

Tikkun Olam Project Opportunities and Suggestions

Efforts to improve our world may be performed in many ways. You may volunteer time, money or resources to existing community service organizations or you may develop a project or program of your own. Below is a list of local and nationwide community service organizations, as well as examples of fundraising events that you might organize to benefit a cause of interest to you.

Organizations:

Organizations for Social Justice:

American Jewish Committee	310-282-8080	www.ajc.org
Amnesty International	310-815-0450	www.amnestyusa.org
Anti-Defamation League	310-446-8000	www.adl.org
CA Assoc. of Human Relations Org.	213-974-7601	www.cahro.org
Facing History and Ourselves	626-744-1177	www.facing.org
Human Rights Watch	310-477-5540	www.hrw.org
Interfaith Communities United for Justice, Peace	650-599-1009	www.icujp.org
International Rescue Committee	212-551-3000	www.theirc.org
Jewish World Watch	818-501-1836	www.jewishworldwatch.org
Simon Wiesenthal Center	310-553-9036	www.wiesenthal.com

Disaster Relief:

American Red Cross	213-739-5200	www.redcross.org
Magen David Adom USA	866-583-8539	www.mdais.com
National Disaster Search Dog Foundation	888-459-4376	www.searchdogfoundation.org
Points of Light Foundation	202-729-8000	www.pointsoflight.org

Food and Shelter/Building:

AIDS Project LA	213-201-1600	www.apla.org
Children Helping Poor & Homeless People	310-840-4777	www.chphp.com
Habitat for Humanity	818-891-1951	www.habitat.org or
www.habitatla.org		
Loaves and Fishes Food Bank	818-997-0943	
Mazon	310- 442-0020	www.mazon.org
Meals on Wheels	818-374-5350	
www.sfvic.org/MealsOnWheels.html		
North Hollywood Interfaith Food Pantry	818-980-1657	www.nhifp.org
Ocean Park Community Center	310-450-4050	www.opcc.net
Project Angel Food	323-845-1816	www.angelfood.org
Project Chicken Soup	310-836-5402	www.projectchickensoup.org
SOVA Food Bank	818-342-1320	www.jfsla.org/sova
Temple Judea Homeless Shelter	818-758-3800 x209	
West Valley Food Pantry	818-346-5554	www.westvalleyfoodpantry.org
Westside Food Bank	310-828-6016	www.westsidefoodbankca.org

Environmental Appreciation and Conservation:

California Environments Projects	818-500-1025	
Children's Nature Institute	310-998-1151	www.childrensnatureinstitute.org
Heal the Bay	310-453-0395	www.healthebay.org
National Recycling Coalition	888-253-2652	www.nrc-recycle.org
Santa Monica Bay Keepers	310-305-9645	www.smbaykeeper.org
Tree People	818-754-4600	www.treepeople.org

Animal Rescue and Therapy:

Ahead with Horses	818-767-6373	www.aheadwithhorsesla.org
City of Los Angeles Animal Services		www.laanimalservices.com
El Dustberry	818-995-0277	
Friends of Animals	310-479-5089	www.foala.org
Guide Dogs of America	818-362-5834	www.guidedogsofamerica.org
Lange Foundation	310-473-5585	www.langefoundation.org
Los Angeles Zoo	323-644-6400	www.lazoo.org
Pet Adoption Fund	818-340-1186	www.petadoptionfund.org
Pet Orphans	818-901-0190	www.petorphansfund.org
Special Equestrian Riding Therapy	818-776-6476	www.sert.org
Wildlife Waystation	818-899-5201	www.wildlifewaystation.org
Petopia™	818-782-6974	www.valleycatsinc.org

Disability Support and Services:

Activities for Retarded Children (ARC)	818-762-4365	www.arcandadults.org
Blind Children's Center	323-664-2153	www.blindchildrenscenter.org
Down Syndrome Association	818-786-0001	www.dsala.org
Lokrantz Special Education Center ca.schoolloop.com	818-886-8980	lokrantzsec-laUSD-
Lowman Special Education Center ca.schoolloop.com/	818-765-3404	lowman-laUSD-
SFV Association for the Retarded	818-894-9301	www.newhorizons-sfv.org
Special Olympics of Southern California	800-700-8585	www.sosc.org
Tri-Valley Special Olympics	818-342-0017	www.sosc.org/trivalley

Medical Research and Treatment:

Alzheimer's Association	800-272-3900	www.alz.org/socal
American Cancer Society	818-905-7766	www.cancer.org
American Diabetes Association	323-966-2890	www.diabetes.org
Cystic Fibrosis Foundation	323-655-8525	www.cff.org
Locks of Love	888-896-1588	www.locksoflove.org

*Note: These represent only a few of the many organizations that work for the treatment and cure of disease. A simple internet search should yield information on research and treatment organizations of specific interest to you.

Hospitals:

Children's Hospital	323-660-2450	www.childrenshospitala.org
Encino-Tarzana Medical Center	818-995-5000	www.encinomed.org
Northridge Medical Center	818-885-8500	www.northridgehospital.org
Valley Presbyterian Hospital	818-782-6600	www.valleypres.org
West Hills Hospital	818-676-4000	www.westhillshospital.com
Motion Picture & Television Hospital	818-876-1505	www.mptvfund.org

Children's Services:

Children's Defense Fund	213-355-8787	www.cdfca.org
School on Wheels	805-641-1678	www.schoolonwheels.org

Services for the Elderly:

Jewish Home for the Aging	818-774-3219	www.jha.org
Organization for the Needs of the Elderly	818-705-2345	www.onegeneration.org
Topanga Park Retirement Home	818-716-9900	
www.topangaparkassistedliving.com		

Jewish Community Organizations, Funds, and Project Databases:

BJE Los Angeles Service Learning Section)	323-761-8607	www.bjela.org (For Teens)
The Friendship Circle	310-280-0955	www.fcla.org
Jewish National Fund	323-964-1400	www.jnf.org
Jewish World Watch	www.vbs.org/organizations/WorldWatch/index.htm	
Magen David Adom USA	866-583-8539	www.magendavidadom.org
Mazon	310-442-0020	www.mazon.org
Pups for Peace	800-669-8930	www.pupsforpeace.org
Simon Wiesenthal Center	310-553-9036	www.wiesenthal.com
Social Action.com	888-458-8535	socialaction.com
SOVA Food Bank	818-342-1320	www.jfsla.org/sova
United Jewish Communities	212-284-6500	www.ujcna.org
Kavod	402-397-1975	www.kavod.org
Ziv Tzedakah Fund	973-763-9396	www.ziv.org

Fundraising Suggestions:

1. Bake Sale- Everyone's favorite! Include baked foods from around the world.
2. Car Wash/ Errands- Students can hold a weekend car-wash to raise money or they can make themselves available to run errands, do yard work or walk dogs, etc. Have them make up fliers to advertise their services and explain where the money will go that is earned.

