

It's Your Bar/Bat Mitzvah!



Mitzvah Project Ideas





Mazel Tov...

You're ready to start your Mitzvah Project!

Being a Bar or Bat Mitzvah is a special time. It's a time for *you* to accept your new responsibilities as an adult. It is also time for you to choose a meaningful and *enjoyable* Mitzvah Project. It is important to spend time learning about what *you* enjoy doing and how you can discover a way to use your talents and interests to find the perfect project for you.

On the following pages we have listed some ideas from organizations that could really use your help. We hope that this will help you get started on your Mitzvah Project. Most have website addresses as well as contact information to give you more information.

The ideas and organizations listed here are only suggestions. If you have other ideas, we would love to include them for next year's B'nai Mitzvah students. Once you know what you might like to do, it is important to make sure your project is manageable, making sure you have the time, resources, effort, and commitment available to making your mitzvah project work. Talk with your parents, Rabbi Hecht, Rabbi Lobel or Cantor Hyman, or even your teachers to see if your mitzvah project idea can be completed. If you have your own ideas, please share them with us!

Helping others is a great feeling and an important Jewish value. We hope that some of these suggestions will start you on your way to finding the perfect Mitzvah Project that's right for *you*.



The Bar/Bat Mitzvah Committee

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If You Want To Help...Animals



North Shore Animal League of America

www.nsalamerica.org

516-883-7575

The largest no-kill animal shelter in the world located in Port Washington, NSAL is always in need of willing families to offer a welcoming home for countless puppies and kittens, as well as full grown dogs and cats. With animals running between \$50 and \$215, the North Shore Animal League America offers an affordable opportunity for families to give their time and resources to an animal in need.

B'nai Mitzvah Project Opportunities: Collect the following items for animals at the shelter: brushes/combs (cat and dog) towels, cat toys, puppy toys, treats, towels milk bones and dog biscuits.

Save A Pet Long Island

www.saveapetli.net

631-473-6333

Contact: Lynn Schoepf

lschoepf@optonline.net

At this Long Island animal shelter, Save a Pet believes it is our moral responsibility to protect and improve the lives of abused, abandoned, and homeless cats and dogs, and to place them in loving permanent homes.

B'nai Mitzvah Project Opportunities: You can sponsor a cat or dog at our animal shelter until he/she is adopted. 100% of donations go directly to the animals. It will not only help defray the cost of the dog or cat's routine and medical care, but also will allow us to provide them with special toys, treats and bones. You can pick a pet from their adoption center to sponsor or they will pick one for you. You will receive an email about your pet once a month and when they find your pet a good home. You can also have a bake sale, lemonade sale or bring blankets to their facility.

Canine Companions for Independence

www.cci.org/northeast

631-694-6938

Contact: Debra MacKenzie

dmackenzie@cci.org

This is a non-profit organization that enhances the lives of people with disabilities by providing highly trained assistance dogs and ongoing support to ensure quality partnerships. CCI breeds, raises, and trains dogs to become assistance dogs. They also teach the adults and children who enter the program how to apply the skills to best meet their individual needs.

B'nai Mitzvah Project Opportunities: With adult supervision: Puppy Raising - Raising an 8 week old potential Canine Companion until it is approximately 15 months old.



If You Want To Help....
National Organizations with Long Island Chapters

The American Red Cross www.nassauredcross.org. Youth Coordinator: 516-747-3500 x 239
Provides relief to individuals affected by disasters and helps people prevent, prepare for, and respond to emergencies.

B'nai Mitzvah Project Opportunities: Parents and kids age 13 and older can help with mailings, assist in the Red Cross offices, join the Disaster Action Team, educate others by becoming a Basic Aid Instructor, help out with fundraising events like the annual Cross Walk at Eisenhower Park or Swim-A-Cross, or come up with their own projects to raise money for the Red Cross.

The Ronald McDonald House of Long Island www.rmhlongisland.org 516-775-5683
Provides a home-away-from-home for families of seriously ill children undergoing critical medical treatment in area hospitals, such as Cohen Children's Hospital (formerly Schneider Children's Hospital). The House strives to provide a comfortable and supportive environment, to help families through their most difficult time. Volunteers are the "heartbeat of the House," and opportunities to get involved are offered on many different levels.

B'nai Mitzvah Project Opportunities: Help organize and participate in fundraising events. If you're short on time, show a little love for families far from home through comfort food-donate non-perishables to the House's food pantry or whip up some tasty treats together that you can drop off. Read to a young child or sibling(s).

