

## BAR/BAT MITZVAH TZEDAKAH PROJECTS FOR STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

What are you good at? What do you love to do? What do you see in the world, that you want to help fix or make better? How can you use your talents and energy to do this? Answering these questions will help you pick a Tzedakah project! But here are some ideas to get you started.

“Whoever saves a single life is as if one saves the entire world.” -Talmud

***Scroll down to page 4 of this list for tzedakah / mitzvah ideas to include in your Bat/Bar Mitzvah Service and Celebration – including twinning with a child lost in the Holocaust, or an Ethiopian Jewish child in Israel, and ways to infuse your party with “mitzvah” as its theme.***

### ~~~~~PROJECT IDEAS~~~~~

**Lowell Humane Society** <http://www.lowellhumanesociety.org/> has volunteer opportunities for kids of all ages.

Pet sit or make gourmet dog treats; there are many dog biscuit recipes on the internet.

Sell them and donate the money to the Humane Society or to **Israel Guide Dog Center for the Blind** - <http://israelguidedog.org/> , **MSPCA, Buddy Dog** or **Save A Dog**. Or collect old towels and donate them to your local animal hospital or kennel. **Sterling Animal Shelter**, a nearby No Kill shelter's website is [www.sterlingshelter.org](http://www.sterlingshelter.org). Heifer International [www.heifer.org](http://www.heifer.org) helps impoverished families acquire and raise animals, and then pass on the gift of their acquired skills and offspring to neighbors in need.

Donate a portion of the babysitting money you make during your Bar/Bat Mitzvah year to a cause you are passionate about...or purchase something with your proceeds to further the cause. Donate the money to the scholarship fund for a summer camp or school program.

Repair or clean the home of someone no longer able to do it for him/herself. Volunteer to do this for someone on a regular basis; your neighbor or relative may simply enjoy a visit!

Interview an elderly relative in your family or at an assisted living facility about his or her life story. If possible, collect photos or memorabilia to create a memoir.

Contact the Department of Natural Resources in your town and join a supervised group participating in cleanup days or trail clearing project (*join KS trail clearing on Mitzvah Day!*)

#### **Protecting Endangered Species Locally.**

Bryan Windmiller, a Concord area wildlife biologist and founder of Grassroots Wildlife Organization <http://www.grassrootswildlife.org/> is leads programs that seek to protect locally endangered or declining turtles, salamanders, and frogs in Concord and adjacent towns. Participants in this Mitzvah Day project will about the natural history of these species, and also learn about opportunities for both children and adults to participate in hands-on local conservation projects that might include: radio-tracking rare turtles to find their nesting sites, helping raise hatchling turtles to "head-start" them in life, or trapping and counting rare salamanders in local vernal pools (small ponds). **Bat or Bar Mitzvah students who love animals are particularly welcome to work with Bryan and his partners, including Zoo New England, the Town of Concord, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Concord Land Conservation Trust, on hands-on wildlife conservation projects as part or all of their 18 hours of tzedakah work.**

**Tutor at school for free**, or put the money earned towards the purchase of requested **books** for KS school's library or Maynard's **Green Meadow School** (our sister school through the Jewish Coalition for Literacy, where adults read to kids for an hour a week; Karen Belinky is KS's volunteer coordinator).

Become Mitzvah clowns and visit hospitals and nursing homes. [http://www.areyvut.org/about\\_us/](http://www.areyvut.org/about_us/) is a NY-based Jewish Clowning and mitzvah website with great ideas, trainings, etc.

**Donate new caps** to children and adults who have lost their hair because of cancer treatments ([hatsofforcancer.org](http://hatsofforcancer.org)) You could even decorate them yourself, or invite friends to join you; create a "signature" design. **SEW polar-fleece hats** the GROW CLINIC's children [www.bmc.org/pediatrics-growclinic](http://www.bmc.org/pediatrics-growclinic) on Mitzvah Day.

For an assisted living facility or nursing home, buy an aquarium or birds ([www.secondwind.org](http://www.secondwind.org)) and commit to visiting regularly to maintain and take care of them.

Help purchase Chumashim (books of Torah) for our Shabbat morning services, or help purchase large print *Chumashim*/texts of Torah and Haftarat for KS for the visually impaired.

Volunteer at the synagogue (office work, babysitting, teen aide, weeding flower beds)

Take friends to assisted living facilities, nursing homes and shelters to give "Mitzvah Manicures" or arrange for deluxe visits to a hairdresser for women in shelters.

