

ELEM'S MITZVAH PROJECT

The Miriam-Webster Dictionary lists two definitions for the word “Mitzvah”:

1. A commandment of the Jewish law
2. A meritorious or charitable act

A Bar or Bat Mitzvah is a reflection of both these ideas. This coming-of-age celebration is a staple in Judaism, but it's also our reminder that those around us need our good deeds and help, which is where the charitable act comes in.

There are many concerns in today's world. How can one choose a single, significant charitable act for their special day, when they know that looking back years down the line, this one Mitzvah will hold a special place in their hearts?

Objectively speaking, the greatest deed one can do is save a life, which is exactly what we do.

ELEM serves youth of all backgrounds in Israel. Some experience the loneliness and isolation of adolescents, a kind of distress that isn't necessarily visible, along with bullying, and drug and alcohol abuse, while others live on the streets and suffer from extreme anxiety and depression. These are problems that US teens relate to and understand.

When a person loses hope and someone reaches out and offers assistance and kindness, it can alter the course of one's life. It can be the light in the darkness that helps them trust again, hope again, and instead of sinking deeper into despair, hope returns. That hope is life-saving.

With over 50 programs statewide, we address all types of distress among youth and young people. ELEM has outreach vans, after-school drop-in centers, 24/7 shelters, online counseling, mentors, programs in schools, and so much more.

When it comes to ELEM's youth, this kindness can manifest in many forms. You can use your special day to do a short-term crowdfunding campaign for a specific ELEM program that brings hope back to our youth, but you can also utilize any of the following ideas.

Outreach Vans/Shelters

Because we help youth who live on the streets and often can't pay for basic products, the items below are very much in demand.

- **Basic Supplies Kit** - Collect soaps and shampoos, deodorant, first aid supplies, sunscreen and socks.
- **Hydration Project** - You can hold an event to decorate portable water bottles to help youth on the streets stay hydrated. Israel can get very hot, and youth without means can be in danger.

Here are additional projects you can do to support the youth in our shelters and on the streets:

- **The Good Gear Project** - Raise money for duffel bags or luggage with locks for homeless youth so

they have a way to keep their belongings together.

- **It's Fashion, Baby** – Host a fashion show event to raise funds to support our shelters.
- **Life Makeover Event**– Host a makeover event and raise money to give confidence-boosting haircuts to homeless youth.
- **Throw Cushion to the Wind** – Have a sleepover Bar/Bat Mitzvah to raise money for the facility or personal pillows for participants to take with them wherever they go.
- **Sweet Bubbles Event**– Have a bubbles theme party to raise money for shower products for participants.

Youth Centers

Many youths come to our after-school drop-in centers. It's their home away from home, and sometimes, it's the only home they know. It's where they connect with others, enjoy hobbies, experience growth through different workshops and feel safe. Did you know that activities and workshops are amazing therapy tools? We can hold a special activity for the youth at our centers that fits in with your hobbies! Do you like comic books? Then maybe you'd like to contribute to a comic book writing workshop. Do you love horses? Perhaps you'd like to sponsor a day at a horse ranch.

There are so many fun ways in which you can help ELEM youth. Here are some:

- **Game On** – Gather board games like chess, checkers, backgammon, or other games to assist ELEM counselors in engaging the teens in therapeutic goals.
- **Marvel at This** - Collect comic books to expand the collections at our centers where many youths discover a new hobby for the first time.
- **Music Saves Lives** – Raise money to support musical programs and instruments.
- **Be a Good Sport** – Hold a sports tournament to raise money for sports programs and supplies.
- **Say "Cheese!"** – Raise money for photography program equipment, such as cameras, darkroom materials, and computers.
- **Go Green** – Plant a garden to raise money for seeds, soil and tools for gardens at our centers in Israel.
- **Hold Your Horses!** - Have a horseback riding event and raise money to provide therapeutic horseback riding for at-risk Israeli youth.
- **Art Heals/Clay at Play** - Have a paint night or pottery event to raise money for painting or pottery classes.
- **Book Your Mitzvah Today** – Host read-a-thon and raise money for books at the centers to encourage literacy.

Is there something you're passionate about that we didn't mention? Let's discuss how we can make this fit YOU.

To learn more and participate please contact Chen at cdrachman@elem.org

Please be advised, that shipping items to Israel are contingent upon you covering the costs of shipping and handling.

