or call **312-357-4853**.

The Fun Doesn't Stop Here! Get Involved After Your B'nai Mitzvah

TOV Teens

The Tikkun Olam Volunteer (TOV) Teens Network is JUF's connection point 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



Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not. – Dr. Seuss





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 the Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago. 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 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

Good Deeds Day is an international day of “doing good” founded in Israel in 2007. Participants from over 75 countries throughout the world perform good deeds, proving that any single person can make a difference in their community. All ages are welcome to participate in volunteer projects in partnership with agencies from across the Chicagoland area. Past projects have 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

Need some more ideas? For extra help planning your mitzvah project, visit www.juf.org/teens/BM-Projects or call 312-444-2867.

