

Section 3 – Mitzvah Projects Requirements

Every student is expected to participate in the following three mitzvot:

- Gemilut Chasadim (Deeds of Loving Kindness)
- Tzedakah (Material Contributions)
- Tzedakah (Financial Contributions)

This section describes these three categories and provides information and examples of each.

Gemilut Chasadim (Deeds of Loving Kindness)

As part of the sixth grade curricula, each student chooses a *Gemilut Chasadim* project. Please fill out the form later in this Guide. This project involves **on-going** (e.g., monthly) effort and is discussed in the student's final essay.

Examples include:

- L'Dor Va'Dor: Connecting with our elderly Temple members (phone calls, visits, birthday cards, etc.).
- Supporting a food pantry.
- Visiting a nursing home or assisted living facility.
- Visiting children in a homeless shelter.
- Removing litter from a park in your local community.
- Working with organizations to help needy and/or disabled community members.
- Shabbat, Holiday and Temple Helpers: Working with Barnert's custodial staff to help set up (chairs, tables, food, prayer books, etc.) before Shabbat, special events or major holidays. Contact Alice in the Office at (201) 848-1800 to make arrangements.
- Bringing our Shabbat flowers every Sunday to a local hospital or nursing home. Contact Alice in the Office at (201) 848-1800 to make arrangements.

For additional ideas, see the list provided.

Tzedakah (Material Contributions)

Each family organizes a collection (e.g., books, toiletries, winter clothing, non-perishable food, etc.) in support of the needy. The Social Action Committee is happy to offer suggestions. (See the list provided.) Please fill out the form later in this Guide. The collection may be done in one of the following two ways:

- By inviting guests to bring contributions on the day of the bar/bat mitzvah. (Please note that you are responsible for removing collected items within three days after the bar/bat mitzvah day.)
- By taking up a collection in your local community.

Tzedakah (Financial Contributions)

Jewish tradition encourages us to offer tzedakah at the time of a simcha. Because we are so grateful for our blessings, we offer something to others in need. Each student makes a personal contribution to a tzedakah-of-choice in honor of his/her bar/bat mitzvah. The Rabbi helps guide the student appropriately. It is hoped that the family makes a similar contribution, perhaps, as a family, discussing the recipient and amount.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah On-going Volunteer Ideas

“Gemilut Chasadim (deeds of loving kindness)”

Following are some ideas for your Gemilut Chasadim Mitzvah Project. Please keep in mind that these are only suggestions and that there are many, many other worthy organizations in need of volunteers. Go to www.bergenvolunteers.org, www.pointsoflight.org, or www.dosomething.org for more ideas, or come up with your own! Be sure to check out www.ziv.org, and click on “So you are becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah!”

**Note: Be sure to contact the organization in advance to confirm all of the details.*

Organization	Baby Basics at the American Red Cross www.redcross.org/nj/bergen
Description	Baby Basics provides parent education and nutritional and hygienic products to working families in need. It serves as a safety net by offering support and resources to those families struggling to succeed.
What would I do?	Students will help distribute diapers and formula to families who participate in the program.
Contact Info	Theresa Schwartz, (201) 882-3707
Location	74 Godwin Avenue, Ridgewood, New Jersey

Organization	Barnert Temple www.barnerttemple.org
What would I do?	Students will act as Shabbat, holiday and Temple helpers. Volunteers will work with Barnert’s custodial staff to help set up (chairs, tables, food, prayer books, etc.) before Shabbat, special events or major holidays.
Contact Info	Alice Kintisch, Temple Administrator, (201) 848-1800
Location	747 Route 208 South, Franklin Lakes, New Jersey

Organization	Barnert Temple www.barnerttemple.org
What would I do?	Each Sunday the student will take our Shabbat flower arrangement to a local hospital or nursing home.
Contact Info	Alice Kintisch, Temple Administrator, (201) 848-1800
Location	747 Route 208 South, Franklin Lakes, New Jersey

