

“Make a Difference” Day
Educational Materials
April 1-3, 2011

Building Blocks that Matter:
Strengthening Relationships and
Fostering Community

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Additional copies of this document can be downloaded at:

www.areyvut.org

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Introduction

On April 1st, the “A Kindness a Day” Calendar encourages people to:
“Try to be totally unselfish today.”

On behalf of Areyvut, I welcome your help in bringing this powerful suggestion to life by participating in Areyvut’s 7th annual “Make a Difference” Day. The “A Kindness a Day” Calendar unites Jews across the world in an effort to inspire acts of kindness through its 365 suggestions of how to incorporate *tikkun olam* (social justice) into everyday life. On “Make a Difference” Day, we will strengthen this effort as schools, synagogues, families and community organizations and thousands of people worldwide dedicate Friday, April 1st – Sunday, April 3rd as a time to turn the calendar’s suggestions into action.

The 2011 “Make a Difference” Educational Material presented here focus on Community Building and Maintenance, an important topic that needs to be highlighted and addressed in the Jewish community. The materials include a project planning unit to guide preparation of social action projects; detailed resources and activity ideas for projects that fit under our main theme; and a list of additional themes to spark your own creative thinking. The activities are arranged topically with suggested age ranges, but all activities can be easily adapted to meet the needs of your audience. For additional resources to use in your classroom, please see the texts that are included in the packet and consult the Areyvut website www.areyvut.org for additional ideas. Certain links provided in these resources will launch Internet sites that are not under the control of Areyvut. We provide these outside links solely for your convenience and do not endorse these particular sites. Accordingly, Areyvut makes no representations or warranties concerning the availability of or content, products and services found on those sites.

We hope that these educational resources equip schools, synagogues, communities, families and organizations to actively make a difference in the world. Please use them as a starting point to spark your own ideas and interests and remember that even the simplest act of kindness can have a powerful impact on someone else’s life. Please share these resources widely but remember that when using them to properly acknowledge and credit Areyvut. We encourage those interested in other aspects of *tikkun olam* to “think out of the box” to create projects of their own and look forward to supporting these endeavors. For activity suggestions related to other themes, please refer to the “Make a Difference Day” archives www.areyvut.org/areyvut_in_action/make_a_difference_day/make_a_difference_day_archives/.

We request that you please let us know what you are planning by registering on our website www.areyvut.org/register_now/ so that we can share your ideas with others. You will also find a registration form included in this packet.

We would like to thank our Board of Trustees, interns and staff who helped to bring this project to fruition. We would particularly like to thank Shira Hammerman, our Educational Consultant, Sharon Stahl, our Special Projects Coordinator, Susan A. Abravanel, Education Director at Youth Service America (www.ysa.org), and Mollie Feldman, 2010 Summer Intern, for their help in developing these resources. Additionally, we want to acknowledge all those who will be participating in “Make a Difference” Day.

Good luck!

Daniel Rothner
 Founder & Director
 Areyvut

About Areyvut

Who We Are:

Areyvut, translated from Hebrew, means “responsibility.” Responsibility to one’s community, responsibility to the world. But when it comes to what Areyvut is about, responsibility is just the beginning.

Areyvut’s mission is to infuse the lives of Jewish youth and teenagers with the core Jewish values of *chesed* (kindness), *tzedakah* (charity) and *tikkun olam* (social action). Areyvut offers Jewish day schools, congregational schools, synagogues, community centers and families a variety of opportunities to empower and to enrich their youth by creating innovative programs that make these core Jewish values meaningful to them.

Areyvut’s fundamental belief is that sparking a passion for service in the young inspires a lifelong commitment to social justice. Therefore, Areyvut creates programs that reach out to Jewish youth, building on their individual interests and putting their experiences into a meaningful Jewish and communal context. We encourage young people to engage in both hands-on service and philanthropy, in the belief that all of God’s gifts should be used to improve our world. We also believe that community service benefits – and changes – both the recipient and the provider of the service.

Our target audience is middle and high school students from all denominations of Judaism, all types of Jewish education and all levels of Jewish communal affiliation.

What We Do:

Our programs set us apart from other organizations:

- Jewish Teen Philanthropy – We create and facilitate Jewish teen philanthropy programs, exposing students to organizations in need and enabling them to have a strong voice in their philanthropic giving. We provide an opportunity for students to consider what is important to them and to decide what to support with their own money and time.