**"The Nature Connection/** Bringing Nature, Animals and the Arts to People," based in Concord, needs volunteer help from kids and adults. Stop into Classroom 4 for their presentation at Mitzvah Day. Go to [nature-connection.org/](http://nature-connection.org/) for more info. Nancy Kaplan and Susan Oman are TNC volunteers and would be glad to talk with you about their programs.

**HGRM (Household Goods Recycling of Massachusetts)** in Acton needs volunteer help (*student help encouraged! A meaningful project for parents and kids to do together*) and household goods for families in need. Naomi Rosenfeld is our volunteer coordinator. **KS members volunteer at HGRM from 1:00-4:00 PM the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of every month.** Go to [www.hgrm.org](http://www.hgrm.org) for the list of urgently needed items.

**Yad LaKashish** is a non-profit artists' collaborative in Jerusalem that provides work opportunities, economic and social services and caring community for 250 elderly and disabled artisans who make exquisite Judaica, jewelry and crafts that are sold around the world. *To see samples of the artisians' work and for more on how you can help and how to donate, go to their website for more info: [www.lifeline.org.il](http://www.lifeline.org.il).* **Click on B'nei Mitzvahs and then on "click here to download our B'nei Mitzvah Kit" – to see great mitzvah project ideas for your simcha.**

**Open Table Food Pantry.** **Open Table accepts donations of non-perishable food and money.** Please contact KS members Marilyn Hughes, or Joannie and Peter Hilton if you are interested in sponsoring a food drive or getting involved in the weekly dinners. **On MITZVAH DAY Oct 17<sup>th</sup>** a group of KS kids and adults will bake apple crisp in the KS kitchen for 100 people for Open Table Maynard's Monday evening Oct 18<sup>th</sup> dinner. Several KS members will serve the dinner and staff the pantry on Monday, Oct 18<sup>th</sup>. Contact KS member Peter Hilton to help with dinners throughout the year; see "Next Week at KS" and the KS Grapevine for more info.

COLLECT kids' healthy snacks and fill and decorate school lunch bags for the OT **School Lunch Program.** 45 bags a week year round are distributed to needy children. **At Mitzvah Day join the Blue and Gladstone-DeLong families in decorating and filling these bags.**

**Family Table Food Pantry of Jewish Family and Children's Service.** Susan Brager Murphy is KS's project coordinator. Every month throughout the year KS is committed to donating 45 each of two designated food items (this year we're responsible for bringing **cans of tuna and salmon**) to Family Table's pantry for distribution to needy Jewish families in the Greater Boston area. Volunteer to deliver once or more, our one-Sunday-a-month groceries to the pantry. You can also stay and sort the groceries- and one month every year KS is obligated to deliver the groceries to households.

**Concord Park Assisted Living.** Kerem Shalom sponsors **monthly Kabbalat Shabbat services, on Fridays from 3:30-4:30 PM (includes oneg Shabbat).** **Come as a family or as an individual to**

welcome Shabbat and visit with the residents. Nancy Kaplan leads services using JF&CS's Kabbalat Shabbat booklet; she would be delighted to teach you how to lead services. Please contact Nancy Kaplan or look in *The Grapevine* for service times. Or, you can bring your instrument—or use the piano in Concord Park's lobby—to **give concerts for the residents** (*One Bat Mitzvah student has performed here at Concord Park, at CCC and COA in Concord. AUDIENCES of ALL AGES love music!*)

Become a FRIENDLY VISITOR. The residents would love someone to commit to visiting on a regular basis, to play cards or checkers, or just have conversation. *This is for parents and children to do together.* To volunteer to visit Concord Park on a long-term basis, you will be interviewed and matched to elders by Volunteer Activities Coordinator, Meg Gaudette. Contact her at 978-369-4728 to set up an appointment

**Somerville Homeless Coalition.** SHC operates an adult shelter, a family shelter, a food pantry, community suppers, a case management program and several new initiatives related to housing. Mark Alston-Follansbee is the Executive Director. The Coalition is always looking for donations of non-perishable food donations. They also gladly accept monetary donations, clothing, school supplies, new hygiene items – please call them if you have a creative idea you would like to propose for a collection. [The first Sunday of October they have an annual road race/fundraiser and they welcome volunteer support for several tasks throughout the day. Please contact them in advance if you would like to participate in this heartwarming and fun fundraising event.](#) Somerville Homeless Coalition, Box 440436, Somerville, MA 02144, online at [somervillehomelesscoalition.org](http://somervillehomelesscoalition.org).