Juvenile Diabetes Foundation of Long Island

JDRF-Long Island Contact: Betsy Paffmann: 631-414-1126 longisland@jdrf.org
The mission of JDRF is to find a cure for diabetes and its complications through the support of research. Type 1 diabetes is a disease that strikes children suddenly and requires multiple injections of insulin daily or a continuous infusion of insulin through a pump.

B'nai Mitzvah Project Opportunities: If you are living with Diabetes you can become a youth ambassador and help write thank you notes/letters to our generous supporters, Participate in arts and crafts projects for JDRF events and attend meetings with JDRF staff and share your story of life with diabetes.

Soles4Souls www.soles4souls.org (615) 391-5723

Soles4Souls has a simple concept: they buy shoes and get them to those in need. Founded after the 2004 tsunami that hit Southeast Asia, Wayne Elsey, the Founder and CEO of Soles4Souls Inc., felt compelled to do something. Like many of us, he did not know what to do. He was at home one night, watching TV and he saw a picture of a single shoe washing up on the beach. That triggered a few calls to some other executives in the footwear industry and the subsequent donation of a quarter of a million shoes to victims in the devastated countries.

B'nai Mitzvah Project Opportunities: Host a Barefoot Event where people in temple or your reception can be challenged to leave their shoes at the door as an act of worship and selflessness. They will provide support materials and donation cards to announce the event, as well as information needed to send the shoes collected directly to our warehouse. Sponsor a Country or Community and by raising funds with a creative fundraiser or a special offering to help an area of your choice. Through this method, your congregation can provide the financial support to have Soles4Souls deliver shoes to a destination of your choice!



If You Want To Help....Children



FEGS [Adopt a Family Program](#)

Contact: Debbie Weiss 516.496.7550 x 225

Matches families and individuals in crisis with volunteers. Professional case management provides linkages to vital benefits, services and resources.

B'nai Mitzvah Project Opportunities: You can adopt a needy family for Chanukah and put together a gift basket for them or buy gift cards from Target or Walmart to donate.

Temple Chaverim is involved with this charity.

Pajama Program www.pajamaprogram.org

Contact: Joanne Giardinelli 212-716-9757 joanne@pajamaprogram.org

Pajama Program provides new pajamas and new books to children in need, many who are waiting and hoping to be adopted. Thousands of the children live in group homes and shelters and are shuffled often between temporary living facilities. Many of them have been abused or abandoned, and have never enjoyed the simple comfort of having a mother or father tuck them in at bedtime and read to them.

B'nai Mitzvah Project Opportunities: Pajamas need to be new, unused, and a complete set or nightgown. Then decide if you want to help children from Infant – 5 yrs old, 5 yrs old – 12 yrs old or for teenage children ages 13-17 (Adult sizes Small to XXXL!) Decide where people can drop off/send the PJs and books. You can decorate a big box or multiple boxes with fun wrapping paper to make it festive looking. Or you can have people bring or send them to your home or reception.

Sunrise Day Camp www.sunrisedaycamp.org

Contact: Beth Fetner 516-634-4196

This is a special camp for children ages 3 1/2 - 16, that is the only dedicated day camp in the nation for children with cancer and their siblings. It is a camp designed to meet the emotional, social, recreational and physical needs of these children while allowing them to enjoy the comforts and safety of their own homes at night. Sunrise Day Camp is situated on the Henry Kaufmann Campgrounds, a 300-acre wooded site that borders Nassau and Suffolk counties.

B'nai Mitzvah Project Opportunities: **Arts and crafts supplies**, new toys (do not wrap) gift cards, flip flops and goggles and crayons.

Family-To-Family www.family-to-family.org

Contact: Pam Koner - 914-478-0756 famtofam@aol.com

Family-to-Family is a non-profit hunger relief organization dedicated to providing food and other basic life necessities to profoundly poor, rural American families. They link families with "more" to families with much less. Each donating family is linked to a specific family in need, and each month either sends "their" family a box of food, or donates money for food to Family-to-Family, which then purchases the food for that particular family.

Bnai Mitzvah Project Opportunities: Through their Birthday Buddies program, kids can create shoebox sized boxes filled with birthday goodies (small gifts, goody bag, a gently used book, cake mix and a card) to be given to families in our receiving communities who cannot afford to celebrate their children's birthdays.



If You Want To Help...Children



Coalition Against Child Abuse and Neglect

www.ccanli.org

Contact: Nicole Gonzalez 516.747.2966 x 4604

ngonzalez@ccanli.org

Since its founding in 1979, CCAN has made educating both child victim services professionals and the general public an important and integral part of its mission to fight child abuse and neglect. CCAN has taken the lead in educating the Long Island community on child abuse issues, especially child protection and Internet safety.

