

the

Good People Guide

Spring 2009

the  fund
מעשים טובים

*Doing a World
of Good Through
Tzedakah*

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Shalom and welcome to the first issue of the Good People Fund Guide!

Many of you receiving this guide were generous supporters of the work of Danny Siegel's Ziv Tzedakah Fund for which I proudly served in various positions for nearly 15 years, most recently as the Managing Director. When the Ziv board voted to close the organization my immediate response was to make a fresh start — to create something new that could build upon all that came before. The price for not doing so was too great; too many people would suffer from immediate loss of key financial support, and a unique way of giving cost-effective, personalized tzedakah would decline. Joined by others who shared Ziv's mission and were anxious to find ways to continue the good work, this "second-generation" tzedakah fund was born almost one year ago. We are proud of what we have accomplished despite the unsurprising headaches and constraints we encountered during our start-up year. With the generous support of donors, old and new, even more good will come from our efforts in the years to come. As news reports reiterate daily in this post-Madoff, economic meltdown world, our particular mission has become more urgent than ever before.

The Good People Fund is about the visionaries in our midst who work selflessly and quietly on behalf of others, often below the radar screen and with shoe-string budgets, helping to alleviate poverty, hunger, homelessness, social injustice and other forms of human suffering.

What we do ...

- Support the work of good people in the US and Israel who are changing the world in ways both big and small.
- Maintain low overhead with all salaries covered only by specified donations, while operating with a minimum of bureaucracy and with total transparency.
- Conduct appropriate diligence and monitor results, to assure that all donations will do a maximum of good.
- Inspire both students and teachers and B'nai Mitzvah celebrants with timely and motivating lessons and projects posted on our web site.

We hope that you will join us on this new journey, as we recite the traditional Shehecheyanu prayer offering thanks for reaching this special time ...

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיַּיְמָנוּ וְהַגַּעְנוּ לְזֶמַּן הַזֶּה

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has kept us alive, and sustained us, and enabled us to reach this moment.

Tizku l'mitzvot,



Naomi K. Eisenberger, Executive Director



Table of Contents

Organization

Page

* HUNGER

General	1
Beit Frankforter	1
Clara Hammer	1
Darchei Tzion	1
Family to Family	2
Fugee Fridays	2
Miryam Torres	2-3
Postville	3
Rock and Wrap It Up!	3
Stop Hunger Now	3-4
Table to Table	4
The Bagel Brigade	4
Tova Cohen	4
Zehava and Karyn - Neighborhood Food	4-5

* ELDERS

Alice Jonah	5
Am Echad	5
Challah for Heroes	5-6
Project Ezra	6
Second Wind Dreams	6-7
SongWriting Works™	7

* KIDS

Bet Haya'el	7
Big Brothers Big Sisters	8
Birthday Angels	8
Dental Volunteers in Israel	8
Homerun Hopefuls	8-9
Lev Leytzan	9
St. Joseph's Baby Corner	9
The Quincy Kids	9-10
Warm Woolies	10

* WELL-BEING

A Gift of Comfort	10-11
Amuta for Emotional Support	11
ATZUM	11
Books, Bears and Bonnets	12
Casting for Recovery	12
Gift of Life	12
Hosts for Hospitals	13
Project Debby	13
REMEDY	13-14
Shalhevet	14
Volunteers in Psychotherapy	14

* POVERTY

African Refugees Development Center	14
Christian Service Program	15
Female Hebrew Benevolent Society	15
House to House	15
Israel Free Loan Association	15
Romema Families and Zev Birger	15-16
Sunday Friends	16
The Forgotten People Fund	16
The Redistribution Center	17

* THE WORLD-OVER

Cuba America Jewish Mission	17
JDC - The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee	17-18
Jewish World Watch - Do Not Stand Idly By	18
Kulanu	18
MayaWorks	18

* ANIMAL-HUMAN INTERACTION

HAMA	19
Israel Guide Dog Center for the Blind	19
Israel National Therapeutic Riding Association	19-20

* OTHER TIKKUN OLAM

African American Jewish Coalition	20
A Package From Home	20
Hurricane Katrina	21
Peace Through Humor	21
Sderot	21-22
The Bookman	22
Tzvika Levy and the Lone Soldier Program	22
Yaakov Maimon Volunteers	22

* HUMAN NEEDS AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Special Individual Needs	23
Shoah Survivors and Righteous Gentiles	23
The Blue Card	23

Additional/Final Notes	24
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1. Go to <http://goodpeoplefund.org/Postal>,
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3. Call us at (973) 761-0580, or
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the Good People fund
מעשים טובים

Country Key:



= Israel



= United States



= Worldwide

 **HUNGER**

“One way to enter Heaven is by feeding the hungry” – Midrash Tehilim 118:17

General

At no time in the more than 16 years that we have been working in the “tzedakah business” have we seen the issue of hunger and food insecurity take on the significance that it has today. The global downturn has created unprecedented demand for food assistance. In this country it is estimated that 36 million people experience hunger insecurity with 1 in 10 families currently receiving food stamps. In Israel, 22 percent of Israelis are “food insecure” and 30 percent of Israeli children live below the poverty line...all grim statistics.

In addition to the programs listed below, the Good People Fund has been involved in several other efforts to help relieve hunger. We have purchased large quantities of supermarket coupons in Israel and the United States and distributed them to many families and individuals who we know to be having a difficult time putting food on the table. We have also underwritten trucking costs of large quantities of donated food to several food pantries and soup kitchens.

