

# Everyday, Every Way.



## National Mitzvah Day March 8-10, 2013

*Inspire our Jewish youth to give of themselves.*

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# Introduction

On behalf of Areyvut, I welcome your help in bringing this powerful suggestion to life by participating in Areyvut's 9<sup>th</sup> Annual National Mitzvah 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 National Mitzvah Day, we will strengthen this effort as schools, synagogues, families and community organizations and thousands of people worldwide dedicate Friday, March 8<sup>th</sup> – Sunday, March 10<sup>th</sup> as a time to turn the calendar's suggestions into action.

The 2013 National Mitzvah Day Educational Material presented here focuses on Chesed – Everyday, Every Way. Included in this packet is a project planning unit to guide preparation of social action projects; resources and activity ideas for service, as well as a list of additional themes to spark your own creative thinking and interest. Activities are arranged topically and can be adapted to meet the needs of any audience. For additional resources to use in your classroom, please see the texts included in this packet and/or consult the Areyvut website [www.areyvut.org](http://www.areyvut.org) for additional ideas.

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, 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" and create projects of their own. It gives us a great sense of joy to help support these types of endeavors and we look forward to doing so. For activity suggestions related to other themes, please refer to the [National Mitzvah Day Archives](#).

Please let us know what project you are planning by [registering](#) your project on our website. By doing so, we will not only be able to help you coordinate and facilitate your project, but you will also be inspiring others with your actions. For your convenience, a registration form is also included in this packet.

Thank you to our Board of Trustees, interns and staff who have helped bring this project to fruition. A special thank you to Shira Hammerman, our Educational Consultant; Sharon Stahl, our Special Projects Coordinator; and Susan A. Abravanel, Educational Director at Youth Service America for their help in developing these resources. Thank you to all those participating in National Mitzvah Day 2013.

Good luck!

*Daniel Rothner*

Daniel Rothner  
 Founder & Director  
 Areyvut

# About Areyvut

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 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 G-d’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.

National Mitzvah Day – our national community service initiative actively engages *everyone*, from teens to adults, in giving back to the community through social action programs. This, we believe, is a first step toward greater commitment to making a difference.

## **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 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.
- For more information, contact us at (201) 244-6702 or [info@areyvut.org](mailto:info@areyvut.org).

# Project Planning Unit

This Areyvut Project Planning Unit will provide a step by step guideline on how to plan a project from start to finish. The goal is to implement service-learning, (a teaching strategy that unites community service with academic learning) in students.

## Step 1: Preparation

- In order to efficiently plan a project, one first needs to assess the community's needs.
- Consider what your community would look like without these problems or needs.

## Step 2: Pick your project

- Pick a project that will address and attempt to solve these communal problems.
- The project can solve an issue directly. For example, collect food for families who cannot afford it. A more indirect approach would be to have a fundraiser with all the proceeds going to an organization that distributes food to families in need.

## Step 3: Make your project happen

- Create a list of goals – What do you hope to accomplish at the end of your project?
- Identify different tasks that need to be performed.
- Assign roles for task completion.
- Establish a timeline in order to successfully accomplish your goals.
- Determine costs (if any) for materials, equipment and services you will need as you implement your project.
- If it is a communal event, prepare flyers or posters to help recruit others in the community.
- Raise community awareness about the issues being addressed.
- Take before and after pictures to document the event and show the impact of the project.
- Utilize the attached Biblical sources and connect the project to Jewish teaching and learning.
- Continuously encourage the students by telling them all the good that will come from their project.

## Step 4: Reflection and evaluation

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 school.

### Some Questions That Prompt Reflection Discussion:

- ✓ 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 being Jewish?
- ✓ How did this project impact you?
- ✓ How do you think you make a difference in your community?
- ✓ Why do you think that the project you completed 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?

**Other ways to reflect:**

- **Write:** Have the students write a journal entry in which they reflect on the experience.
- **Read:** Handout articles pertaining to the type of service the students were involved with.
- **Speak:** Engage in class or group discussions, about the project and use the Judaic sources to spark discussion.

**Evaluating your project:**

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?

**Sharing your experience:**

- Areyvut would like to receive information about your project, its impact and any photos or videos from the event. Please forward pictures, videos or other information to [info@areyvut.org](mailto:info@areyvut.org).