Organization	Camp Sunshine/Camp Snowflake www.sunshine-snowflake.org
Description	These camps have social recreation programs for children and adults with disabilities.
What would I do?	Volunteers are needed to help campers with arts and crafts, games, snacks, and having fun. Special activities include dances and field trips. Sunshine runs 9 wks from end June, Mon-Fri 9:30 – 3:30; Snowflake runs every Sat. 1:00 – 4:00 from end of Sept. to early June. Download the application and show up the day you want to volunteer. No prior registration necessary!
Contact Info	Kim DaSilva, (973) 633-7111
Location	Ridgewood Duck Pond

Organization	The Daniel Jordan Fiddle Foundation www.djfiddlefoundation.org
Description	Their mission is to provide grants to programs that enhance the lives of adolescents and adults with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and that support their families and caregivers.
What would I do?	Students can volunteer at one of the grantee programs or community outreach/fundraising events listed on the website. Students can design flyers or other materials to create community awareness or help to coordinate mailings for the Foundation. They can also organize the sale of blessing candles in their own communities.
Contact Info	Linda Fiddle, (201) 444-4141

Organization	Fellowship House
Description	An emergency family homeless shelter in Englewood for working poor families with dependent children.
What would I do?	On the third Sunday morning of every month (note: other days may be available), students can spend time with the residents of the shelter by playing games or doing crafts with the children or just providing company. Parents must accompany their children.
Contact Info	Karen Gerstel, (201) 444-1318, kgerstel@msn.com

Organization	The Friendship Circle: Friends Helping Friends www.bcfriendship.com
Description	“A Big Brother, Big Sister Opportunity.” “Friends at Home” is the core of “The Friendship Circle.” Each week pairs of teenage volunteers visit participating children in their homes, offering friendship and sharing activities. The teens are specially trained for their valuable role as friend and mentor. Other opportunities are sibling support groups, holiday programs, sports night, cooking circle and the volunteer club.
What would I do?	Volunteers provide a unique experience by offering friendship to children with particular needs.
Contact Info	Zeesy Grossbaum, (201) 262-7172, zeesy@bcfriendship.com
Location	310 South Drive, Paramus, New Jersey

Organization	Hackensack Riverkeeper www.hackensackriverkeeper.org
Description	Volunteers are needed to help protect, preserve and restore the Hackensack River.
What would I do?	There are once-a-month river cleanups from April to October, either in a canoe or along the banks of the river. Each child must be accompanied by an adult. Times, locations and registration on line.
Contact Info	Lisa Ryan, (201) 968-0808
Location	231 Main Street, Hackensack, New Jersey

Organization	J-ADD (Jewish Association for Developmental Disabilities) www.J-ADD.org
Description	Their mission is to provide services to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. J-ADD operates several residential sites and also provides care for families who have children with special needs living at home. In addition, they provide outreach, education, and advocacy programs.
What would I do?	Students can interact with the residents (located in Washington Township, Englewood, and Fairlawn) through various activities like baking, playing games, reading, etc. Other opportunities include helping at different events such as their annual Walk-a-thon, Sukkot, Chanukah and Holiday parties, which take place at various synagogues or at the JCC on the Palisades.
Contact Info	John Winer, (201) 457-0058, ext. 13
Location	190 Moore Street, Hackensack, New Jersey

Organization	Jewish Home at Rockleigh www.jewishhomerockleigh.org
Description	A state of-the-art center for long-term and rehabilitative elder care.
What would I do?	Students will interact with the residents of this home through various recreation programs. Students can assist with existing programs or create their own. Note: All volunteers must show proof (doctor's note) of a TB test within 1 year of starting.
Contact Info	Charlene Vannucci, (201) 784-1414
Location	10 Link Drive, Rockleigh, New Jersey

Organization	L'dor Va'dor
Description	L'dor Va'dor is dedicated to serving seniors in our own Barnert community one-on-one. Volunteers will have the opportunity to understand, appreciate, and learn from our older members.
What would I do?	Students will meet with their designated senior member at least six times throughout the year. Activities include friendly visiting (storytelling, movies, baking, cards), helping out with daily errands and chores around the house, helping to celebrate birthdays or holidays, bringing your senior to services at Barnert, entertaining him/her (singing, dancing, playing a musical instrument).
Contact Info	Karen Gerstel, (201) 444-1318, kgerstel@msn.com