- “Make a Difference” Day – Our national community service initiative actively engages everyone, from children to senior citizens, in giving back to the community through social action programs. This, we believe, is a first step toward greater commitment to making a difference.
- Bnai Mitzvah and Chesed Fairs – We organize hands-on and community service fairs for schools, synagogues and community centers to educate students about the many different ways they can make a difference in their community.
- “A Kindness a Day” Calendar – Every day we share a daily kindness with Jewish youth, drawn from traditional Jewish sources, to inspire good thoughts and good works. We reach youth through the means that are most accessible to them, including e-mail, Twitter and the Areyvut website.
- Bnai Mitzvah Video Essay Contest – This contest enables students to display their mitzvah projects and take pride in their impact on the community. Winners become Areyvut ambassadors who speak publicly about ways in which their peers can make a difference.
- Mitzvah Clown Training – Our newest initiative is truly a gift that keeps giving. We teach teenagers and adults the art of clowning and put their talents to work at local hospitals and senior residences.
- Summer Internship – We invite a select group of high school and college students to become directly involved in Areyvut and its programs. Interns also learn about local non-profits through visits, guest speakers and hands-on volunteering.

What You Can Do to Make a Difference:

The success of our efforts to engage our youth depends on the support of the adult Jewish community. There are several ways you can become involved:

- Learn more about Areyvut's programs and help us bring them to your school, synagogue or community.
- Make a tax-deductible donation to Areyvut to assist us financially, so we can expand our programs and touch the lives of more Jewish young people, as well as the people they touch.
<https://www.areyvut.org/donate/>

Contact us at (201) 244-6702 or www.areyvut.org.

Inspire our Jewish youth to give of themselves.

Project Planning Unit

This Areyvut Project Planning Unit will:

- ❖ Explain the meaning and significance of service-learning and, more specifically, Jewish service-learning
- ❖ Provide a step-by-step guide to preparing and implementing your own Jewish service-learning project

Service-learning

What is service-learning?

- Service-learning is a teaching strategy that unites community service with academic learning.

Why is service-learning important?

- Service-learning is important because it encourages leadership skills, civic engagement, community improvement and thoughtful action.

How is Jewish service-learning unique?

- Jewish service-learning enhances the standard service-learning model with Jewish values, connecting action to Jewish texts and traditions.

Why is Jewish service-learning important?

- Jewish service-learning is important because it engages Jewish youth with the core Jewish values of *chesed* (kindness), *tzedakah* (charity) and *tikkun olam* (social action).

Step by Step Guide

Building blocks for a successful Jewish service-learning project:

Block One: Preparation

- Assess your mission statement and the needs of your community
- Choose a project
- Set goals and expectations
- Create a project plan

Block Two: Action

- Follow through on project plan
- Document the event
- Connect the project to Jewish teaching and learning

Block Three: Follow-up

- Reflection
- Evaluation
- Celebration

Block One: Preparation

1a. Identify your mission statement

A mission statement is a short representation of why your group exists and what you hope to achieve. Creating a mission statement is important because it gives direction and clarifies purpose.

Areyvut's Mission Statement:

Areyvut enables Jewish youth to infuse their lives with the core Jewish values of *chesed* (kindness), *tzedakah* (charity), and *tikkun olam* (social justice).

Your group's Mission Statement:

1b. Assess your community's needs

Assessing your community is important to ensure that your mission statement and group projects respond to real community problems and needs.

What problem(s) or need(s) in your community does your mission statement address?

What would your community look like without these problems/needs?

1c. Choose your project

When you pick a project, select one that will help to solve problems and fulfill needs in your community.

Making your selection:

You can create your own project or select one from the list of project choices in the 'Suggested Activities' section on page 26. When you make your selection, you should consider the following:

- Time: Will you and your volunteers have enough time to design, develop, and implement this project?
- Logistics: What tools will your project require? Will you need transportation? Will you need funding? If so, how will you secure these resources?
- Volunteers: Will you have enough volunteers to complete the project as planned?
- Impact: Do you and your volunteers find this project meaningful? Will your project make a positive difference? How will you assess the impact?

1d. Set goals and expectations

Setting clear goals is important for measuring your impact after you finish your project. Also, you should talk about what you and your volunteers expect from the experience. Knowing your expectations will help with evaluation and reflection.

Define your goals:

There are many types of goals you can set for your project. Your goal could be to have a certain number volunteers, to help a specific number of people or to raise a set amount of money. To help you define your goals and set clear expectations for the project, you may consider the following questions:

- What do you hope to accomplish at the end of your project?
- What do you expect to gain as an individual and as a group?

- How will you know if you met your goals?
- What challenges do you think you might encounter?
- How do you think participating in this project will make you feel?

1e. Create a project plan

Creating a project plan is important to develop leadership skills, to encourage accountability and to ensure that ideas become actions.

Making your plan:

When you make your project plan, it is important to identify different tasks, assign roles for task completion and establish a timeline. One way to structure the tasks and responsibilities is to divide them into the following four categories. You may choose to assign groups or individuals to each category or specific task:

Category 1: Logistics

- Estimate the number of volunteers and time you will need for the project.

- Contact community organizations you are working with on your project. Make an appointment to share your project idea and to find out whether it fits with their needs. Be prepared to discuss the following information about your project:
 - A thorough description of your project, including what you hope to accomplish;
 - Date and time that you want to meet;
 - How many volunteers you think you will have in your project group;
 - What kind of help you will need from the organization;
 - What the organization may be able to provide and what you will provide for the project (special equipment, tools, snacks, protective clothing, etc.)