# Suggested Activities

The following is a list of suggested activities that are related to this year's theme National Mitzvah Day: Everyday, Every Way. The goal is to be involved in an everyday activity that can benefit someone else and hopefully continue to build on it throughout the year. Adaptation ideas are provided for one action item in each category.

## Minding My Manners, Behaviors and Actions

1. Deliver gift baskets to new members of your community.
2. **Support a friend's growing business.\***
3. Make yourself available to drive a friend or relative to the airport, store or doctor's appointment.
4. Check in your siblings, parents and/or grandparents with a friendly phone call.
5. Smile when you greet people throughout the day.
6. Volunteer for a local nonprofit organization in need.
7. Don't gossip, spread rumors or associate with people who do.

\* This can be done by purchasing items, sharing information about the business to people looking to consume these types of services, leaving positive feedback on a website about the company and more!

## Medical Assistance, STAT

1. Take a Mitzvah Clowning course and commit to a year of service.
2. Become a hospice volunteer.
3. **Run a toy drive for the children's department of a local hospital.\***
4. Create a mural with your friends and donate it to a medical facility.
5. Help refurbish the home of someone who is no longer mobile.
6. Learn CPR.
7. Have your positive attitude rub off on others.

\* Running collections drives is a great way to stay involved in the community and help others. While more people think to host toy drives around the holidays, consider facilitating one during the summer months when stock is low. The same is true for food, blood and bone marrow drives.

## Give Me Shelter

1. Help build a home for a deserving family in need.
2. Visit your local women and children's shelter. Spend time with the residents playing games, creating art projects or just chatting.
3. Offer to share your umbrella with someone caught in the rain.
4. Host a family visiting your town for Shabbat.
5. Host a parlor meeting in your home for a local nonprofit organization.
6. Offer everyone who enters your home a cold drink.
7. **Plant a garden with the residents of a local senior center.\***



\* This may seem surprising, but most residents of senior care facilities don't get frequent visitors. Planting a garden is a great way to provide beautification for the facility and check in on the residents on a regular basis.

### **Elderly? I Prefer “Aged to Perfection”**

1. **Deliver a meal through a meals on wheels program in your community to a homebound senior.\***
2. Organize a weekly Bridge, Canasta or Mah Jongg club at your local senior center.
3. Offer to be a walking buddy to an older neighbor who could use help walking to synagogue.
4. Call your grandparent(s) just to say “hi”.
5. Teach a computer literacy course for seniors.
6. Attend a fundraising event for a senior center in your community.
7. Listen intently when a senior citizen speaks to you and try to learn from their experiences.

\* A staggering amount of senior citizens don't have enough money to provide adequate nourishment for themselves. When delivering meals to seniors feel free to bring small items, particularly around holiday times or their birthday to show that you care.

### **Fun Things for Special People**

1. Coordinate a fun evening for the parents of children with special needs.
2. Form a committee at your synagogue with the goal of creating a more inclusive environment for all.
3. Volunteer once a month for an organization that provides fun activities for children or adults with special needs.
4. Be patient with someone who is differently-abled from you.
5. Be a friend to a child with special needs in your school, synagogue or community.
6. **Show your support by attending a play or sporting event that caters to and is facilitated by individuals with special needs.\***
7. Hire an adult with special needs at your place of employment.

\* You'd be surprised by just how impressive children and adults with special needs can be. By attending a play or other event acknowledging their talents, you're not only showing your support for them, but also for their family, friends, school and more.

### **Easy as Pi...and Other Educational Things**

1. Become a peer mentor in your school.
2. Teach someone how to swim.
3. **Donate musical instruments to an inner-city music program.\***
4. Have a Bar or Bat Mitzvah student who created an innovative project inform your community about it.
5. Write a letter of thanks to your teachers for all of their hard work.



6. Offer to pick up carpool even if it's not your turn.
7. Be respectful of everyone in the school from the custodian to the principal.

\* Most inner-city schools no longer offer arts education programming. Donate instruments to schools in need or your time to help underprivileged students become proficient in music, drawing, painting, etc. This will not only show your interest in their education, but also their well-being.