3. Flea Market- Students and their families can get their books, used clothes, or hand-made crafts together to sell. Ask them to donate part or all of their profits to a particular cause.
4. Community Auction- Ask families, friends and community businesses to donate their specialties (including skills) to be auctioned off. Be creative! Some teachers and students have had themselves auctioned for a day of baby-sitting, or a day of museum-gazing with a child, etc. Teachers have made videos of their classroom over the course of the year and auctioned them off to parents. Restaurant and theater owners can donate dinners and seats to shows. This takes some organizing but can raise a lot of money for your cause, will alert the community and get many people involved. Students can create posters, canvas the neighborhood for donations, etc.
5. Costume Ball- Hold this event around Purim. Give it a theme. Charge admission.
6. Seasonal Celebration- Hold a seasonal pot-luck dinner. For instance, in autumn ask participants to bring a seasonal dish. Eat outside under colorful trees (or in a Sukkah during Sukkot). Organize simple games and activities to attract children to the event - leaf rubbings, scavenger hunt, storytelling, autumn poetry readings, etc. Charge admission.
7. Talent Show- Hold a student-teacher talent show. Sell tickets. Donate the profits to a cause.
8. Art Show- Hold an art contest where local artists and students enter up to three pieces of their art at \$5 per entry. Try to get a local gallery owner to donate space for the event and recruit local celebrities as judges. You could also sell this artwork and donate a portion of the proceeds to your favorite organization.
9. Poetry Reading- Hold a poetry reading in your favorite cafe. Get students or family members to volunteer to read their own or other's poems related to hunger, homelessness, discrimination, etc. Pass the hat and ask diners to contribute. Explain where the money will go. Try to get local news coverage for your event --- this will also appeal to the restaurant owner whose establishment gets free advertising!
10. Read, Dance or Walk-a-Thon- Collect pledges from family, friends and community members for each hour or mile students walk or dance, or for each book they read.
11. Fast- Give up one meal a week, junk food for a specific period of time, etc. and donate the money you save to a cause. Get the school involved by going around to other classes and explaining where their money will go. Place large containers in each classroom in which students can place their change.
12. Birthday Donations- On birthdays students can ask parents, friends and grand-parents to make a contribution (money, time, or materials) to a special organization instead of buying a gift. Students can do the same for other people's birthdays. Make up a card for the birthday person explaining that a donation was made in honor of his/her birthday to a local organization. Explain how the organization works.

So You're Having A Bar/ Bat Mitzvah...

How can we add that special ingredient of Tikkun Olam, or fixing the world, to our upcoming simcha so that others may benefit from our happiness and joy?

It's really easy to find that special idea, the one you will enjoy working on and the one that will give you a special glow when you complete your work. In the process you will see how many other people's lives can be changed because you care.

Start by asking yourself a few questions:

1. What are the need(s) of the person, or people, whom we want to help?
2. What am I good at?

Answers may include: giving big hugs, playing soccer, baking chocolate chip cookies, talking on the phone for hours, being a computer whiz, or drawing or painting the most beautiful pictures.

3. What do I like to do?

In order to answer what you like to do you will have to think a little bit more. What activities give you the most pleasure? Can you sit and read for hours? Are you really excited about playing the guitar or keyboard?

4. What bothers me so much about what is wrong in the world that I weep or scream in anger and frustration, or am speech-less at the horror of it?

"What bothers you?" Are we tired of hearing that there are untold numbers of kids who go to bed hungry every night? Are you enraged when you think about what terrible things happened when the World Trade Center was attacked? Do you feel uncomfortable when you visit a nursing home and see so many people just sitting and staring into space? Now--turn what bothers you into Tikkun Olam and make a difference.

5. Whom do I know?

The classic example of "Whom do I know?": After the World Trade Center attack on September 11, 2001 we saw unprecedented giving and helping from all parts of the country. Some people raised money by making American flag pins with safety pins and beads. Others held bake sales -anything to raise funds to help the victims. The late George Harrison of Beatles' fame went one step further. He remembered how his own father, a firefighter in his native England, put his life on the line every time he went out to fight a fire and then used the "Whom Do I Know" principle to raise tens of millions of dollars for relief for fallen firefighters. How did he do it? He called all of his friends, the most famous rock stars we know, and brought them together for an incredible concert. The result? Millions of dollars for relief for the victims of the terror attacks.

Know someone who enjoys playing a musical instrument as much as you do and would like to join you in a concert at a local nursing home? Or, maybe you have a relative who is a dentist and is willing to give you dental supplies that can be donated to a dental clinic in Jerusalem? Are you and your friends ace soccer players who could teach kids at a homeless shelter how to play? There is no end to the answers to this question—you just need to think about it....and, do it!

And finally—

6. Why not?

"Why Not?" is generally the easiest of all: almost always the answer is, "There's no real reason why not. So,

Be thoughtful! Be creative! What comes from your heart and mind will be an important contribution to any Tikkun Olam effort.