Be prepared to be flexible and sensitive to the needs and capacity of the organization.

- Visit the selected project site(s) to know what to expect on “Make a Difference” Day.
 - Determine best placement for on-site coordination “staging area,” arrange for registration table and folding chairs (if needed);
 - Make arrangements for purchase (if necessary), and for delivery of special equipment, tools, snacks, etc. to the project site.

Category 2: Working with Volunteers

- Contact other students and adults who might be willing to help you with the project. Keep an accurate, up-to-date list of the following contact information for all volunteers:
 - Full name;
 - Home Address;
 - Phone number (home or cell);
 - E-mail address.
 - Emergency contact and phone number (if applicable)

- Prepare a letter to distribute project information to all volunteers. Include information about:
 - What the project is;
 - Where and when to meet (including directions to the project site, and the availability of transportation);
 - Appropriate clothing they should wear;
 - Anything they may need to bring (for example, I D, a notepad, water, food, tools or other equipment, etc.)

- Copy and distribute volunteer waivers. You may need to have a waiver from all participants—students and adults—for your event. Consult your teacher - as well as any community organization you are working with on your project - to see what specific waiver language they may require. You will also need to get permission from participants to use pictures/videos of them for PR purposes.

- Plan out the “Make a Difference” Day Project presentation for volunteers. You will want to include:
 - An introduction to the project leaders for the day;

- What you will be doing, project goals, and clear instructions (if needed);
- Appropriate behavior and safety reminders;
- Restroom locations;
- A big THANK YOU for helping!!

Category 3: Resources

- Determine costs (if any) for materials, equipment and services you will need as you implement your project.
Your costs might include:
 - tools or special equipment;
 - materials (such as paint, books for a literacy project, bags for a clothing drive, plants and mulch for a planting project, paper materials for advertising, etc.);
 - water and snacks for volunteers;
 - transportation; and
 - recognition/thank-you items (t-shirts, buttons, stickers, hats).
- Develop the project budget, and include any expected income (donations, fundraising proceeds or in-kind contributions) that could offset your expenses.
- If needed, seek additional support for the project.
- Be sure to keep a detailed record of all donations and in-kind support you receive for the project. (Donors will want a copy of this record for their files.) Also, make sure you recognize all support and gifts through acknowledgement and thank you letters.

Remember to recognize and thank all sponsors, donors and volunteers after the event. Tell them what you were able to do as a result of their support. Include what community agency you worked with or benefited, how many people you served and that volunteered, a quote from a participant or member of the agency's staff and a picture if possible. Areyvut will also like to see this information.

Category 4: Publicity, Media, and Documentation

- For publicity, you may want to:

- Prepare flyers or posters about the project to help recruit other students in your school, synagogue or neighborhood. Provide a phone number, website and e-mail so they can ask questions or sign up as a volunteer;
 - Inform local business and elected officials about your project. Invite them to attend, and to support your efforts.
 - Use your newsletter, bulletin, website, or e-mail update to share information about the project and how people can get involved.
- For media, you may want to:
- Send a press release prior to the event to local media outlets informing them about your project and inviting them to cover the event. You may also want to blog, tweet or make a YouTube video.
 - Write advance news releases or articles about your project for your school newspaper or other local media. Include interviews with team leaders and participants telling how they are planning to make a difference;
 - Find out what other community or group newsletters (synagogue, PTA, etc.) might be willing to carry information about your project;
 - Once your project is complete, announce your results to your school, the media, your neighborhood and the community;
 - After the event, send a press release highlighting the project and include who it served, who was involved and a quote and picture.
- To document your project, consider the following:
- Take "before" and "after" photos to show the impact of your project;
 - Videotape interviews with community members, project planners and participants about the benefits of your project;
 - Prepare a "how-to" video or PowerPoint that uses steps from your project to show others the process that you followed;
 - Compile a "reflection video" in which project participants are asked to talk about their experience;
 - Send Areyvut any anecdotes, feedback, picture or videos to highlight on our website.

Note: Be sure that you have permission from anyone whom you film or videotape to publicly display their images.

Block Two: Action

2a. Follow through on project plan

In a service learning project, the planning period focuses on idea creation, and critical thinking. The experience of service learning occurs when ideas and thoughts are put into action.

Following through:

To help things run as smoothly as possible on the day of the project, you may want to stress the following:

- Location: Make sure that all volunteers know exactly where to be and when to arrive. Also, scoping out the volunteer site and surrounding area would be useful for knowing where to find bathrooms, wash facilities, stores for food/drink, etc.
- Communication: Have a record of everyone's contact information and know how all volunteers intend to arrive at the site. Then, any last minute confusion or plan changes can be easily communicated.
- Logistics: Volunteers must know what is expected of them on the day of the event far in advance. This includes project details but also if they have any extra considerations such as filling out a liability waiver, bringing money, packing a lunch, providing supplies/tools, etc.

