

SOCIAL ACTION MITZVAH DAY 2- SUNDAY FEBRUARY 27, 2005

It is fitting that we announce Temple Bat Yam's Second Mitzvah Day on February 27, 2005 on the heels of Chanukah, the holiday that celebrates the rededication of our people.

We are directed that Gimilut Chasadim (performing acts of goodness) is an essential part of Judaism. These deeds reaffirm who we are as a faith, as people and as individuals. We are always looking for ways to express this here at Temple Bat Yam.

There is no shortage of opportunities to become involved in good works, as just a brief review of our activities reveals. Mitzvah Day is yet another opportunity to become involved. It is a specific day set aside when the Temple Congregation can come together as a family, go into our community and do good works.

For our second Mitzvah Day, we will expand our activities. We hopefully have something to will appeal everyone's interests.

WE WILL plant a garden. The seeds we sow on that Sunday will become food that we will distribute to the needy later in the year. Under Cantor Wendy's guidance, over 100 pounds of vegetables was harvested from our "Gan Hazan" and given to feed the hungry this past year. Cathy S. and Lynne W. have graciously agreed to help Bruce A. and Cantor Wendy in being the Co-Captains of this effort.

WE WILL help build houses. We will assist Homes, Inc a non-profit developer of affordable houses, and provide basic finishing services around houses that will become the homes of those that could not afford to own a home without this support. Kathy B is instrumental in overseeing this project.

WE WILL care for children. We will go to the Kids in Distress program and spend the afternoon with troubled kids providing activities and a respite from the issues that confront them. Our own Sheldon V will provide music; Rob F and Linda R will spearhead this effort.

WE WILL care for adults. We have arranged with local nursing homes and assisted living facilities to spend time with these senior citizens, interacting with them and supporting the weekend staff. Our program will include music and even if you cannot sing, your voice is welcome. Cantor Wendy is instrumental in this effort as well, as is Beth F.

WE WILL assist a special a program that uses miniature horses to provide support for emotionally troubled children headed by our own Abby M. A group will assist Abby in her efforts to provide this support including grooming the animals, mucking the stalls and general assistance to her facility and the children it serves.

WE WILL write letters to our service men and women in harm's way. This program will send letters to local men and women on active duty to let them know that they are remembered and appreciated.

WE WILL provide a meal for the hungry. Everyday, the food cooperative provides a bag lunch for the men and women who go there for a breakfast meal and help with starting their day. We will provide 400 bag lunches to help alleviate hunger for Monday, February 28.

WE WILL decorate small flowerpots in which we will plant a flower. These potted plants will be delivered to shut-ins in our community to let them know they are remembered.

Additionally we have made arrangements to have the bloodmobile here at Temple for those wishing to give a donation.

We will meet at Temple Sunday morning at about 10:30am. We will use this time to prepare for the day ahead-, which of course will involve some food. We will then go off to the chosen activity for the day. At around 4:00 we will re-convene at Temple to share our experiences with each other and of course, TO EAT AGAIN. We will host a barbecue here as a way of capping off the day.

Success of the Mitzvah day, like so many other things, depends on how many people join us and participate. It is immensely fulfilling and rewarding to know at the end of the Mitzvah Day that you have touched someone, made someone else's life just a little bit better as a result of your action. It is enriching on a personal level, and it is also fun; for we do these things together. It is an act of rededication to our people and our faith and ourselves.

Registration forms are available at Temple and will be in the Hakol. Please complete and return them to the Temple office as soon as possible (I gotta order the food, plan the day, go get some food, order the t-shirts, check about the food....) Email me with any questions at [REDACTED].