**Concord Council on Aging Volunteer Program.** Elders can use help with fall or spring cleaning, yard work, leaf raking, weekly grocery shopping, etc. Families can participate, but adults over 18 must be CORI'd. IF YOU and your family would like to create your own team, or if you'd like to partner with another family to do this mitzvah, Carol Dromgoole will find a senior to match you with. For more information, please contact Carol at [cdromgoole@concordma.gov](mailto:cdromgoole@concordma.gov) 978-318-3020. [We are putting together DREAM TEAMS of families willing to do cleaning and other chores for seniors requesting help.](#)

**Perkins School for the Blind.** Perkins School for the Blind is located in Watertown and always needs help inventorying tapes. They are open weekdays until 5 pm, but have weekend opportunities as well. To learn about ongoing volunteer needs, go to [Volunteers@Perkins.org](mailto:Volunteers@Perkins.org) or call 617-972-7224.

**COLLECTIONS.** If you want to start a collection, for any of the organizations listed below or for one of your choosing, [we will accommodate your collection box in the lobby on Mitzvah Day and at our book fairs.](#) You can put a sign on the box to advertise what your cause is about, to educate and enlist the help of our KS membership.

**Collect discarded cell phones** for Domestic Violence Advocates Program. The cell phones you collect can be dropped off at all local police stations. They will re-program the phones to be able to dial 9-1-1, and will donate them to shelters for abuse victims. JF&CS's Journey to Safety, the domestic violence program of JF&CS, also welcomes donated phones. For more info go to [www.jfcsboston.org/tabid/212/Default.aspx](http://www.jfcsboston.org/tabid/212/Default.aspx) or call 781-647-5327.

**Collect videos/ DVDs** for hospitals, for patients to borrow or take home (While many hospitals will not accept stuffed animals, they will accept videos.). If you don't want to collect DVDs, you could ask for donations to buy them. Hospitals particularly like videos/DVDs for children (Disney- type) or elders (Lawrence Welk Show, I Love Lucy, Humphrey Bogart, Gene Kelly, Fred Astaire movies.) These could also be donated to a nursing home or assisted living facility.

**Collect gently used childrens' books** for Green Meadow School in Maynard – our partner school through the Jewish Coalition for Literacy. OR for Childworks at Rosie's Place or a pediatric ward in a hospital. Collect **adult books** for Concord Prison Outreach. Larry Frey is Kerem Shalom's liaison with Prison Outreach.

**Metrowest Harvest.** Metrowest Harvest serves homeless families in the Framingham area. There are several ways to help this organization (Kerem Shalom collects coats for them at our Mitzvah Day winter outerwear drive.). First, you could donate food leftover after your Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Ask a family friend to deliver it to them, and then Metrowest will distribute it to the hungry. You could also donate clothes, toys, school supplies, personal care items/toiletries and money! They especially need warm clothes and footwear, as many of the children they serve live in motels and shelters on Route 9 and have to wait out on the highway for the school bus. They could also use pj's, slippers and flannel anything, since these shelters are usually cool. The contact person is Jeen Kniveton, 300 Howard St, Framingham MA 01720, 508-788-FOOD (3663) or fax: 508-620-2304.

**SUPPORT the Fair Trade Federation and help alleviate poverty** with sales of Fair Trade items, like <http://www.projecthavehope.org/> and [www.beadforlife.org](http://www.beadforlife.org). BeadforLife eradicates extreme poverty by creating bridges of understanding between impoverished Africans and concerned world citizens. Ugandan women turn colorful recycled paper into beautiful bead jewelry. All net profits from BeadforLife are invested in [community development projects](#) that help people work their way out of poverty. For more ideas: [www.fairtradefederation.org](http://www.fairtradefederation.org).

SELL (and purchase!) **Equal Exchange Chocolate** <http://www.equalexchange.coop/> – fairly traded chocolate that supports small-scale farmers around the world --- and support AJWS's Reverse Hunger Campaign.

**PROGRAMS AT ROSIE'S PLACE.** Contact for donations: Sheila Aliber, 781-444-1755

**“Hygiene bags”** for Childworks of Rosie's Place

During school vacation the children in shelters have scheduled activities, field trips, entertainment and a Hygiene Day. On Hygiene Day, nurses come in to teach the importance of good hygiene for good health, bringing donated kits containing toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, etc. On your Bat/Bar Mitzvah, you could collect these items, and ask your guests to help wrap them in simple plain gift bags or clear plastic bags with a ribbon. These are gifts for the children, and the kids will compare so do not make some more special than others – you might want to specify which brands sizes of toothpaste, soap, etc. guests should bring.

**“Breakfast for Learning” packs** for ESL women of Rosie's Place

- Three mornings a week about 50 women from Rosie's learn English as a second language together. Having a good meal before class helps their learning. Cereal boxes, small juice boxes (not sugared drinks), breakfast bars are needed. If you'd like to donate money, Rosie's Place will use it to buy perishable items like yogurt and fruit.