2b. Document the event

Documenting the project will better enable volunteers to remember the event, to share the experience with others and to celebrate the project in the future.

Suggestions for documenting the event:

To ensure that the event is documented successfully, assign clear roles so that everyone knows what their responsibilities are.

- Take pictures

- Record videos
- Collect any media coverage related to the event
- Ask volunteers to write a journal entry at the end of the day discussing their experience

2c. Connect the project to Judaism

Connecting projects to Jewish texts and Jewish values helps to root service-learning in tradition, to give the experience greater significance and to encourage further involvement with the Jewish community.

Ways to enhance Jewish service-learning with texts:

You can find your own texts or select some from the 'Sources from Jewish Texts' section on page 23.

- Classic text study
- Activity related to text
- Use texts to prompt reflective writing
- Discuss a specific theme/value using texts as a frame of reference

Block Three: Follow-up

3a. Reflection

Reflection is a critical part of service-learning both during and after your service activity. Reflection helps you to internalize the experience by connecting to your community, Jewish values, what you learn in school and your life outside of school.

Some Questions that Prompt Reflection:

- What did you enjoy most about what you did?
- What did you learn that you didn't know before?
- How does this connect with Judaism or with being Jewish?
- How did the project impact you?
- How do you think you made a difference in your community?
- Why do you think that the project you did is your responsibility?
- What about this project will influence your thoughts and actions in the future?
- Will you continue volunteering for the same agency in the future?

Try to use a variety of ways to reflect:

- Write: personal journals, group journals, stories, poems, essays, letters to the editor, an article for your school, local newspaper or synagogue bulletins, informational brochures or music lyrics.
- Read: articles, books, websites and blogs related to the project, other people's journals and informational data about the need your project addresses.
- Speak: class or group discussions, debates, presentations, skits and informational interviews.

- Create: collages, posters, scrapbooks, photo essays, videos, PowerPoint presentations, story boards, murals, mobiles, cartoons, puzzles, songs and dance.

Post-project Reflection Activity:

After your "Make a Difference" Day project, please complete and submit a 1-page reflection report to Areyvut to help us document the events that took place. Please be sure to describe your project and your role in the experience.

Please Select ONE of the following "prompts" to help you get started:

1. Discuss the problem(s) that your project addressed. How did you address these issues during your project? Do you have more, or less, understanding for the problem that you addressed than you did before your experience? Why?
2. Did this experience have any impact on the way that you see yourself, the world around you, or how you will become involved with your community in the future?
3. Choose three words that best describe your service-learning experience, and develop an essay around these words.

Sharing your experience:

- Areyvut would like to receive information about your project, its impact and any photos or videos from the event.
- Areyvut also invites you to submit your reflection essay for posting on our website (www.areyvut.org). Send your completed essay as a Word document attached to an e-mail, to info@areyvut.org.

3b. Evaluation

Evaluation is important to post-project follow-up because it helps you to assess your service-learning activity, to improve future projects and to determine if you achieved your goals.

Evaluating your project:

Each project will have a unique evaluation format depending on their goals, purpose, and volunteer base. Areyvut will send you an evaluation after the event to all registered projects, but you should also do an evaluation of your own. Here are some general evaluation questions to guide you in the process:

- Did your activity meet the goals you established at the start of your project? Why or why not?
- What about your project worked well?
- What about your project could be improved?
- What will you do differently in future service-learning projects?

3C. Celebration

After completing a service-learning project, it is important to celebrate the significance of the activity and to recognize the efforts of the volunteers.

Planning your celebration:

Celebrations can range from a small recognition ceremony to a large-scale community event. Whatever type of celebration you decide to engage in, you may want to consider the following:

- Attendees: Who will you ask to come to the celebration, and how will you let them know about the event? Could you combine with other groups in the area who also participated in "Make a Difference" Day?
- Logistics: Where will the event take place? Will the event provide food and/or structured activities? The event may be a good opportunity for highlight videos, picture displays, reflection time, and distributing participant mementos.

As part of your project follow-up, please complete the attached Project Completion Report to send to Areyvut.

Project Completion Report

Please return by mail, e-mail or fax to:

Areyvut

147 South Washington Avenue

Bergenfield, NJ 07621

info@areyvut.org

FAX: (201) 338-2427

Name of Teacher/Project Advisor: _____

Name of School, Youth Group, Synagogue or Agency:

City: _____ County: _____ Zip: _____

Grade Level(s): _____ Number of classes involved: _____

Project Site(s):

Community Partners for the Project (if applicable): _____

How many people participated? Students: _____ Adults: _____

What was your Group's Mission Statement? _____

How did your service-learning project connect to your Mission Statement?

Your project goals: _____

Did you meet your goals? Yes No

Continued on next page – please complete both pages

Project Completion Report *continued*

Project Results: _____

What went well?