Organization	Lorrimer Nature Center www.njaudubon.org/Centers/Lorrimer/
Description	A 14-acre nature sanctuary designed for children and families.
What would I do?	Activities include gardening and landscaping, maintaining nature trails, feeding and caring for the animals and their environment. Call Mr. Scheuer for Spring/Fall clean-up dates.
Contact Info	Patrick Scheuer, (201) 891-2185
Location	790 Ewing Avenue, Franklin Lakes, New Jersey

Organization	Pony Power @ Three Sisters Farm
Description	Provides horseback riding therapy to children and adults with autism, cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, emotional disabilities, developmental delays, and multiple handicaps.
What would I do?	Must be 14yrs. old: Activities would range from grooming the horses, cleaning saddles and tidying up the stable to sidewalking riders or leading the horses. Under 14: contact Ms. Skinner for alternate chores
Contact Info	Linda Skinner, (201) 934-1001
Location	1170 Ramapo Valley Road, Mahwah, New Jersey or 40 Fort Lee Road, Overpeck Park, Leonia, New Jersey

Organization	Project Open Hearts, Open Homes
Description	A summer program that provides respite and comfort to Israeli teens victimized by terrorism.
What would I do?	Host an Israeli teen for three weeks during the summer, providing friendship and room and board. Family needs to transport the teen to and from the Washington Township Y-JCC, where he or she will participate in a three-week camp program.
Contact Info	Steven Mark, (201) 666-6610
Location	Program is sponsored by the Bergen County Y-JCC of Washington Township, New Jersey.

Organization	Ramapo-Bergen Animal Refuge, Inc. www.rbari.org
Description	RBARI provides sanctuary and finds permanent, loving homes for many animals, including elderly, handicapped, feral and formerly abused. It adheres to a “No-Kill” policy, giving adoptable animals an open-ended stay at a warm safe place until loving homes can be found.
What would I do?	Help kennel staff with all aspect of cat and dog care, including playing with the animals. Also available: Provide foster care to a sick, injured, shy, or very young animal in need of a home. Supplies are provided, but the volunteer must be able to take the animal for veterinary care if necessary. The volunteer must have a separate room where the animal can be confined if necessary. The job requires love, patience, and a good heart! The job is vital to the adoption process as it allows animals to become adoptable.
Contact Info	Maria or Margo, (201) 337-5180
Location	2 Shelter Lane, Oakland, New Jersey

Organization	St. Paul’s Community Development Corp., Men’s Shelter www.dioceseofnewark.org/cdc/98annrpt/spcdc.html
Description	They build community by revitalizing families and individuals through holistic housing initiatives, human services and advocacy.
What would I do?	On the fourth Tuesday of every month, students can help serve the evening meal for 20 – 40 residents and/or cook or bake dishes to be served (prepared in advance at your own home).
Contact Info	Karen Gerstel, (201) 444-1318, kgerstel@msn.com
Location	451 Van Houten Street, Paterson, New Jersey

Organization	The Seeing Eye www.seeingeye.org
Description	The Seeing Eye enhances the independence, dignity and self-confidence of blind people through the use of Seeing Eye dogs.
What would I do?	Keep a puppy in your home for 12–18 months. You will provide guidance and direction in the puppy’s development and expose the puppy to the world in which it will eventually work. Someone must be home everyday at lunchtime for feeding. The Seeing Eye pays veterinary bills and helps defray the cost of food. When the puppy reaches 14 – 18 months old, you must give the puppy back for training as a Seeing Eye dog.
Contact Info	Claudia Tirello, (201) 666-3484

Organization	Therapy Dogs International , www.tdi-dog.org Delta Society , www.deltasociety.org
Description	TDI trains dogs and their owners to visit patients in hospitals and nursing homes, providing comfort and companionship. Delta will allow any domesticated animal such as cats, guinea pigs and rabbits to become therapy animals.
What would I do?	Students (accompanied by an adult) will bring their pet to visit the patients. Note: Pets must first be tested and evaluated to become a therapy pet.
Contact Info	TDI: (973) 252-9800 for local evaluator Delta: (425) 226-7357