### **Keeping it Real for Israel**

1. Send a care package to soldiers in the IDF.
2. Donate teddy bears to children affected by terrorism.
- 3. Support Israel by purchasing Israeli made products in the U.S.\***
4. On your next trip to Israel, volunteer for an organization that is meaningful to you.
5. Educate people about the importance of having a Jewish state.
6. Write a letter to Congressional, Senatorial and other representatives who support Israel, thanking them for their support.
7. Volunteer on a kibbutz.

\* Supporting Israel from far away is a great way to stay involved, committed and show the importance of a Jewish State.

### **Animals and Other Outdoorsy Activities**

1. Volunteer on a family farm.
2. Offer to take care of your friend's pet while he or she is on vacation.
- 3. Don't litter.\***
4. Donate money to a nature preserve.
5. Be conscious of your carbon footprint and try to decrease its negative impact.
6. Plant a tree.
7. Learn more about what a fresh-air fund does and how it is beneficial.

\* It's free. It's easy to do. It's impact will be felt far and wide.

## Sources from Jewish Texts

### **Succah 49b**

Our Rabbis taught: Deeds of loving kindness are superior to charity in three respects. Charity can be accomplished only with money; deeds of loving kindness can be accomplished through personal involvement as well as with money. Charity can be given only to the poor; deeds of loving kindness can be done for both poor and rich. Charity applies only to the living; deeds of loving kindness apply to both the living and the dead.

### **Baba Batra 9b**

Rabbi Yitzchak said, "Whoever gives even a small coin to a poor man receives six blessings, but whoever speaks reassuringly to him receives eleven blessings."

### **Gittin 61a**

We support the non-Jewish poor along with the poor of Israel.

### **Talmud Ketubot**

The one who shuts his eyes against charity is like one who worships idols.

### **Baba Batra 9a**

Charity is equal in importance to all other commandments combined.

### **Talmud Yerushalmi Peah 1:1**

Charity and good deeds are equal to all the mitzvot of the Torah, because *tzedakah* is done for the poor, and acts of kindness, are done for the poor and the rich; *tzedakah* is done for the living, and acts of kindness are done for the living and the dead; *tzedakah* is done with one's money, and acts of kindness can be done with one's money and one's body.

### **Talmud Sotah 14a**

The Torah begins with an act of loving-kindness and ends with an act of loving-kindness. It begins with loving-kindness, as it says, "And G-d made Man and Woman garments of skin, and clothed them." It ends with loving-kindness as it says, "And He buried him in the valley."

### **Ethics of the Fathers 1:2**

The world stands on three things: One the Torah, on the service (of G-d), and on acts of loving-kindness.

### **Mishneh Peah 1**

Acts of kindness are among those things that have no limits.

### **Talmud Yerushalmi Berachot 5:1**

Whoever is occupied with community needs, it is as if he is occupied with the study of Torah.

### **Talmud Yevamot 62b**

The one who loves his neighbors, and brings his family close, about him the Torah says, "Then you will call, and G-d will answer."

# Thinking Out of the Box

National Mitzvah Day 2013 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](mailto:info@areyvut.org) for more information.

## Possible Project Ideas

- Love your fellow neighbor
- Character-building
- Israel appreciation
- Spend time with individuals with special needs
- Foster and strengthen relationships
- Learn and teach Torah
- Help animals
- Give *zedakah*
- Strengthen your community
- Honor the elderly
- Aid victims of terror
- Preserve the environment
- Spend time with others
- Collection drives (coats, shoes, food, clothing, toiletries, etc.)
- Inform others about health and wellness
- Pray
- Show gratitude
- Teach youngsters to read
- Feed the hungry
- Paint a mural
- Donate books
- Teach English
- Donate clothing
- Take actions to combat poverty
- Focus on making Shabbat and Jewish holidays better for others
- Bring smiles to others' faces
- Volunteer your time
- Welcome guests into your home, community, synagogue, etc.
- Demonstrate the power of speech
- Build, refurbish and beautify homes
- Spend time with your family
- Don't focus on the differences between you and others
- Increase education awareness
- Use art, music and dance to impact the lives of others

## 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/](http://www.areyvut.org/register_now/).
- The information that you submit on this form will be included in Areyvut's list of this year's National Mitzvah Day projects.
- Please select a contact person for your project so that we can help guide your participation in National Mitzvah Day 2013. 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 of 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](mailto:info@areyvut.org) to arrange an Areyvut program at your synagogue, school or community center.

# Registration Form

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Details:

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Target Audience:

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