What problems did you have? _____

What would you do differently next time? _____

Was the *Areyvut Project Planning Unit* helpful to you?

Do you have suggestions for changes or additions to this unit?

Were the *Areyvut Educational Resources* helpful to you?

Do you have suggestions for changes or additions to this unit?

Please attach additional comments or information as needed

Sources from Jewish Texts

Connecting your service-learning project to Jewish texts will root the experience in tradition and Jewish values. This will help volunteers internalize the project as part of their Jewish identity and Jewish communal involvement. Feel free to explore any sources that relate to your project, but you may want to use the following texts as a starting point for establishing a connection between Judaism and your service-learning project.

Vayikra 19:9-10

And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather every grape of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and stranger; I am the Lord your God.

Devarim 10:17-19

For *Hashem* your God is the God of all and the master of all, the great, mighty and awesome God, who shows no favor and takes no bribe, but upholds the cause of the orphan and the widow and befriends the stranger, providing the stranger with food and clothing. You too must befriend the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Devarim 15:7-8

If, however, there is a needy person among you...do not harden your heart and shut your hand against your needy kinsman. Rather you must open your hand and lend him sufficient for whatever he needs.

Devarim 15:11

You shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor, and to your needy, in your land.

Devarim 19:28-29

At the end of three years you shall bring forth all the tithe of your produce in that year, and shall lay it up inside your gates...and the stranger, and the orphan, and the widow, who are inside your gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.

Yeshaya 58: 7-8

Share your bread with the hungry, take the homeless into you home...If you put yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the soul for the poor, then shall your light shine in the darkness and your gloom shall be as noonday. *Hashem* will guide you continually.

Mishlei 10:2

Tzedakah saves from death.

Mishlei 14:21

He who is kind to the poor, happy is he.

Mishlei 22:2

The rich and poor meet together; God is the maker of them all.

Mishlei 22:6

Educate a child according to his own way, and when he is old he will not depart from it.

Baba Bathra 9a

Charity is equal in importance to all other commandments combined.

Gittin 61a

We support the non-Jewish poor along with the poor of I srael.

Taanit 11a

When the community is in trouble do not say, "I will go home and eat and drink and all will be well with me."...Rather, involve yourself in the community's distress as was demonstrated by Moses (*Shmot* 27:12). In this way Moses said, "Since I srael is in trouble, I will share their burden." Anyone who shares a community's distress will be rewarded and will witness the community's consolation.

Talmud Chagigah 12b

The world rests on a single pillar – righteousness.

Talmud Shevuot 39a

All I srael is responsible for one another.

Pirkei Avot 2:8

Hillel used to say, the more *tzedakah*, the more *shalom*.

Pirkei Avot 2:10

Your friend's honor should be as dear to you as your own.

Pirkei Avot 5:23

According to the effort is the reward.

You can search additional sources related to chesed, ethics, hunger, tzedakah, and tikkun olam at

<http://www.areyvut.org/resources/sources/>.

Suggested Activities

Group #1: Helping Close to Home

Help with chores and tasks around your house and neighborhood. It will let the people around you know that you think and care about them.

Suggested Activities:

- Rake leaves
- Mow or water the lawn
- Wash cars
- Shovel a driveway
- Do another family member's chores
- Put a flower on your neighbor's doorstep

Example Project: Wonderful Washing

Description:

Plan a car wash for the vehicles belonging to your family.

Preparation:

1. Find a location where you will have space to wash cars.
2. Collect any supplies you need.
3. Determine a time when the cars will not be used and you can wash them.

Follow-up:

1. Continue to look for ways you can help your family with small chores and tasks around the house.
2. If there are extra supplies at the end, offer to wash someone else's car.

Variations:

1. Find other people in the neighborhood who would help you wash cars and then expand the event, offering to clean the cars of neighbors as well.
2. Offer to clean the inside of the car as well.
3. Make the car wash a family event. After finishing cleaning the cars, eat a picnic lunch together or play a family game.

Suggested Age:

Elementary School +

Group #2: Eye on the Community

Build community infrastructure, raise community awareness, and strengthen relationships amongst community members to show your commitment to the people around you.

Suggested Activities:

- Bring in a speaker to raise awareness about an issue pertinent to your community
- Start a club
- Begin a recycling program
- Plan a block party
- Organize a health fair to improve community wellness
- Plan an ice cream social for your neighborhood
- Benefit local agencies by having a fair where local businesses/organizations can talk to community members about their services

Example Project: Sharing Nutrition

Description:

Organize a program to teach children in a low-income area about guidelines and benefits of maintaining balanced nutrition. As part of your program, provide nutritious snacks for students to enjoy. This will benefit students in the present and will enable them to make informed decisions about food for many years to come.