B'nai Mitzvah Opportunities: New toys for children infant, pre-teen; new winter clothing, jackets, tops, pants for infants–teens; individual food baskets; decorations. You can make shoeboxes for children that contain soap, shampoo, toiletries, socks, gloves, etc. then give to them if they have to go to a shelter.

Mid-Island Y Jewish Community Center

www.miyjcc.org

Contact: Caroline Kushnitz, 516-822-3535, x324

ckushnitz@miyjcc.org

B'nai Mitzvah Opportunities: Gift of Literacy Program: Volunteers tutor 2nd and 3rd graders struggling to meet reading standards. Volunteer tutors receive on-site supervision by the JCC's reading specialist, who gives a phonics-based lesson to the group and provides lesson plans to guide the volunteers in their work with students during each session. Volunteers may commit to work with the same student one or two sessions each week during the school year.

Locks of Love

www.locksoflove.org info@locksoflove.org

This great organization provides hairpieces to financially disadvantaged children under age 18 suffering from long-term medical hair loss. Donated hair is used to create the highest quality hair prosthetics to help children restore their self-esteem and confidence.

B'nai Mitzvah Opportunities: Anyone can cut your hair as long as certain guidelines are followed. They encourage all of our donors to go to a salon they are already familiar with to ensure their comfort when donating.

Long Island Philharmonic

www.liphilharmonic.com

Contact: Karen Beluso, 631-293-2223

The Orchestra is dedicated to working with the community to provide quality music education for Long Island children. They reach out to over 30,000 students, educators and parents annually.

B'nai Mitzvah Opportunities: The Philharmonic is collecting musical instruments for band and orchestra programs in Long Island's underserved schools and to help these schools start programs where none exist. We are also collecting instruments for our future Instrument Petting Zoo so that children get to draw a bow across a violin, make music on a clarinet or trumpet, and discover that the magic to create music resides in all of us.



If You Want to Help Donate....Food



The INN (Interfaith Nutrition Network)

www.the-inn.org

516-486-8506 x 100

This organization serves Long Island's hungry and homeless through its kitchens and emergency shelters in 19 locations throughout Nassau and Suffolk counties.

B'nai Mitzvah Opportunities: Families can also donate food or commit to "adopting a family" by supplying housewarming baskets for residents new to The INN's Emergency Shelter or long-term housing program.

Rock Can Roll

www.rockCANroll.org

Contact: Aimée Z. Holtzman, 516-822-3457

Rock CAN Roll, Inc.,® is a volunteer, 501c3, non-profit, hunger relief organization and think tank. We collaborate with rock concerts, schools, corporations, and private individuals to collect healthy & nutritious non-perishable food for distribution to local agencies and into the hands of children, seniors and families who live with hunger and in poverty.

B'nai Mitzvah Opportunities: Bring a can or non-perishable food to the service or reception and it will be donated to an organization that participates in Rock Can Roll.

Island Harvest

www.islandharvest.org

Contact: Joan Flynn, (516) 294-8528 Ext. 121

joan@islandharvest.org

Fighting Hunger and touching lives, Island Harvest — Long Island's largest hunger relief organization serves as the bridge between those who have surplus food and those who need it.

B'nai Mitzvah Opportunities: Donate your extra food. Island Harvest will make arrangements with your caterer to rescue any excess food. There are no additional costs to the event host or catering facility for donating the excess food. Make a contribution in lieu of a traditional favor. A tax-deductible donation can be made in honor of your guests or create theme centerpieces with a beautiful basket of seasonal fruit (whole), toys, personal products or packaged food that can be donated to Island Harvest after your celebration.

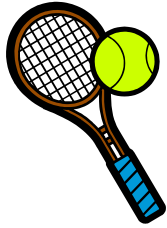
Mazon

www.mazon.org

1-800-813-0557

Founded in 1985, MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger is a national nonprofit organization that allocates donations from the Jewish community to prevent and alleviate hunger among people of all faiths and backgrounds. Each year, MAZON which means "food" in Hebrew, grants over \$4 million to more than 300 carefully screened hunger-relief agencies, including emergency food, food banks and groups that seek long-term solutions to the hunger problem.

B'nai Mitzvah Opportunities: Collect recipes from family and friends bind them in a book to sell, hold a bake sale at Hebrew school or in your own school, instead of gifts ask your family or friends to make a donation to Mazon.