Beit Frankforter

Beit Frankforter is a popular center in Jerusalem where elders gather daily to socialize, study, share a meal. What takes place there in the early morning hours though, is a perfect matching of skills and needs. Who better to lovingly prepare sandwiches for hungry schoolchildren than the *savtas* (grandmothers) who come together to complete this task? The sandwiches are delivered to nearby schools where they are enjoyed by kids whose parents cannot afford to provide them with this mid-morning snack. Like clockwork, five days a week, 500 sandwiches filled with tuna or cheese or hummus are prepared and packed with a piece of fresh fruit. We’ve no doubt that there is also another ingredient included and that is love! For about 75 cents, a hungry tummy can be filled — not bad.

» frankfor@netvision.net.il
» *Sima Zinni, Director*

Clara Hammer

Clara Hammer, often referred to as the “Chicken Lady” of Jerusalem, is approaching her 99th birthday this May and when we stopped by to visit a few months ago we were happy to see that neither time nor circumstances has changed things for her. She is still delightful, she still sings, and most importantly, she is still passionate about making sure that hungry people will have a proper Shabbat meal.

Clara’s story is a legend that has been shared with many people throughout this country, especially religious and day school students who contribute tzedakah to her work. Many years ago, while visiting her butcher, Mr. Hacker, Clara witnessed him handing over a bag of chicken bones and skin to a young girl. Commenting to him that the girl must own many cats, the butcher replied that the bag’s contents were actually for the family to use to prepare a Shabbat cholent. He went on to explain that the father and mother were not well and had not worked in a very long time. Though he had extended credit to them, he could no longer do so. Clara was appalled that anyone would have to eat such garbage and instructed Mr. Hacker to give the girl two chickens and a half kilo of chopped meat weekly so that they could have a proper Shabbat. No one was to know the identity of the donor.

Clara has been performing the mitzvah of feeding hungry people for almost 30 years. (she was merely 69 when she actually started this particular mitzvah). Her story never fails to inspire those who hear it. To 120, Clara!

» yhomnick@netvision.net.il
» *Chana Homnick, Clara’s daughter, 02-581-6164*

**Darchei Tzion –
The Beit Shean Gemach**

The work is simple—people are hungry—help feed them. Beit Shean, better known for the amazing excavations which have uncovered ancient life in that historically important region of Israel, is also one of Israel’s poorest cities. The all-volunteer effort at this simple food pantry which was started in 1995, utilizes both donated and purchased food. In fact, more than 75% of the food that they handle is donated by local caterers, nearby residents and others. On a budget that runs about \$50,000 a year, the group manages to feed more than 800 people every Friday. One of their greatest expenses? Those ubiquitous aluminum throw-away pans upon which so many pantries and soup kitchens rely. Our donation was used to provide a month’s worth of containers.

» *Yitz Feigenbaum, yitz66@gmail.com*

Family to Family usa

We have worked with Pam Koner, founder of Family to Family, for several years but we believe that right now the group's focus could not be more important. Dedicated to eliminating hunger as well as poverty in some of the poorest and most remote parts of this country, Pam's program connects families with sufficient resources to families who struggle to put food on the table day after day. It is a unique arrangement which, in addition to feeding hungry people, also helps to foster a personal relationship between families.

Running a program with such a focus would be sufficient for most people, but Pam's mind is always racing...always seeking other creative ways that people can be fed and avoid the pain of hunger. One of the communities where FtoF operates is Myra, Kentucky, deep in the heart of Appalachia, where unemployment, hunger and poverty go hand-in-hand. Pam's idea was to return many of Myra's residents to farming, a lifestyle in which many of their parents and grandparents were involved. How great it would be if they were given seeds, chickens, even piglets and be taught how to farm...the land is rich and fertile, the basic tools needed are relatively inexpensive... you need only add some education about farming and lessons on how to can or preserve your bounty so that you can enjoy the fruits of your labor long after the fields have been cleared. It is a recipe for success. The Good People Fund underwrote last year's experiment and we have just sent funds for the program this year. Each family that signs on must agree to teach another family, so that the program's benefits will spread to more members of the community. We have seen pictures of the bounty and it is pretty amazing. Further funds that we have contributed have provided food to many people in other poor communities.

» www.family-to-family.org, famtofamily@aol.com

Fugee Fridays isr

On our February trip to Israel we were impressed by a group of young Israelis (including some American *olim*) who were actively involved in two specific mitzvahs— *lechem Pre'eyvim* (providing food for hungry people), and *bal tashchit* (do not waste) – by rescuing perfectly good food that would otherwise go into the garbage.

Jesse Fox and his brother Steven made aliyah several years ago and now call Tel Aviv home. After many visits to the famous Carmel market, Jesse soon realized that the vast quantity of leftovers — fresh fruit, vegetables, pita, and more — that litter the ground at the close of business on Friday could actually feed hungry people. Jesse thought about the many, many African refugees who have found their way to Tel Aviv and

now reside in several shelters near the old bus terminal and Levinsky Park. He knew that most of them did not have a sufficient and reliable source of nourishment and what could be better than lots of fresh fruit and veggies? It seemed that there was one simple solution — gather the leftovers and deliver them to the shelters. But, how do you do that? Joined by his brother and two of their friends, Gilli and Daniel Cherrin, the idea for Fugee Fridays was born. What started with the four of them and a friend with a car who could help transport the many, many boxes of food they gathered each week, eventually became a group of several other Tel Aviv-area residents who learned of their efforts and joined in the rescue. Soon, some of the volunteers began to play with the refugee children or offer other types of support. In time, the group also delivered the gleaned food to other very poor residents of the South Tel Aviv area.