Preparations:

1. Contact an elementary school in a low-income area and arrange a time for this program to take place. Be sure to discuss any restrictions on foods distribution at the school.
2. Provide volunteers with information about nutrition and the benefits of maintaining a balanced diet. Work with them to create a format and lesson plan for the project.
3. Consider the logistics of the program including arranging transportation and obtaining permission slips.
4. Prepare volunteers to work with younger children by discussing possible issues that might arise and how these issues can be resolved patiently and efficiently.

Follow-up:

1. Create an ongoing program through which volunteers visit the school on a regular basis to provide additional lessons, coupled with nutritious snacks and friendly smiles.

Variations:

1. To cover the cost of the snacks, you can ask for donations from your volunteers, hold a fundraiser to raise money or seek a sponsor to fund the project.
2. Even if it is not possible to organize a class at a local school, it may be possible to sponsor an after-school program at a community center in a low-income area that provides nutritious snacks to students.

Suggested Age:

High School +

Group #3: Food and Sustenance

Help ensure that the needy have food to eat by making and delivering meals.

Suggested Activities:

- o Volunteer at a soup kitchen
- o Serve food at a homeless shelter
- o Collect food donations
- o Prepare home-cooked meals and deliver them to hungry families
- o Establish a leftover-collection project where you distribute leftovers to the hungry

Example Project: Special Deliveries

Description:

Take part in a program that delivers food packages to members of the community who are homebound due to injury, disability, age or are in need. You can help pack the packages and/or help deliver them.

Preparation:

1. Contact an organization that brings food to the homes of those in need.
2. Arrange for you and your group to partner with them and participate in their deliveries.
3. Take care of the logistics including obtaining permission slips and arranging transportation for the volunteers.
4. Role play with the volunteers so that they are prepared for interacting with the recipients.
5. Prepare volunteers who will be accompanying delivery men on their assignments by discussing the possible scenarios that they might encounter.

Follow-up:

1. Have participants write a thank you letter to the agency for enabling them to participate in this important program.

2. Encourage participants to volunteer again with the agency.
3. Encourage students to maintain communication with people whom they visited through e-mail, letters, phone calls or additional visits.
4. Provide an opportunity for students to debrief and discuss their experiences.

Variations:

1. While making deliveries, use the opportunity to interact with the recipient of the package. Spend some time talking, reading aloud or playing board games. Get to know your host on a personal level but be careful not to overstay your welcome.

Suggested Age:

- To help pack - Elementary School +
- To help deliver - Middle School +

Group #4: Small Simchas

Anyone can brighten someone else's day through a simple act of kindness. Doing these small deeds will bring great joy to those around you.

Suggested Activities:

- o Give someone a compliment
- o Distribute flowers
- o Draw pictures and deliver them to the sick and elderly
- o Make placemats to donate to a soup kitchen
- o Offer your postal worker a refreshment
- o Bring a friend an ice-cream cone

Example Project: A Little Goes a Long Way

Description:

Create placemats for women and children living in battered women's shelters. It will provide them with a sense of hominess and let them know that someone cares about them.

Preparations:

1. Reach out to area shelters and determine which ones would be receptive to receiving the placemats.
2. Purchase construction paper, stickers, markers and other fun items to work with in creating the placemats. Be sure to buy contact paper as well to make sure that you can make your placemats waterproof. (You may want to speak with managers of local stores to see if they will donate items to you, cutting down on your cost.)
3. Schedule a time for your class or family to take part in this project. Make sure you use a flat surface when applying the contact paper to

the construction paper to ensure that there are no bubbles in the final project.

4. Call the representative(s) you initially contacted, let them know that your project is completed and find out when you can drop them off.

Follow-up:

1. Stay in contact with the shelter representative. E-mail them to find out if there are items that are needed, if you and your class or family can volunteer or other areas in which you can help.
2. Write an article for your local newspaper describing the innovative project you completed.

Suggested Age:

Elementary School +

Group #5: Lending Hands

Volunteer your time to help others with projects or tasks they are unable to complete for themselves.

Suggested Activities:

- o Help to build for Habitat for Humanity or a similar organization
- o Volunteer to run errands with someone who does not have their own transportation or may struggle to carry their bags
- o Assist in repairing run-down houses
- o Help to repaint a house or fence

Example Project: Carrying Crew

Description:

Bring residents at a nursing home a favorite food that they may not be able to go get for themselves very often.

Preparation:

1. Contact a nursing home and ask if you can bring food in for the residents.
2. Arrange to learn some of the residents' favorite foods either through staff or visiting the home.
3. Role play with volunteers to help them prepare for delivering the food to and visiting with the residents.
4. Arrange for transportation to bring volunteers to collect and deliver food.

Follow-up:

1. Continue to visit someone you met at the nursing home.
2. Next time you go to the store, grab a treat for someone else as well.

Variations:

1. Bring something homemade instead of something from the store.
2. Make the event into a communal meal with the residents and volunteers.

Suggested Age:

To help with transportation - High School +

To help deliver - Middle School +

Group #6: Camaraderie and Care

Show that you value all members of your community by building new personal relationships or strengthening those you already have.

