

Here are some additional mitzvah activities in our community for anyone who is interested. Please contact the individuals and/or numbers listed for more information.

1. Help for Haiti:

- United Synagogue has a Disaster Relief Fund set up for those who wish to help earthquake victims. The web site for on-line donations is: www.uscj.org/donate/relief.

- The American Red Cross is accepting donations via text messaging. To automatically donate \$10 to the Red Cross, text the word 'Haiti' to the number 90999.

2. Provide free tax counseling:

- **The Somerset County Office of Volunteer Services** is looking for volunteers to provide free tax counseling for older adults and disabled residents in the county. Volunteers must be 18 or older, and free training will be provided. For more information call Laurie Beckhorn at (908) 704-6338.

- **AARP Tax-Aide** is the nation's largest volunteer-run tax assistance and preparation service for low- and middle-income taxpayers, with special attention to those ages 60 and older. Volunteers are needed to serve as technical coordinator, tax assistance counselor and leadership coordinator. Training will be provided. For more information, call Bonnie Fox at (732) 236-2879.

3. Tutoring: In cooperation with the County Superintendent of Schools, the **Somerset County Office of Volunteer Services** has launched a new program to recruit volunteers, of all ages, to tutor underperforming students. Although volunteers are not required to be teachers, they do need to be knowledgeable in certain school subjects, such as reading, mathematics, language arts, science and English as a Second Language. Over a dozen students are currently on a waiting list for tutor assistance, with the majority needing help in reading and math. To participate in the program, students must be referred by a teacher or guidance counselor. The tutor will meet with the student at a mutually acceptable location, such as a local library. Individuals who can spare a few hours a month to tutor a child are asked to contact Laurie Beckhorn, Office of Volunteer Services, at (908) 704-6338 or beckhorn@co.somerset.nj.us. A free background check will be performed before volunteers are accepted as tutors.

4. Connections Israel was started to help Jewish Schools and Communities throughout the Diaspora establish ties with Israel. Their current project is the annual Purim Drive for IDF Soldiers and Victims of Terror. Mishloach Manot baskets are sent from you to Israeli Soldiers. Together with the Mishloach Manot baskets, Connections Israel delivers personal letters and pictures, offering thanks or support to the IDF soldiers and/or Victims of Terror. A basket for a soldier costs \$10, and a basket to a family affected by terror costs \$36. Send the letters and checks, payable to Connections Israel to: Connections Israel, PO Box 28371, Jerusalem 91283, Israel. For more information, contact: Adi Friedman - Managing Director, Connections Israel, Israel number: (972) 2 6235266, US number: (206) 984-3295, www.connectionsisrael.com.

5. Volunteer assistance being sought for Somerset County Senior Centers:

The Somerset County Office on Aging offers educational, recreational and entertaining activities for clients at its seven senior centers and is looking to increase the variety of programs that are offered. The preferred time frame, Monday through Friday, is 10:45 to 11:45 a.m. Programs may be held on a single day or a series of days. The seven senior centers are the Senior Wellness Center (Bernards), Hillsborough Senior Center, Manville Senior Center, Montgomery Senior Center, Quail Brook Senior Center (Franklin), Raritan Senior Center and Warrenbrook Senior Center.

-Volunteers who can present topics of interest or facilitate group activities are invited to contact the county Office on Aging at (908) 704-6346. Examples of topics may include local or historical events, famous people, literature, science, art, poetry, theater or music appreciation.