*If You Want to Help Donate...
Sports Equipment*

Tennis Rackets For Kids

www.tennisracketsforkids.org

Contact: Dr. Guy Mintz

racquetsforkids@optonline.net

This organization was started by two high school students who played in many USTA tournaments and ended up changing their rackets frequently but wondered what to do with all the tennis rackets they had hanging around the house. Tennis enhanced their lives and they wanted to spread the "love" of the game.

B'nai Mitzvah Project Opportunities: Mitzvah students can collect used racquets or purchase new ones from their monetary gifts. These racquets have generated smiles and hugs from children of all ages. Racquets can be collected by the individual through a drive at his/her synagogue, school, camp, or tennis center. Collection receptacles can be set up. The organization has fliers and business cards for distribution. The participant will receive a Tennis Racquets for Kids tee-shirt to wear on the day of a sponsored event.

Children Sports Connection

www.cscny.org

Contact: Patricia D'Accolti

512-8922

The mission of Children's Sport Connection is to provide financial assistance to children from homes in the midst of a family crisis. They believe these children can benefit emotionally if they are enabled to maintain an active involvement in organized sports. Families in crisis often find it difficult to devote their precious time and finances to athletic programs.

B'nai Mitzvah Project Opportunities: We accept all lightly used or new sports equipment. The equipment should be in usable condition since it will be used by a child in need. They accept gear for all sports.

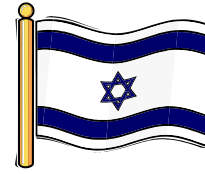
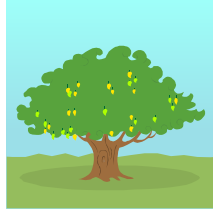
U.S. Soccer Foundation

www.ussoccerfoundation.org

(202) 872-9277

The mission of the U.S. Soccer Foundation is to enhance, assist and grow the sport of soccer in the United States with a special emphasis on underserved communities.

B'nai Mitzvah Project Opportunities: A pair of playing shoes. A soccer ball. That's all it takes to enjoy the. Yet there are countless children for whom a decent pair of cleats and a soccer ball remain unfulfilled items on a wish list. One of the easiest things anyone can do is share new or gently used soccer gear with those who are less fortunate.



If You Want to Help.... Jewish Organizations & Israel

Birthday Angels Birthday Party Project www.birthday-angels.org

Contact: Ruthie Sobel Luttenberg ruthie@birthday-angels.org

Birthday Angels is dedicated to giving children from disadvantaged backgrounds in Israel a birthday party with their friends. Birthday Angels produces a kit full of games, decorations, music and stickers which are used by volunteers from most of Israel's biggest social welfare organizations to run a two hour, self-esteem party. At the end of the party the child fills out a "Thank You Card" that is included in the kit which is sent to their Angel. It has won the Menachem and Aliza Begin Service to the Community award twice.

B'nai Mitzvah Opportunities: Pizza Parlor Parties, selling donation cards, talent shows, children's art auction, car wash, dog walking, snow shoveling and candy sales have been great opportunities for kids to spread the word while they are raising money for Birthday Angels. Many people have asked for "presence" instead of "presents" and give out Birthday Angels cards instead of loot bags at their parties.

A Package from Home www.apackagefromhome.org

Contact Person - Barbara Silverman, 516 791-8100

Package from Home offers the opportunity for the B'nai Mitzvah to perform a mitzvah by helping the soldiers of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). Students/families can adopt an army unit of soldiers with no family in Israel, each soldier will receive a care package filled with such items as items as a t-shirt, anti fungal socks, fleece jackets, long underwear, hat, gloves, assorted snacks, toiletries and a letter of appreciation written by adults and children from around the world.

B'nai Mitzvah Opportunities: You can include a letter with your invitation telling guests about your project and/or ask guests to donate directly to A Package from Home, or your family can decide to personally adopt an army unit. In addition writing letters to be included in the packages, collecting supplies for the soldiers and other ideas can be part of their project.

JNF-Jewish National Fund www.jnf.org

Contact: Nina Woldin, 212 879-9305

You and your family might know JNF has the global environmental leader by planting 240 million trees, building over 200 reservoirs and dams, developing over 250,000 acres of land, creating more than 1000 parks, and educating students around the world about Israel and the environment.

B'nai Mitzvah Opportunities: You can buy their invitations which will let your guests know that a tree will be planted in their name or many students create their own JNF mitzvah webpage to raise money for your mitzvah project. The proceeds will go towards a JNF project of your choice including: Sderot Indoor Recreation Center, Therapeutic Riding Centers, Aleh Negev, Project Baseball, B'nai Mitzvah Remembrance Wall, or Essence of Life.