Organization	YWCA of Bergen County, Special Swim or Sports Programs
What would I do?	The YWCA is looking for Special Swim or other sports program volunteers to work one-on-one with disabled children in the pool or in the gym. Swim: M, W, F 4:30- 5:15; Gym Wed. 3:45-4:15
Contact Info	Linda Doller, (201) 444-5600, ext. 348, ldoller@ywcabergencounty.org
Location	112 Oak Street, Ridgewood, New Jersey

Please submit this form to the Religious School Office 12 months prior to the bar/bat mitzvah date.

Gemilut Chasadim Mitzvah Project Form

Name _____

Telephone Number _____

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Date _____

I will be doing my ongoing volunteer service project for the following organization:

Name of organization _____

Address of organization _____

Telephone number of organization _____

This is what I will be doing:

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Collection Ideas

“Tzedakah (Material Contributions)”

Following are some ideas for your Tzedakah/Collection Mitzvah Project. Please keep in mind that these are only suggestions and that there are many, many other worthy organizations in need of collections. Go to www.charitablechoices.com for more ideas or come up with your own! Be sure to check out www.ziv.org, and click on “So you are becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah!”

**Note: Before taking up a collection,
be sure to contact the organization to confirm all of the details.*

Organization	ABC (Association to Benefit Children) www.a-b-c.org
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>All Children’s House Family Center</u>: Provides support services to families and children who have suffered from homelessness, drug exposure, physical and mental illness and low birth weight. • <u>Cassidy’s Place</u>: Helps children who suffer from severe disabilities caused by prenatal exposure to crack-cocaine and serious medical conditions such as cancer and AIDS.
Collection Items	These centers can use new and gently used clothing. In winter, they need winter coats, hats, gloves, etc. They also have a summer camp, so new or gently used sports equipment and sneakers are needed.
Contact Info	Judy Holtzman, (212) 845-3823
Location	New York City
Note	Barnert Temple member Sheryl Benjamin, (201) 848-1801), can deliver the donations to the centers in New York City.

Organization	Baby Basics at the American Red Cross www.redcross.org/nj/bergen ; click on Family Resource Center
Description	Baby Basics provides parent education and nutritional and hygienic products to working families in need. It serves as a safety net by offering support and resources to those families struggling to succeed.
Collection Items	Baby formula (check on specific brands), diapers, pull-ups, baby food, baby wipes, lotion, powder, gently used clothing and other supplies (not toys) for infants up to age two.
Contact Info	Marisa Tarateta, (201) 882-3712
Location	74 Godwin Avenue, Ridgewood, New Jersey

Organization	Books for Israel Project www.edu-negev.gov.il/bs/b4i
Description	Provides English language books for Israeli school children.
Collection Items	English language children's books
Contact Info	Rena Cohen, (202) 255-5959, rcohen@genvec.com for local representative.
Note	The family has to ship the books to Israel at a cost of 99 cents per pound.

Organization	Care Plus NJ – Healthy Families Program, Foster Care Program www.careplusnj.org
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Healthy Families</u>: A home-based program designed to prevent child abuse. The program serves a population of at-risk first time mothers. Families are visited regularly for five years, starting at pregnancy, to ensure that children are receiving a healthy start. • <u>Foster Care Program</u>: Care Plus makes arrangements and supervises visits between biological parents and their children living in foster care. Sibling visits are also arranged.
Collection Items	<p>Healthy Families: Baby supplies and accessories, children's books, puzzles, developmental/interactive toys (new only) appropriate for children from birth to age five, new or gently-used clothing for moms and babies, gift certificates to supermarkets.</p> <p>Foster Care: Special occasion gifts (e.g., board games, dolls, books) for foster children, most of whom are between the ages of eight and ten.</p>
Contact Info	Tara Phalen, (201) 797-2660, ext. 119
Location	1707 Romaine Street, Fair Lawn, New Jersey