-In addition, five of the centers have a particular set of needs. People who are interested in volunteering are asked to contact one of the centers listed below for more information:

- Manville Senior Center at Fire Company #1, 20 South Third Avenue, Manville, Lisa Carra at (908) 526-0175
- Montgomery Senior Center, 356 Skillman Road, Skillman, Denise Crowley at (609) 466-0846
- Quail Brook Senior Center, 625 New Brunswick Road, Somerset, Ellen Baxter at (732) 563-4213
- Somerset County Senior Wellness Center, 202 Mt. Airy Road, Basking Ridge, Paul DiBianca at (908) 204-3435
- Warrenbrook Senior Center, 500 Warrenville Road, Warren, Gwen Chalker at (908) 753-9440

6. Teen volunteers needed at Zimmerli art museum. Zimmerli Art Museum is accepting applications for ZAMBassadors for its spring session. High school students in grades 10 to 12 who volunteer will receive training to act as art museum assistants while at the same time, fulfill community service requirements. Volunteer opportunities include greeting visitors, assisting families or children with art projects or assisting with Sunday afternoon programs or concerts. For more information, send email to nfo@zimmerli.rutgers.edu or brenowitz@rci.rutgers.edu.

7. Blood donations needed:

Every minute of every day, someone needs blood. Currently only three out of every 100 people in America donate blood. To make an appointment at a blood drive or donor center near you call (800) 448-3543 or visit www.pleasegiveblood.org.

8. Bridgewater Recreation Department is seeking volunteer assistants to shadow and assist people with disabilities in their various sport programs and camps. Volunteers will receive inclusion training, which includes disability awareness and sensitivity training. As a volunteer assistant, individuals will play an essential role in helping participants be successful in programs and sports with their peers while having fun. For more information, call (908) 725-6300 ext. 5300 or send email to recreation@bridgewater.nj.gov.

9. Support Jewish World Watch's (JWW) efforts of education, advocacy, and refugee relief projects. More information is available at www.JewishWorldWatch.org.

- the **Solar Cooker Project's** purpose is to protect refugee women and girls from rape and other forms of violence. Women and girls who have fled the genocide in Darfur, Sudan are particularly vulnerable while performing the critical task of collecting firewood for cooking. Jewish World Watch hopes to reduce the frequency of these crimes by providing women from refugee camps with an alternative cooking option: the solar cooker. Solar cookers, using only the energy from the sun, do not require firewood and enable women to remain within the relative safety of the camp. Solar cookers also help the environment - two solar cookers can save one ton of wood per year and reduce greenhouse gases by over 3,814 pounds per year. **A \$30 donation allows JWW to supply one family with two solar cookers and training to use them.** To learn more, visit www.SolarCookerProject.org.

- **Recycled Water Gardens:** JWW is providing funding for a water reclamation garden project in the refugee camps of Iridimi and Touloum. With the installation of inexpensive plastic sheeting and PVC pipes, the small bathing area of each hut has been turned into a reservoir for grey-water collection. The collected water is used to irrigate small vegetable patches. Women are growing okra, watermelon, peppers, eggplant and cucumbers. There is even a 'competition' between the women to see who can create the best and most varied garden. Some women are selling the seeds in the marketplace. This is a project that addresses environmental, economic development and nutrition issues. **With your donation of \$10, you can buy a water reclamation system for one family.**

10. Jewish Family Service of Somerset, Hunterdon & Warren Counties (JFS) offers volunteer opportunities for youth.

- **Teen Mentoring** - Ages: 15-19 years; Program Description: Provide play and social interaction for young child with Autism Spectrum Disorder in child's home to develop social skills, Serve as a helping hand to parent (s), Visit assigned family weekly; Requirements: Complete 5 hours of training with other teens offered in the fall and the spring of each year. Be available to make visits to the home of a family weekly for 9-12 months (excluding holiday and vacation times) lasting approximately 1-1.5 hours. Participate in monthly supervisory sessions with other teens in the program and JFS social work staff. Reliable transportation required. Time of day and day of week flexible; preference for geographic location is honored as much as possible. Commitment to time requirement is important.