Now involved with this project for just a year, Jesse and his friends are planning other ways they might work on behalf of this refugee population. When we sat with them we asked what they might need to help them in their work. It did not take long for them to come up with a wish-list. We loved the idea of a t-shirt with the Fugee Friday logo that would identify volunteers as they gather food in the market each week and our funds went to underwriting these shirts.

Fugee Fridays' founders and the group of volunteers who work with them are impressive examples of the marriage between social activism and ecology. What could be better than feeding hungry people with food that would otherwise end up in the landfill?

» www.fugeefridays.blogspot.com

» jessefox82@gmail.com

Feeding the Neighbors usa

Miryam Torres is a local (N.J.) woman whose quiet work was featured in the Sunday paper a few months ago. Miryam herself, was an immigrant from Ecuador who arrived in the United States 40 years ago and has since raised five children — now all adults. It was Miryam's work that alerted her to a group of immigrants living nearby who often went without a meal for days on end.

The news article shared that Miryam remembered growing up in Ecuador and her father's admonition that they were always to share with people who had less. Hearing of the local immigrants' situation evoked her response — "I must cook for them so they can have a hot meal".

...and cook she does. Every Thursday evening Miryam visits the supermarket where she purchases the ingredients for her

meal. She returns home and spends the evening cooking...chicken and rice, hot soup, sandwiches—a healthy, hot meal for sustenance. Friday night (it is a bit like a “Shabbat” meal) Miryam and her brother pack the food in individual containers and proceed to a dark parking lot where the group assembles to share this meal-made-with-love. Sometimes people give Miryam clothes to share with the men and since the news article appeared, one woman brought her 25 blankets to distribute and a local pastor is opening his church every Friday night so that the group can share their meal in a more comfortable place.

We went to meet Miryam and we were not disappointed. Diminutive in stature but definitely someone with passion and compassion, Miryam shared that she was surprised by the response the news story had evoked. When asked why she was doing this, her response was that if someone has no food you must help them. When asked how she was going to continue to pay for this week after week, she very calmly explained that “God will provide”.

Our funds were used to purchase some new commercial cooking utensils, as well as cover the cost of the meals for the next several months. Good people come in all sizes and from many different backgrounds. They are always out there—sometimes you just have to search a bit to find them.

Postville

usa

Anyone reading the Jewish press (or even the *New York Times*) for the past year could not avoid the wrenching stories coming out of Postville, Iowa, a small town catapulted to national attention with the early morning raid of immigration officials at the Agriprocessors plant. Agriprocessors was the largest kosher meat slaughterhouse in the country, and the May 12 raid was not the first time the company was cited for serious violations including inhumane treatment of both the animals slaughtered at the plant, and the workers who toiled daily under difficult and often unsafe conditions.

The story that came out of Postville was one of human tragedy and one that required prompt attention as local social services became overwhelmed with the large number of workers and their families who were now left with few resources. Nearby churches, particularly St. Bridget's, the local Catholic church, became safe havens for families whose husbands or wives (or even children) were arrested and taken away during the raid. Through several personal connections we made in Postville, we learned that food for these people was a primary concern and in a very short time we were able to send a 53' trailer loaded with 24 pallets of food and groceries. The food was donated by Joe Lordi who runs the Youngstown, Ohio-based Gleaner's Food Bank and freight

costs were split between the Good People Fund and Temple Israel-Ner Tamid in Mayfield Heights, OH.

In addition to providing this food, we were also able to provide funds for additional food items that needed to be purchased, as well as funds for the needs of individuals impacted adversely by the plant closing.

Rock and Wrap it Up!

usa

When we think of hunger, food retrieval and creativity in this country, Syd Mandelbaum and Rock and Wrap It Up! immediately come to mind. What started in 1994 as a hunger relief project that retrieved leftovers from backstage at rock concerts and other musical venues (performance artists are usually treated to bountiful meals prior to going onstage) has expanded in many ways. Many popular music stars have signed on with Rock and Wrap it Up! and allow the group's volunteers backstage access to gather these often elaborate and filling leftovers and deliver them to local social service agencies.

While this type of food recovery has always been the organization's main focus, RWR also acts as a think tank on anti-poverty issues and in that role they have made some major contributions to help end hunger in this country. Syd's most recent success is the Federal Food Donation Act of 2008 which requires all federal buildings that serve food to retrieve leftover food from its premises and get it to local agencies. At its inception, 32 federal buildings in Washington, DC will work closely with 204 local agencies that will benefit from the leftovers. Imagine the impact this program will have when it is fully implemented throughout the country.

We cannot help but think that creative programs such as Syd's have taken on even greater importance today as we face the difficulties of an economic slowdown. We know that this country produces enough food to feed its citizens—the problem has always been to get it to where it is needed. We believe that Rock and Wrap It Up! is a very important piece of the solution. We recommend you check out their web site to learn more and to see if there is a part you can play in relieving hunger in the United States.