Organization	Center for Food Action www.cfanj.org
Description	CFA fights hunger and homelessness by providing food, utility and housing assistance to residents of Bergen County.
Collection Items	Non-perishable food and beverages, toiletries, cosmetics and cosmetic bags, school supplies, books, clothing for men, women and children.
Contact Info	Jim James, J.JamesMahwahCFA@aol.com
Location	281 Campgaw Road, Building C-2, on the grounds of the Police and Fire Academy, Mahwah, New Jersey

Organization	Emmanuel Cancer Foundation www.emmanuelcancer.org
Description	ECF helps to preserve the quality of life for any New Jersey family whose child has been diagnosed with cancer. Services are offered at no charge to the family, and include professional counseling, advocacy services, material assistance, and limited emergency financial relief.
Collection Items	Birthday bags (cake mix, frosting, plates, napkins, hats, party blowers, gift wrap paper and ribbon, etc.), entertainment items for hospital stays (coloring books and crayons, magazines, stickers, craft kits, electronic games, etc.), non-perishable food items for food pantry.
Contact Info	David Johnson, (201) 612-8118
Location	174 Paterson Avenue, Midland Park, New Jersey

Organization	Eva's Village www.evasvillage.org
Description	Eva's mission is to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, provide medical care to the sick and rehabilitate the addicted.
Collection Items	They need non-perishable food all year round. At Christmas time, they collect NEW warm weather accessories (hats, gloves, scarves, etc.) for men and women. They also collect toiletries during the holidays to give as gifts.
Contact Info	Annette Pierce, Director of Kitchen, (973) 523-6220
Location	393 Main Street, Paterson, New Jersey

Organization	Morris Heights Elementary School
Description	99% of the students attending this school qualify for Title 1 Federal Aid.
Collection Items	Books, pocket Spanish/English dictionaries, pencils, paper, rulers, counters, flash cards, teaching clocks, and other school supplies.
Contact Info	Marcy Gladstein, Principal, (718) 583-5005
Location	108-110 West 174 th Street, Bronx, New York 10453
Note	Some teachers at this school live in New Jersey and can deliver collected items to the school.

Organization	North Porch
Description	An emergency service that provides supplies for needy mothers and infants in communities in northern New Jersey.
Collection Items	Diapers, wipes, formula (Good Start is most needed, but they'll take other brands also), socks (infant to six years), bibs (newborn sizes), new or gently used children's clothing (newborn sizes is most needed, but they'll take larger sizes also), new or gently used in season women's clothing.
Contact Info	Nella Rosendale, (973) 278-8611
Location	451 Van Houten Street, Paterson, New Jersey

Organization	Ramapo-Bergen Animal Refuge, Inc. www.rbari.petfinder.org
Description	RBARI provides sanctuary and finds permanent, loving homes for many animals (including elderly, handicapped, feral and formerly abused). It adheres to a "No-Kill" policy, giving adoptable animals an open-ended stay at a warm safe place until loving homes can be found.
Collection Items	Pet supplies and other supplies such as adult cat food (Meow Mix – original), dry kitten food (Purina Kitten), dog food (Pedigree), nylon slip collars and nylon leashes (6 ft.) for dogs, dog toys (NO RAWHIDES), cat toys, cat litter boxes, dog/puppy crates and carriers, pet beds, towels/sheets/blankets, cat/dog nail clippers, heating pads/lamps, flashlights, large spray bottles, brooms, spoons, paper plates, grooming tools.
Contact Info	Maria or Margo, (201) 337-5180, ext. 22
Location	2 Shelter Lane, Oakland, New Jersey

Organization	Rebuilding Together www.rebuildingtogetherbergen.org
Description	Their mission is to preserve and revitalize houses and communities, assuring that low-income homeowners, particularly those who are elderly and disabled and families with children, live in warmth, safety and independence. Their goal is to make a sustainable impact in partnership with communities.
Collection Items	Paint brushes and rollers (all sizes), scrapers, drop cloths, sandpaper, work goggles, work gloves, large trash bags.
Contact Info	Lauren Springer, (201) 934-6527
Location	Bergen County, New Jersey

