

Every Day A Good Deed

Daily Calendar Focuses on Kindness

BY RAPHAEL AHREN

Not too long ago, a teenage boy from a Jewish high school was playing football when all of a sudden he collapsed for no apparent reason. Attempts at CPR failed and the boy passed away the following day in the hospital.

A 22-year-old man from the Five Towns witnessed that tragedy. When he came home, he happened to open "A Kindness a Day," a daily calendar that encourages readers to perform more good deeds by suggesting one act of kindness for each day of the year. That day's entry said: "Sign up for a CPR course."

"The particular suggested act really had an impact on me. ... I knew that must be a message," the man recounted.

The aforementioned "Jewish Values Desk Calendar" — officially titled "A Kindness a Day: 365 Ways to Make the World a Better Place" — everyday offers one suggestion for people to better themselves and the world around them. The entry on New Year's, for example, reads "Let your first check of the year be to charity," other entries remind readers to "call someone who won't expect it" or to "be quick to forgive those who have wronged you."

"The calendar is great for adults and children, as well as homes, schools and other organizations; both as a guide to help inculcate Jewish values into one's life and as a springboard for discussion and study," says Daniel Rothner, founder and director of Areyvut, the New York-based nonprofit organization that publishes the calendar. "The calendar plays an active role in people's lives," he told *The Jewish Star*. "Teachers use the calendar in their classrooms, families read it at the dinner table — it has become part of the culture," he claimed.

The calendar, which now has



a circulation of 14,000, is indeed popular among many Jewish families and institutions. According to Rothner, many prominent figures from the South Shore use and appreciate the calendar on a daily basis, among them the head of the HAFTR Kollel, Rabbi Gideon Rothstein, Yeshiva University's Rabbi Josh Joseph of the Five Towns, Rabbi Yisroel Moshe Siff from Far Rockaway, and David Marc, psychology teacher at DRS. Reportedly, Rabbi Barry Gelman, who was born in Oceanside and now serves as rabbi of the United Orthodox Synagogue in Houston, Texas, gave a copy of "A Kindness a Day" to President Bush, when he recently spoke at the White House's Chanukah party.

Areyvut, Hebrew for responsibility or accountability, aims to "empower Jewish youth around the world, enabling them to infuse their lives with the core Jewish values of chesed [kindness], tzedakah [charity] and tikun olam [social justice]," it says on the organization's Web site. "Established in 2002, Areyvut reaches out to Jewish day schools, congregations and

communities, regardless of affiliation."

Rothner told *The Jewish Star* that Areyvut is also very engaged in the Five Towns area. He mentioned, for instance, that "we help local high school students organize and plan bar mitzvah chesed programs." Areyvut's most recent local project is a chesed day that is slated for February 15 and is supposed to take place at the Hebrew Academy of Nassau County (HANC) in Uniondale. Even though plans for the event have not been finalized, Rothner said he planned to work with the seventh grade, which will be split into different groups: some students will, for example, say Tehilim for sick people, while another group might spend the chesed day writing letters or collecting donations for Israeli soldiers.

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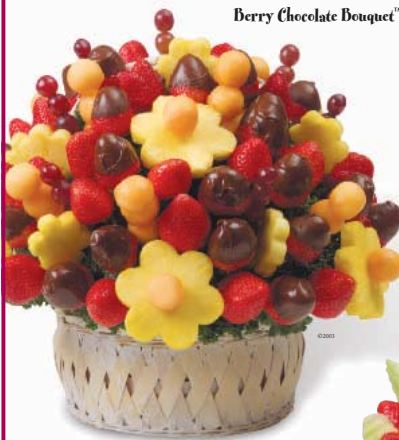


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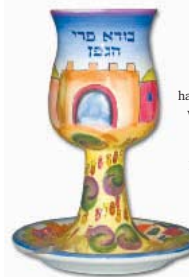
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