» www.rockandwrapitup.org, sydmandelbaum@att.net

Stop Hunger Now

w

One of the many natural disasters to occur this past year involved a string of devastating hurricanes which whipped across the Caribbean in the span of a week or two. In the United States, Hurricane Ike did the greatest damage, but islands like Haiti endured repeated poundings which killed

hundreds and destroyed everything in their paths.

Ray Buchanan is the founder of Stop Hunger Now, an international relief agency. Ray is someone we have known and trusted for many years and has become our “go to guy” in these types of disasters. We trust Ray and his staff and know that any funds we send them will be used quickly and efficiently, which is why we responded to their call for help in Haiti. With our donation and many others, Stop Hunger Now was able to send four shipments of life saving food and clothing valued at \$1 million to provide much needed relief for the victims in Haiti who have suffered with these latest disasters.

» www.stophungernow.org
 » r.buchanan@stophungernow.org

Table to Table

Wherever there may be perfectly good food that might otherwise go to waste, Israel's Table to Table is the primary organization that will retrieve it and deliver it to hungry people. Organized in 2003 by Joseph Gitler who had recently made aliyah, TtoT operates with a core group of hundreds of volunteers as well as a dedicated staff who work around the clock to gather good healthy food from any number of sources — caterers, corporate cafeterias, manufacturers, bakeries, army bases, farms and packinghouses. Once picked up, the food is delivered to a wide network of social service agencies who feed thousands throughout the country. We are especially impressed with Project Leket, TtoT's creative program which promotes the Biblical mitzvah of gleaning by welcoming groups to Israel's fields in which growers allow volunteers to retrieve the unharvested crop. If you are planning a trip to Israel we recommend you be in touch with TtoT to arrange for a gleaning session—it is a very special activity that will add a great deal to your trip.

» www.tabletotable.org.il/english
 » info@tabletotable.org.il

The Bagel Brigade

Herman Berman, upon retirement, decided that he wanted more than golf or tennis. Herman became the inspiration behind The Bagel Brigade, a group of retirees who make daily pickups of leftover bread, cakes, and cookies at local food establishments and then deliver the items to shelters, pantries, and schools. Recalling when food was not so plentiful in his childhood home, Herman was particularly sensitive to the amount of baked goods that are thrown into the garbage at the end of each day. Living in Los Angeles and the San Fernando Valley where so much of the nation's produce is har-

vested, Herman knew that there were many migrant families for whom this food would be a welcome addition to the family's diet. The problem then seemed to be how to get the leftovers from the stores who would gladly donate them, to the people who could use them. The solution: The Bagel Brigade

One more word about Herman and his merry band...one of the ways they raise funds to keep their vital program running is to collect old cell phones and sell them to manufacturers. If you have old cell phones sitting in a drawer (and who doesn't?) just put them in the mail to Herman at the address below.

» *Herman Berman, 14236 Chandler Blvd., Sherman Oaks, CA 91401* » Hberman662@aol.com

Tova Cohen

One of our favorite programs that feed hungry people in Israel is run by another diminutive woman, Tova Cohen. Tova has been cooking in her very tiny kitchen (and we use the term “kitchen” quite liberally) every Wednesday morning for many years. No matter how cold or how hot it might be, Tova will be in that small space with very little protection from the elements. The recipients of her meal are several poor elders who live in the Bukharan neighborhood in Jerusalem for whom this hot meal may be the only hot meal they enjoy that day or, perhaps, any other day. Her tasty soup has just the right seasonings that reflect her Farsi heritage and the food she serves is both simple and filling.

Our donation is used to help her purchase the ingredients she uses to prepare this special meal. It is that simple.

» *26 Yosef Karo St., Jerusalem, 02-582-2879.*

Zehava and Karyn – Neighborhood Food

Sometimes, it really does take a village to...raise a child, feed a family, put shoes on little feet or buy school supplies for eager students.

We were recently in touch with Karyn and Zehava, two Jerusalemites whose actions, we believe, represent the very essence of the Good People Fund. They lead a group of neighbors and friends who provide monthly food packages for nine needy families in their neighborhood. All families are vetted by a social worker and all are living in extraordinarily difficult circumstances...a family of 4 children living with their unemployed divorced parent in a 1.5 room apartment; an elderly widow with five adult children, four of whom are handi-

capped and the fifth now severely handicapped from army service; an Ethiopian family with four children under the age of ten and a parent with a brain tumor...each situation heart-breaking in its own right.

How does this small group make such a profound difference? They have absolutely no overhead. All purchases, packing and delivery are done by volunteers and all funds collected go to food, or occasionally purchasing gift certificates for a local shoe store when little feet need new shoes for school.

The Good People Fund has contributed to their efforts in two ways. We have provided supermarket gift cards for the extra needs everyone has during Pesach and Rosh Hashanah, as well as gift certificates to a local shoe store so that the kids can pick out their own new shoes. What a blessing it is to have neighbors who live by our tradition which says *kol Yisrael arevim zeh ba-zeh* — all Israel is responsible one for the other.

In keeping with their principles of tzedakah, Karyn and Zehava do not wish to be further identified.

ELDERS

“You shall rise in the presence of the elderly” - Lev. Chap. 19

Alice Jonah and The Diplomat Hotel

Travelers who visited Jerusalem many years ago will remember the famous Diplomat Hotel where luxurious suites and beautiful views of the surrounding hillsides could catch your breath. As often happens to hotels that are not properly maintained, the Diplomat lost its luster, fell into disrepair and eventually became an absorption center where (mostly) Russian *olim* (immigrants) settled in single rooms that still offered those amazing views, but not much else. The elderly residents were grateful for the chance to live in Israel and somehow overlooked the cramped quarters where they had but four walls and a bathroom in which to spend their days.