Organization	St. Paul's Men's Shelter http://www.dioceseofnewark.org/cdc/98annrpt/spcdc.html
Description	They build community by revitalizing families and individuals through holistic housing initiatives, human services and advocacy.
Collection Items	New or gently used men's clothes (in season), especially large sizes.
Contact Info	Yasin Perry, (973) 278-7900 ext. 45
Location	451 Van Houten Street, Paterson, New Jersey

Organization	Shelter Our Sisters www.shelteroursisters.org
Description	A safe-house that provides shelter to women and children who are fleeing abusive home situations.
Collection Items	Gift cards to stores such as Old Navy/Tower Records/Barnes & Noble/GAP, baby supplies (formula, diapers, bottles, pacifiers), pillows, maternity clothes, women's and children's slippers, toiletries (full size, not trial size), cleaning supplies, fragrance-free laundry detergent, paper products, twin size sheets and blankets (no comforters), children's dictionaries.
Contact Info	Christine LaPore, (973) 616-7551

Organization	Social Service Association of Ridgewood
Description	Social Service Association serves six towns in northern Bergen County. SSA runs a year-round food pantry for their clients. In addition, they assist clients with financial hardships and other concrete services such as childcare scholarships, rent and utility assistance, the cost of eyeglasses and summer camp tuition.
Collection Items	Non-perishable food, birthday bags (cake mix, frosting, candles, balloons, etc.), wellness bags (toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo, dental floss, etc.), campership bags (sunglasses, towels, water bottles, goggles, etc.).
Contact Info	Ellen Abrams, (201) 444-2980 ssa6@verizon.net
Location	6 Station Plaza, Ridgewood, New Jersey

Organization	Supplies 4 Success
Description	Supplies 4 Success is a volunteer program of that provides disadvantaged children with the most basic equipment to start the new school year off on the right foot. Volunteers pack and distribute thousands of filled backpacks each school year to elementary students in Bergen, Passaic, and northern Hudson Counties.
Collection Items	Collection Items: School supplies of any kind: notebooks, binders, pencils, pens, erasers, rulers, looseleaf paper, markers, crayons, pencil cases, assignment notebooks.
Contact Info	Nikki Rosen nikkirosen@aol.com. E-mail to get current list of needed items

Organization	YCS (Youth Consultation Service) www.ycs.org
Description	This agency helps children in need through its centers all over the state of New Jersey. YCS provides residential treatment centers for children from infancy to age 22. Most of these children have severe emotional and/or behavioral problems and cannot live in their biological or foster homes. YCS also provides temporary housing for children who have just been released from a psychiatric hospital but are not yet ready to go back to their biological or foster home.
Collection Items	Donations include games/puzzles/non-violent toys, batteries, arts and crafts supplies, school supplies, clothing (including pants, shirts, sweaters, undergarments, socks, pajamas, slippers, tights, hair accessories), shoes and sneakers, coats and jackets, gift cards to stores such as Old Navy/Barnes & Noble/GAP, baby supplies, disposable cameras and photo albums, sports equipment, e.g., balls, helmets, protective gear (for their summer camp program).
Contact Info	Kathy Mongon, (201) 678-1312, ext. 128
Location	270 Union Street, Hackensack, New Jersey
Note	YCS accepts donations that are NEW only.

Please submit this form to the Religious School Office approximately two months prior to the bar/bat mitzvah date.

Mitzvah Project Collection Form

Name _____

Telephone Number _____

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Date _____

I will be collecting the following items _____

The items will be donated to the following organization _____

The collection will take place (please check one):

- On the day of my bar/bat mitzvah by invited guests
- In my community at _____

Sample Insert for Your Invitation

A number of parents have asked us to provide a sample “insert” that explains their child’s Mitzvah Project Collection and that they could include in their invitation. Here is a sample that you can customize as appropriate:

Dear Family and Friends,

As part of my bar/bat mitzvah, I am asked to take on a Mitzvah Project Collection. On the day of my bar/bat mitzvah, I will be collecting _____. These will be donated to _____. I chose this collection because _____. I’m asking you to help make this collection a success by bringing _____ with you to my bar/bat mitzvah. Thanks!