- **Generation to Generation** - Ages: 12-18 (suitable for Bar/Bat Mitzvah projects, community service requirements); Program Description: visit Jewish seniors or disabled persons living in Assisted Living or Nursing Homes with staff, provide holiday related programs (example: participate in a model seder at the ARC (Association for Retarded Citizens), work with Ohr Tikvah Rabbi or JFS Social Workers; Requirements: Attend seasonally offered workshop (approximately 2 hours) to prepare for visit; attend event (friends may sign up together), and then attend a follow up session to share experiences. Some youth may make occasional visits throughout the year, around holidays or other occasions. For information, contact Ruth Edelman, LCSW, at JFSofSHW@verizon.net or (908) 725-7799 ext. 109

11. The mitzvah of *Hiddur P'nai Zaken* - Honoring our Elders:

- **The Greater Somerset County Chapter of the American Red Cross** has a **desperate** need for volunteer drivers in their transportation program. The drivers use Red Cross vehicles to transport the elderly and disabled who rely on the Red Cross to assist them in getting to medical appointments. For more information, call (908) 725-2217, ask for Donna.

- **L'Chaim: Nourishing the Mind and Soul of our Elderly** is a new volunteer visiting program that matches volunteers with isolated older persons living in the community, in an assisted living or nursing home, organized by Jewish Family Service of Somerset, Hunterdon and Warren Counties and Ohr Tikvah Jewish Healing Center. Referrals of older persons who would like to receive services as well as persons interested in volunteering should contact JFS at (908)725-7799.

- **The Handyman Program**, operated by the Somerset County Office of Volunteer Services, has trained volunteers available to perform **minor** home repairs for seniors or disabled residents of Somerset County. New volunteers are being recruited for the program. No experience required. Free training is provided. Scheduling of home repairs is flexible. For information about volunteering visit the web site at <http://www.co.somerset.nj.us/handyman/> or call (908) 704-6358. Assistance also needed by **Hillsborough Township Mr. Fixit Program**, (908) 369-3880; and **Hunterdon County's Mr. Fixit Program**, (908) 788-1358.

- The **Martin and Edith Stein Hospice**, at the Oscar and Ella Wilf Campus for Senior Living in Somerset, is looking for compassionate volunteers to support their staff in providing excellent end-of-life care to their patients. If you can hold a hand, read out loud, listen sympathetically or simply offer a caring presence, join them to help improve the quality of life for hospice patients and their families. Call (732) 227-1212 for more information.

12. Talking Trash - Are you recycling?

- **1ST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH DROP-OFF DAY February 6, 2010**- Somerset County Recycling Center at 40 Polhemus Ln, Bridgewater open from 8am-2pm. For more information call (732) 469-3363.

****Food Bank Donations are also accepted at 1st Saturday drop-offs (canned goods & non-perishables only)****

- **Over the counter and prescription medications should not be disposed down the drain or toilet** because wastewater treatment facilities are not designed to remove pharmaceutical compounds and they may end up in your local waterways, and may eventually be found in drinking water. Proper disposal of unwanted and expired prescriptions and over-the-counter medications in the trash promotes a healthy aquatic environment and prevents accidental poisoning and intentional abuse.

4 steps for proper disposal:

1. Keep medicine in original container. Mark out personal information on prescription bottles.
2. Mix liquid medicine with undesirable substances like coffee grinds, cat litter or dirt. Dilute pills with water, then add coffee grinds, cat litter or dirt.
3. Place bottles in an opaque container, like a yogurt container and secure lid; or wrap in a dark colored plastic bag.
4. Hide the container in the trash. Do NOT recycle.

For more information, contact the DEP Solid & Hazardous Waste Program at (609) 633-1418.

- **The Somerset County Recycling Center has announced that starting Jan. 1, 2010 it no longer will accept batteries with curbside collection of recyclables.** Due to regulatory changes and less hazardous battery compositions, alkaline batteries now fall below federal and state hazardous-waste standards and can be disposed of in the regular trash. For more information, contact Diana Vigilante of the Somerset County Solid Waste Management Division at 908-231-7681 or solidwaste@co.somerset.nj.us.