Life for these people — many were formerly teachers, doctors, professors or scientists before they left the FSU for better times in Israel — changed dramatically when a former Canadian named Alice Jonah happened to offer to fill in as a volunteer for a friend who was the activity director at the “hotel-turned-home”. It turned out that the friend never returned to the Diplomat and Alice became an integral part of life there. Working first as a volunteer and then as an em-

ployee, Alice turned this building which provided only the most basic housing into a caring *community*. She instituted an *ulpan* (Hebrew language class), a beautiful choir that performs throughout the country, exercise classes, computer lessons, trips—meaningful social and cultural opportunities for the residents to enjoy.

Perhaps Alice’s greatest achievement was the formation of a group of residents who became “home health aides” for the weaker residents who needed a few hours of care each day. To Alice (and the residents) this was a win-win situation. Using donated funds, Alice is able to pay a modest wage to those who offer their help and the recipients benefit from the extra care they receive daily. Our funds were directed to this critically important service.

» *Alice Jonah, aleph1@bezeqint.net*

Am Echad

Though Igor Feldblyum moved to the United States from St. Petersburg in the Former Soviet Union many years ago, he never forgot his roots or the many elderly people living in extraordinary poverty in this city. How could he help them despite the distance that separated him from his ancestry?

Am Echad, the small non-profit started by Igor several years ago was his way of trying to help lonely and often sick elders for whom a small monthly stipend would make a difference as they live out their last days in St. Petersburg. With the help of contacts living in the city, elders are identified and modest sums of money are delivered regularly (as well as for occasional emergency needs). For all of them life is a bit easier with this small additional income, combined with the fact that there is someone who cares about them.

Am Echad helps about 90 people—most of them single and living alone. They each receive anywhere from \$20-\$75, depending upon their individual circumstances. Those modest sums provide for medications, extra food, some bit of relief. For about \$36,000 a year (there is little or no overhead) Am Echad saves many lives. Sometimes we forget—changing lives, one by one is not impossible...sometimes it just takes a vision and the will.

» *www.amechad.net, AmEchad@aim.com*

Challah For Heroes

In his job as a social worker at a Philadelphia senior residence, Michael Schaeffer spends his days with the elders living there and has learned a great deal about what their lives are really like. He can see quite clearly that often “seniors are sometimes

forgotten.” He recalls from a deeply personal perspective how his own father who had been an important part of his community, was forgotten as he aged, became ill and eventually died, no longer a part of the community he had loved and nurtured.

A second aspect of Michael’s job at the center involves his work with veterans. At each gathering he hears story after story about the sacrifices each has made during both times of peace and during wartime. As Michael recently shared, “I so want to give something back to these people of principle, humility and honor. It’s more than “supporting the troops” ...it’s trying to give a little back.”

How could he give something back to the veterans who gave of themselves so willingly, in a way that was meaningful? Reminding his elders that no matter what their age, Shabbat can be a wonderful time to regain some personal peace of mind — a time to “recharge our internal batteries”, Michael realized that nothing represents Shabbat better than challah. Perhaps volunteers could deliver challah to these veterans once a month, dispel some of their sense of isolation and fill their stomachs and their sense of self at the same time?

And so, Challah for Heroes was started. Michael’s goal was to identify Jewish veterans in local (Philadelphia) nursing homes, boarding houses and veteran’s facilities and then deliver a fresh challah weekly. Thanks to the generosity of a local bakery, the cost of each challah is very reasonable. In a very short time he has identified over 100 veterans and has a volunteer crew who will do the actual delivery (including the local Star of David bikers who usually stop to shmooze when they make their delivery!).

Michael recently reported that he is expanding his outreach and now sending challahs to Jewish soldiers stationed in Iraq! Along with the challah is a note from local Hebrew school kids who have taken on this new responsibility.

We wonder how many other communities could duplicate Michael’s simple effort.

» schaeffermichael@yahoo.com, 610-660-0286
 » cell 484-620-3599

Project Ezra



If you live in New York or the greater metropolitan area, you know that the Lower East Side of Manhattan is undergoing tremendous change as the area is gentrified and becomes the new “hot spot” for clubs and nightlife. Despite these changes, tucked away on Grand Street where many of our relatives probably worked or lived, is Project Ezra, a special organiza-

tion co-directed by Misha Avramoff that provides many life-saving services for the remaining elders who live nearby. In addition to social and educational activities, and a very important home health aide program, Project Ezra’s social workers stand ready to offer other forms of help to these vulnerable elders as the needs arise. One of those needs is help with food. Many of the elders live on very limited budgets and no matter how hard they may try, it is sometimes just not possible to put sufficient healthy food on the table. That is where the Good People Fund steps in. Our funds are used to purchase supermarket scrip for some of the more vulnerable elders who can barely make it through the month with their meager incomes. The nice thing about this program is that the small local stores, which are where most of the elders shop, work with Project Ezra to facilitate the project. Each elder who qualifies receives a monthly allowance of \$30 or \$360 yearly. It doesn’t seem like a lot of money — particularly when you know the cost of food today, but we know that it really does make a difference for them. How nice it would be if more elders could benefit from this help through increased funding!