Suggested Activities:

- o Visit with the elderly
- o Volunteer at a hospital to talk with patients who don't receive many visitors
- o Write a letter to a family member telling them that you love them
- o Spend time getting to know a special-needs class
- o Plan an event at school that involves bringing multiple grades together
- o Organize a barbeque with friends and family
- o Plan and perform a show for the residents at a homeless shelter or nursing home

Example Project: Shows for Smiles

Description:

Prepare a special performance to entertain people as they dine at a local soup kitchen, with the goal of putting a smile on diners' faces. You may choose to perform a skit, sing songs, dance to traditional music, play instruments or put on a talent show.

Preparations:

1. Contact a local soup kitchen to arrange a visit.
2. Consider logistics such as arranging transportation, obtaining permission slips and enlisting additional chaperones.
3. Prepare students for the experience by discussing some of the scenarios that they might encounter. Explain that the people they will meet will be diverse; some may appear disheveled and unkempt and others will not. Instruct them to treat all whom they encounter with utmost respect.
4. Give students an opportunity to plan and practice their performance.

Follow-up:

1. Provide students with an opportunity to debrief and discuss their experiences.
2. Arrange for volunteers to return to the soup kitchen on an ongoing basis.

Variations:

1. Create an art project, such as centerpieces, placemats or serving pieces, which might make the experience of eating at a soup kitchen more pleasant and donate these items to a local soup kitchen.

Suggested Age:

Middle School +

Group #7: Packages with Purpose

Prepare kits to give to those in need or send care-packages to those who you want to show appreciation.

Suggested Activities:

- o Knit hats or scarves to send to soldiers
- o Send a care-package with a note and small gifts to a friend or family member who lives far away
- o Write a letter to someone in the military thanking them for their service
- o Make kits with useful supplies for those living at a shelter or home
- o Prepare packages to send as part of a relief effort
- o Deliver Shabbat packages to those who don't have the means to prepare their own Shabbat meals

Example Project: Spread Shalom

Description:

Provide care packages to members of the Jewish community who struggle to purchase traditional food on a weekly basis. The packages may include candles, grape juice, *challah* rolls, fish, meat and desserts.

Preparations:

1. Contact a local Jewish charitable organization to obtain a list of people who may benefit from receiving *Shabbat* packages.
2. Purchase materials to create and decorate the packages in honor of *Shabbat* and have volunteers assemble the packages.
3. Arrange for delivery of the packages. If volunteers will be participating in the delivery, make sure to obtain permission slips.

Follow-up:

1. This project can be repeated on an ongoing basis.

Variations:

1. Volunteers can participate in delivery and spend some time reading *Shabbat* prayers, stories and songs with the recipients. Alternatively, deliveries can be done anonymously.
2. To cover the cost of the snacks, you can ask for donations from your volunteers, hold a fundraiser to raise money or seek a sponsor to fund the project.

Suggested Age:

To help pack - Elementary School +

To help deliver - Middle School +

Group #8: Do Good Drives

Organize a drive to collect goods or to support your favorite cause. You could create your own drive, or plan one of the more common drives listed below.

Suggested Activities:

- o Blood drive
- o Food drive
- o School supplies drive
- o Toys drive
- o Clothes (or winter clothing specifically) drive
- o Canned-good drive
- o Electronic appliances drive

Example Project: Taking the Wheel

Description:

Arrange a drive in your school, synagogue or community at large to collect non-perishable foods. Distribute these foods through a local food bank or food pantry.

Preparations:

1. Contact a food pantry or food bank to find out what products are needed and what restrictions may be placed on donations.
2. Decorate bins to gather food and distribute to classrooms, schools, synagogues, community centers and stores around your area (depending on the scope of your target audience).
3. Inform people through announcement at local schools, synagogues, community centers, in newsletters, listservs, newspapers and through social media.
4. Arrange for someone to pick up donations from drop-off points.
5. Arrange for donations to be distributed to those in need.

Follow-up:

1. Separate the food which you have collected by product type and box it in an organized fashion.
2. Have volunteers write thank-you notes to all those who allowed you to leave collection bins on their premises.
3. Write a short article for the school or local paper to explain the project and to share your achievement with your community.
4. Continue collecting and donating food items and volunteering at the food bank and/or food pantry. Develop an on going relationship with the food bank/food pantry.

Variations:

1. Visit a local food bank to donate these items in person. Volunteer to help the staff of the food bank in unpacking donations, restocking and organizing shelves and repacking food for delivery.

Suggested Age:

Elementary School +

Group #9: Fun with Fundraising

Plan a fun event to collect money that you can donate to the charity of your choice - every little bit helps!