**Other organizations our B'nei Mitzvah students have volunteered/collected for:**

Fisher House, Hope House, InvisibleChildren.com, Lindentree Farm's Field of Greens Food For Free Program, Minuteman Arc, Pennies for Peace, Organization for the Assabet River, Special Olympics, SportsGift, Stars in the Light Foundation, Swan's Island Library.

## **AT YOUR BAR/BAT MITZVAH:**

**Use Kerem Shalom's NEW silk flower arrangement for the bimah for a donation to JF&CS Mitzvah To Mitzvah program, supporting needy families of B'nei Mitzvah students in the Metrowest region. AND/OR checks to **Kerem Shalom in support of** our community (any multiples of \$18) deeply appreciated.** See Nancy K. if you're interested in using these beautiful flowers.

**MAYAWORKS KIPPOT** – If you are purchasing kippot (yarmulkas) for your simcha: MayaWorks kippot are crocheted by Mayan women who live in San Marcos, Guatemala, on the shores of Lake Atitlan.

The work of the kippot crocheters makes a difference in the daily life of families: it means more food on the table; it means children can continue their education; it means the family might be able to bring electricity into their home; it means there is money to take the bus to town to visit a doctor. <http://www.mayaworks.org/>



### Consider “twinning” on your Bar/ Bat Mitzvah with:

1. **a child who was lost in the Shoah, the Holocaust**, before he or she could be called to the Torah. <http://www.remember-us.org> has biographies of children, which the Bar/Bat Mitzvah can include in his/her speech to the congregation. Consider purchasing a plaque on our *Yahrzeit* wall at KS or planting a tree in Israel in this child’s memory.
2. **an Ethiopian Jewish child in Israel** (go to [www.nacoej.org](http://www.nacoej.org)).
3. **a non-Jewish person who risked his or her life to save Jews during the Holocaust** (The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous, [www.jfr.org](http://www.jfr.org))

### HOW DO YOU CONVEY YOUR MITZVAH PROJECT TO YOUR GUESTS?

**Enclose it as an attachment with your invitation, or even print it on the invitation itself.**

Let people know what your project is, and what you would like them to bring, or to which charity (or charities) you would like donations to go.

### MAKE “MITZVAH” CENTERPIECES on your TABLE(S) AT YOUR PARTY.

Instead of flowers or other decorative centerpieces, please consider putting any of the following items into a decorative basket or bag, with helium balloons and curling ribbon...

- baskets of food for a pantry/ Decorated School Lunch Bags for Open Table, Concord
- pet treats for a pet shelter
- videos or DVDs for a hospital ward, assisted living facility or nursing home
- baseball caps for “Hats off for Cancer” – <http://hatsoffforcancer.org/>
- “Hygiene bags” for Childworks of Rosie’s Place
- “Breakfast for Learning” packs for ESL women of Rosie’s Craft Cooperative
- Baskets with underwear, socks, slippers, mittens, or sweaters for Metrowest Harvest
- Baskets with baby food, special baby formula, diapers, food in general (for families/children who cannot afford it), children’s vitamins, and warm clothes or hats for Boston’s Grow Clinic. (At Mitzvah Day we sew hats for the Grow Clinic every year).

[www.bmc.org/pediatrics/services/Specialty/Development/GrowClinic](http://www.bmc.org/pediatrics/services/Specialty/Development/GrowClinic)

The Grow Clinic helps children who are not growing according to national standards.

[www.nacoej.org](http://www.nacoej.org) – North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry. Help support the Ethiopian Jewish community. Learn more about their B’nei Mitzvah Twinning program, Food & Education, and Lunch Program. Beautiful Ethiopian Embroideries made by Ethiopian Jews are also available for sale on their website. Click on “Ethiopian Embroideries” on the sidebar.

[www.kulanu.org](http://www.kulanu.org)

“All of Us” - founded in 1994, is a non-profit organization which supports isolated and emerging Jewish communities around the world, many of whom have long been disconnected from the worldwide Jewish community.

<http://kulanu.org/mitzvahprojects/barbatmitzvah.php>

<http://www.kulanuboutique.com/servlet/StoreFront>

**Are YOU involved in a project that we’ve not included on this list?**

**Please share your ideas! Contact our Family Educator, Nancy Kaplan.**

*You’ve looked at this list, and still need help deciding? Come talk with Nancy or Pat to brainstorm project ideas & help you come up with a project suited to your skills and passions.*