» www.projectezra.org, projectezra@verizon.net

Second Wind Dreams



We all have dreams — desires for materials objects, a trip to a sunny climate, better health, to relive our youth, if we have passed that stage of life...the list is endless. PK Beville, a consultant with a long and distinguished career in geriatric services, recognized the importance of fulfilling the desires of our elders and others in closed-care institutions and established Second Wind Dreams as a non-profit organization to help make those dreams a reality. Elder care facilities report just how vital the program is to the elders’ well-being. We never tire of hearing the stories PK shares about many of these dreams. Over the past year we were able to provide funds for several poignant dreams including one for a couple who has been married for over 60 years. The wife has decided that she wanted a real wedding...she and her husband married in the local city hall on the eve of the Second World War, just as he was being shipped out to serve overseas. Now, decades later, she wants to do it right — a wedding gown and all of the trappings. Who could turn that down?

We were also pleased to help with the organization’s annual Gifts of Light...a holiday gift extravaganza delivered to elders who might otherwise have a very quiet and sad holiday celebration. This year, the Gifts of Light program was in peril as the economy plummeted and donations dwindled, and we were happy to make up the shortfall.

Making these dreams come to pass can cost as little as your time or as much as hundreds of dollars... a pretty significant

tzedakah investment.

» www.secondwind.org, swdreams@secondwind.org

SongWriting Works™

usa

“I’ve never sung before in my life and now I am singing.” These words, spoken by a 90 year-old participant in one of Judith-Kate Friedman’s (founder of SongWriting Works™) sessions speak to the profound impact her work has on those who experience it. How much more pleasant life would be if every elder confined to a closed-care institution could experience this award-winning program. Using music as the tool to unlock dreams, emotions and memories, Judith-Kate teaches her students how to write beautiful words which are then put to music. So often the lyrics describe poignant remembrances of an earlier time, a time of youth and independence and joy. As one participant wrote to Judith-Kate, “The lyrics did some cathartic mending of places in my heart.” When working with dementia patients, the results are even more profound. Music can heal and Judith-Kate’s work proves that each day.

In addition to working with elders, Judith-Kate’s methods have also succeeded with families and children and this year her focus has been on teaching others her methods so that the benefits of this type of therapy can be enjoyed throughout the country. Our funds were used to replace a computer that crashed as well as towards matching funds needed for ongoing training sessions.

» www.songwritingworks.org
» songwritingworks@aol.com

KIDS

“And you shall teach them to your children ...” - Deut. Chap. 6

Bet Hayaed

isr

Nestled in the shadows of Mount Gilboa in the beautiful Jordan Valley in Israel is a special home, undistinguishable from all of the others on Kibbutz Merav. This house is “home” to Bet Hayaed — a unique and loving place where kids who are removed from their parents by the courts have a chance to live in a warm and supportive environment under the watchful care of Yitz Feigenbaum and Irit Zucker who work together in this very special endeavor.

Every child who is placed at Bet Hayaed is given the opportunity to thrive in every possible way. What we want for our own children, they offer these kids—critical therapy to work out the conflicts that come with their family situation, after-school clubs, music lessons, a clothing allowance, orthodontia and proper medical care (sometimes not totally covered by National Insurance).

We visited Bet Hayaed this past February and were impressed with all of the new changes we saw in the house. What was different in this visit was that Yitz had a Bet Hayaed “graduate” join us. In all of the years we have worked with him we know that he has never exposed the kids to visitors who might want to see the program first-hand. The kids’ privacy is zealously protected — they are never used to help further Bet Hayaed’s purpose. Knowing this, it was a bit of a surprise when Yitz asked us to lunch and to “meet someone”. After a sumptuous meal, a handsome young man appeared who immediately embraced Yitz and Irit and joined us at the table. Sitting in front of us was “Shimon”, a Bet Hayaed graduate, now a young man in his early 20’s. Shimon explained the circumstances that brought him to Bet Hayaed while he was a youngster and how he spent many of his years there just “sitting around” sullenly on the very couches that abutted our dinner table. It was only Yitz and Irit’s unconditional love and firm hands that brought him to where he was today—married, attending college and the father of a young baby himself.

Sitting at that table and maintaining our composure was impossible. We were suddenly overcome with tears of joy as we saw first-hand just what our involvement in Bet Hayaed’s work had helped to accomplish. Here was living proof that a life could not only be saved but could go on to flourish, give back and bring new life into the world. As we left Bet Hayaed that afternoon, I asked Yitz why he and Irit had broken all of their rules and brought Shimon to lunch with us. With just the hint of a glimmer in his eyes, Yitz explained that sometimes you have to break the rules and let someone share in the joy and naches that they have helped bring about. It was a lunch that will never be forgotten.

Our funds were used to underwrite several needs for Bet Hayaed. In addition to covering some of the therapy costs we had the help of a Bat Mitzvah who contributed to the extra expense of the medications used by some children, and a NJ-based congregation responded to our challenge of matching any funds they could raise to purchase new clothes and shoes for the upcoming Pesach holiday.