*If You Want to Help....
Jewish Organizations & Israel*

JWB Jewish Chaplains Council/B'Nai Mitzvah Project for our Troops

www.jcca.org

Contact: Ziva Davidovich 212.786.5099

zivad@jcca.org

This organization is a service of the JCC Association which provides for the religious and educational needs of the 10,000 Jewish men and women in the U.S. military.

B'nai Mitzvah Opportunities: To provide essential needs packages that include phone cards to call home, toiletries, socks and hand warmers, Shabbat packages and holiday packages. The troops will be notified of your contribution when packages are sent.

American Friends of Meir Panim

www.meirpanim.org

zev@meirpanim.org or renatt@meirpanim.org

American Friends of Meir Panim was established to help alleviate and diminish the harmful effects of poverty on thousands of families across Israel. American Friends of Meir Panim is steadfast in its mission to keep children-at-risk in productive environments, sustaining them and providing an opportunity for a brighter future.

B'nai Mitzvah Projects or Volunteer Opportunities offered by the organization for children ages 11 - 13: BAR/BAT MITZVAH CONNECTION (BBMC)- There are many boys and girls, just like you, who will soon be reaching their Bar and Bat Mitzvah age. For these children, the celebration of this momentous occasion is nothing but a distant dream. By participating in our rewarding BBMC Program, you can CONNECT with another boy or girl in Israel by choosing to sponsor their Bar or Bat Mitzvah celebration; you can COMMUNICATE with another young adult that you have helped, making a lasting friendship; and you can COMMEMORATE your own Bar or Bat Mitzvah by joining our Connection List, Honor Roll Book, or dedicating a Plaque on our Wall of Tributes in Israel. Best of all, you can receive a free personalized gift from Israel!

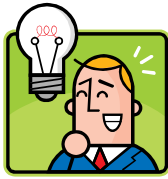
Holocaust Memorial and Tolerance Center of Nassau County

www.holocaust-nassau.org

516- 571-8040

The Mission of the Holocaust Memorial and Tolerance Center of Nassau County is to teach the history of the Holocaust and its lessons through education and community outreach. We teach about the dangers of anti-semitism, racism, bullying and all other manifestations of intolerance. We promote resistance to prejudice and advocate respect for every human being.

B'nai Mitzvah Opportunities: Each spring, the Holocaust Memorial and Tolerance Center hosts student competitions for art, literature, and music. The competitions offer students the opportunity to showcase their talents in response to specific themes related to the Center's mission of teaching the lessons of the Holocaust to promote tolerance and acceptance.



Great ideas deserve our thanks...



We acknowledge, with gratitude, the hard work of Bonnie Brenner in compiling all of the information and resources provided in this Mitzvah Project Ideas manual.



Arts and Crafts

- Make Your Own Tallit
- Make Your Own Yad (the pointer used while reading the Torah so body oils don't get on the Torah and it helps you keep your place with the small print)
- Make Your Own Challah Cover
- Organize an art show and bring the pictures to a senior citizen home.
- Organize a photography show with original student photographs – and hang some of the pictures in the halls of Temple Chaverim.
- Videotape your town's history by interviewing the historical society, researching books in the library, and finding old maps of how the town has evolved. Ask the township to feature your video on their website.
- Collect art supplies for a day care center or shelter.



Community

- Contact a nursing home and organize a bingo game or a concert enjoyed by both young and young at heart.
- Organize a car wash at Temple Chaverim. Donate the proceeds to your favorite charity.
- Arrange a rollerskating/basketball game/soccer or bowling party. Have each friend attending bring a non-perishable snack to donate for a food pantry or throw a party for a special needs group of children with the food you collected.
- Host a sleepover party. Stay up all night (well maybe not all night) baking cookies and bring them to a shelter.



Education

- Collect school supplies and donate them to a classroom in need.
- Conduct a 'read-a-thon' in your school. Challenge the students to read an hour each day after school. The winning student will log the most reading hours.



Environmental

- Organize a recycling program in your school or synagogue.



Technology

- Design a website for a cause.
- Write an article for the Temple newsletter
- Collect old computers for those in need.
- Create a video montage of an event or life with a special-needs child having them assist you in picking the photos to make it a meaningful experience.



Writing

- Design & create a recipe book that can be sold through your synagogue's sisterhood or at a school event in which the proceeds benefit a charity of your choice.
- Write letters to politicians about your cause or political views.
- Record and write the life story of an elderly friend or family member for example, a Holocaust survivor!