Suggested Activities:

- o Run a lemonade stand and donate the profits
- o Ask people to give you their old belongings for a garage sale, donating the proceeds to charity
- o Plan a fundraising event such as a walk-a-thon, bowl-a-thon, or free-throw shooting contest
- o Organize a charitable bake-sale
- o Collect recipes for a cookbook that you can sell for a charitable cause

Example Project: Party with a Purpose

Description:

Host a fundraiser to benefit people living in impoverished countries. The fundraiser could be a bowl-a-thon, dance-a-thon, karaoke party, comedy night, etc.

Preparation:

1. Research organizations that assist impoverished countries and identify an agency to support.
2. Contact friends and family to tell them about the fundraiser and invite them to join a committee and help to see this program to fruition.

3. Reach out to local schools, organizations, synagogues, etc. to see if they would be interested in sponsoring, supplying you with in-kind donations, participating and helping to spread the word.
4. Select a date, time and location for the event and publicize the fundraiser via e-mail, invitations, flyers, social media, listservs, etc. Make sure to include all the pertinent information so that people interested in attending will have all the information.
5. Highlight the organization that will be benefiting from the fundraiser, explain how they will benefit and why it's an important cause.
6. Contact the organization you selected to fund and invite a representative to attend the event. Highlight the organization during the program (speech or slide show) and invite the representative to the stage (or some other central location) to be recognized and/or receive a check for the amount raised.
7. Make sure to delegate responsibilities to the committee members and have a timeline so you stay on task.
8. Get attendees' contact information so that you can inform them of any changes or updates in advance of the event as well as keep them informed after.

Follow-up:

1. Send out personal letters to all the volunteers, committee members and community leaders who attended the program and assisted throughout the process. Be sure to let them know how much money was raised, how it will be used and what a great impact they had on the success of the program.
2. Contact the organization you donated funds to and make sure that the funds were ultimately used the way you had planned.
3. Send an e-mail to the attendees thanking them for participating and helping you support this important agency and cause.

Suggested Age:

High School +

Thinking Out of the Box

“Make a Difference” Day 2011 is an excellent opportunity for your students to create a unique project that meets their interests. Below is a list of possible themes to use as a jumping-off point for their creative thinking. The planning unit included at the beginning of this resource guide is a helpful tool to structure original projects. We are happy to work with you on any idea that is of interest to your students. Please contact our staff at (201) 244-6702 or at info@areyvut.org for more information.

Brainstorm projects around the following categories:

- ❖ Love your fellow neighbor
- ❖ Feed the hungry
- ❖ Character-Building
- ❖ Paint a mural
- ❖ Appreciate Israel
- ❖ Donate books
- ❖ Spend time with those with special needs
- ❖ Teach English
- ❖ Foster and strengthen relationships
- ❖ Donate clothes
- ❖ Learn and teach Torah
- ❖ Decrease poverty
- ❖ Help animals
- ❖ Focus on Shabbat or different Jewish holiday
- ❖ Give *tzedakah* - charity
- ❖ Make people laugh
- ❖ Strengthen your community
- ❖ Baby-sit
- ❖ Honor the elderly
- ❖ Welcome guests
- ❖ Aid victims of terror
- ❖ Demonstrate the power of speech
- ❖ Preserve the environment
- ❖ Build and beautify houses
- ❖ Spend time with others
- ❖ Spend time with your family
- ❖ Collection drives: coats, shoes, food, clothing, toiletries, etc.
- ❖ Increase awareness and education
- ❖ Inform others about health and wellness
- ❖ See similarities with others instead of differences
- ❖ Use prayer
- ❖ Use art, music, or dance to make people happy
- ❖ Show gratitude
- ❖ Try something new!
- ❖ Teach youngsters to read

Guidelines for Registering

- ❖ We ask that you please officially register your project so that we can include your project and update you on the program. The registration form is available below or can be submitted electronically by visiting www.areyvut.org/register_now/.
- ❖ The information that you submit on this form will be included in Areyvut's list of this year's "Make a Difference" Day projects.
- ❖ Please select a contact person for your project so that we can help guide your participation in "Make a Difference" Day 2011. We will include this contact person on all press releases so that the media has a point of contact.
- ❖ After you have completed your activity, we ask that you send us a brief blurb describing the experience that we can include on our website. We also ask that you include any pictures, press or project samples that give a sense of the difference that your actions made.
- ❖ We thank you for your participation and hope that you will join us again next year! In the meantime, we hope that you can make use of the resources available on our website. Please contact us at (201) 244-6702 or at info@areyvut.org to arrange an Areyvut program at your synagogue, school or community.

"Make a Difference" Day 2011 Registration Form

Name:

Title:

Institution:

Address:

City: _____ State: _____

Zip Code: _____ Phone Number: _____

E-Mail:

Add E-Mail to Monthly Newsletter?

Project Title:

Time & Date of the Event: _____

Target Audience: _____

Brief Description of the Project & Additional Comments:

Please fax to (201) 338-2407 or mail to:
Areyvut, 147 South Washington Avenue, Bergenfield, NJ 07621.