» www.bethayaed.org, yitz66@gmail.com

Big Brothers, Big Sisters ISR

Libby Reichman founded Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Israel in 2003. Libby is a social worker who is knowledgeable about the growing number of children in Israel who come from troubled single-parent homes and who would benefit from a warm and positive relationship with an adult. Her response to that problem was to begin Big Brothers, Big Sisters in Israel. Enlisting the help of mentors, adults who commit to meeting weekly with their “littles” to share some quality time at a movie, doing homework, taking a walk or just talking, BBBS has succeeded not only in Jerusalem but has now opened a branch in Tel Aviv as well. What makes this particular program special is that Libby and her staff provide professional support to the mentors as they try to establish a positive supportive relationship with the children.

Libby always has stories to share—most of these children come from terribly tragic circumstances and when possible, Libby feels compelled to provide more than the usual services of BBBS. Sometimes she just has to try to resolve other incredibly difficult problems these kids and their families face. It is for those special circumstances that we have agreed to step in when we can. Over the past year, our funds have made a difference. We provided a bed for a 12 year old boy who, due to his mother’s serious financial straits, did not have a bed of his own, and earlier in the year we were part of a group effort to send a young girl and her mother back to see their only family in the FSU.

» www.bigbrothers.org.il, info@bigbrothers.org.il

Birthday Angels ISR

Who doesn’t remember some of their favorite birthday parties when they were a kid? Birthday parties are one of the things that being a kid is all about. But what if your family cannot afford this expense? When Ruthie Sobel Luttenberg, a Mom and former party-planner, learned how many children never experience the joy of a birthday party (or sometimes even know their actual birth date), she started Birthday Angels with the eventual goal of providing every needy Israeli child with this joyful experience. A \$36 donation makes it possible for Ruthie’s volunteers to provide a school party for any child who has been referred. ...and what a party it is! Ruthie’s creativity and acute sense of what is fun and magical is evident in every aspect of Birthday Angels.

Ruthie is able to reach these kids with the help of an Israeli organization that provides tutors in schools across the country. The tutors facilitate the party utilizing an amazing kit that Ruthie has developed. The activities in which the kids take part are designed to bolster and encourage a sense of self-

worth and meaning to the celebrant. As one of the birthday children shared with Ruthie at her own party, “*When they complimented me one by one I almost cried. I didn’t know anyone even noticed me before.*”

This past year Birthday Angels facilitated more than 1800 parties and has now developed a teen birthday kit which is sure to spread the joy of a party to older kids.

The next time you have to buy a birthday present for a child who may have just about everything, consider a donation to Birthday Angels. Ruthie’s web site gives you all you need to know about how to do this—you won’t be disappointed.

» www.birthday-angels.org
 » ruthie@birthday-angels.org

Dental Volunteers in Israel ISR

The late Trudi Birger (z”l) was devoted to her newly adopted country after escaping certain death in Nazi camps. Upon arrival in Israel with her Mother and only a few other relatives, Trudi set out to begin a new life. Despite professional success as well as a happy marriage to Zev Birger, Trudi never forgot her promise to give back, nor her strong desire to help children after witnessing the horrors that were inflicted upon youngsters during the Shoah.

With no school-based screening for dental problems and a diet rich in sugar and minimal dental hygiene, Trudi realized that many of Jerusalem’s youngest residents were in desperate need of regular dental health screening and Dental Volunteers in Israel, DVI, was her solution to the problem. DVI provides regular screening and care for all of Jerusalem’s needy children, no matter their race or religion. With the help of volunteer dentists from around the world who commit a week or two to the clinic’s operation, DVI has made a profound difference for untold numbers of children who would otherwise suffer the consequences of poor dental care.

Funds sent by us to DVI were donor-recommended.

» www.dental-dvi.co.il, dvi@internet-zahav.net

Homerun Hopefuls USA

In 2002 Brett Kalikow (now a senior at Harvard) was a teenager vacationing with his family in the Dominican Republic. A true baseball fanatic, Brett and his Dad left the resort where they were staying in search of a local baseball game. Nothing quite prepared him for what he discovered. While baseball is a very popular sport in the Dominican Republic, economic conditions often dictate just how the game

can be played. When Brett came upon a game he saw kids using milk or juice cartons for mitts, rocks for balls and sticks for bats. The first thing he thought of was how much equipment he and his friends back in New York had lying around...shoes, bats, balls, mitts, jerseys, t-shirts...who didn't have tons of this in the basement, the attic, or stuck in the back of a closet? For Brett, the answer was simple.

Upon returning to New York, he began to collect whatever he could find. In a very short time he had five boxes filled with perfectly good equipment and eventually made contact with someone at the Dominican consulate. Together they found a shipper who agreed to ship the items at no cost and Brett and his family returned to the country to distribute everything themselves. Since that first visit, Brett and others who have donated to his collections return each year to distribute new items that have been gathered by others who learned about his project. Homerun Hopefuls, Brett's non-profit, continues its good work and has become a favorite project of many Bar and Bat Mitzvah kids who love baseball.

Our funds were used to help underwrite the cost of shipping equipment as well as for the purchase of specific items Brett buys for the local kids.

» www.homerunhopefuls.org
 » homerunhopefuls@gmail.com

Lev Leytzan – Heart of A Clown usa

Dr. Neal Goldberg is the inspiration behind Lev Leytzan-Compassionate Clown Alley, a New York-based medical clown training program that attracts teens and young adults and teaches them the very special art of medical clowning. Neal is a warm and compassionate person which, no doubt, accounts for his success as a therapist who treats a large number of teens.

As a therapist Neal was the co-author of a book designed to help teens deal with the death of a close friend or family member. It was from the experience of writing the book that he came to think about how the act of giving of oneself can do amazing things for the donor. In the case of the teens that are part of the clowning troupe, Neal knows that for many, clowning has awakened new insights and has helped some overcome their own difficult personal situations.

Lev Leytzan (heart of the clown) participants commit to many hours of formal training by professional clowns, mental health professionals and medical doctors. Each student will attest to being profoundly moved by his or her work.

In addition to the usual hospital and nursing home visits the

kids make, clowns have traveled to Israel for the past four years and performed throughout the country as medical clowns and additionally, they have a truly life-saving project which teaches fire safety that has reached thousands of school-age children throughout the greater New York area. This past Hanukkah they also visited Munich where they brought smiles to many elderly Shoah survivors.

To help the clowns in their work, the Good People Fund has underwritten the cost of some white medical coats all qualified clowns receive after they have successfully completed their training, as well as a new camera to record their amazing performances.

» www.levleytzan.org, neal@levleytzan.org

St. Joseph's Baby Corner usa

The web site for Seattle's Baby Corner says it quite clearly— *Changing the World One Diaper At a Time!* Indeed, it is not only diapers but car seats, bottles, thermometers, blankets and just about everything else one may need to keep a newborn safe and comfortable. Begun in 1988, Baby Corner was the result of Jeannie Jaybush's concern about the unusually high infant mortality rate in Seattle. With a friend, Jeannie set out a cardboard box in a local church and the rest, as they say, is history. Today, Baby Corner serves as a resource for local social services who deal with families that have a new baby and cannot afford those many items needed to help with caring for a new infant.

One of the ways we enjoy helping Jeannie and the new mothers is by providing them with nursing bras. Who would have thought? Jeannie tells us that a proper nursing bra is almost unheard of...the cost is prohibitive for poor women, but the difference they make is unbelievable on so many different levels. Whenever I ask Jeannie if she still has a supply the answer is usually "No!" They are a very popular item with the nurses with whom Jeannie works, as well as with all of the new mothers and we could not be happier about supplying them.

» www.seattlebabycorner.org, babies@blarg.net

The Quincy Kids usa

Kids! We often think that if you want something done, some wrong to be righted, ask a kid — they are uniquely qualified to change the world in ways that most adults would never even imagine. One group that we have known for quite some time has proven this year after year. Based at the Broad Meadows Middle School in Quincy, Massachusetts and led by a truly special teacher, Ron Adams, students at the school who wish to change the world in the most meaningful ways can

join Ron's after-school club which is dedicated to improving the lives of kids around the world. Former students began the group more than ten years ago when they were privileged to meet Iqbal Masih, a young boy from Pakistan who had been sold by his parents to a carpet maker and remained chained to a loom creating beautiful carpets for long hours each day. When Iqbal escaped and traveled to America to receive an award from Reebok for his efforts to end child slavery, he visited the Quincy school and enthralled the students with his moving story. After returning to Pakistan, Iqbal was murdered, and so began the Quincy students' quest to end child slavery wherever it may be. Inspired by Iqbal, they formed the Kid's Campaign and began to accomplish amazing things around the world. Though the original students have long since graduated and are now adults (and, no doubt, profoundly changed by their experience), many students from subsequent classes have joined the campaign and continue the good work.

Many students going through Broad Meadows Middle School have taken part in this special effort and because of their involvement, have found their own lives changed. The Kids' Campaign has brought them to present at such august venues as the U.S. Congress, the United Nations, even Harvard Business School has called upon their expertise and invited them to speak on behalf of this world-wide problem.

Over the years the group has directed its efforts to kids' issues in many countries throughout the world. This year's group has decided to work on behalf of Dr. Paul Farmer's, "Partners in Health", to provide free education and free health care to 2,000 children and their families in hurricane-ravaged areas in rural Haiti. Funds are raised in a variety of ways including the yearly "Operation Days Work" in which the students volunteer their time in a meaningful service project.

We believe in Ron Adams, The Kids' Campaign and what they can accomplish; and for that reason we try to provide them with as many of the tools that they need to reach their goal. This can mean a shopping trip to Staples, underwriting the cost of a bus to take them to a nearby conference where they will meet with other kids engaged in similar programs, or even the cost of imprinting t-shirts which they wear as they go about their work.

Think of what these kids will do when they really "grow up".

» www.mirrorimage.com/iqbal/index.html
 » endchlabor@aol.com

Warm Woolies

usa

Several years ago we learned about a Denver lawyer who loved to knit. Since she was home raising a young family she had even more time to indulge in her passion. When a friend adopted a child from an orphanage in the Former Soviet Union and reported on the very sad conditions in which these children live, Kimberly Turnbow found a way to use her talents on behalf of others — she created Warm Woolies. Warm Woolies provides hand-knitted wool garments for children in these orphanages as well as children growing up in Native American communities not far from Denver. All are created by volunteers across the country who knit with skill and not a small amount of love.

Kimberly's efforts have proven extraordinarily successful. With over 500 items knitted in their first year of operation (2003), Warm Woolies ended 2008 with more than 12,000 items—socks, gloves, sweaters, vests—knitted by over 1000 volunteers across the country. This figure means that every week Warm Woolies receives about 70 packages from knitters all over the world and distributes 1000 items each month to children in cold climates who can benefit from the warmth of these beautifully crafted garments.

During the past year monetary donations to Warm Woolies have dropped by about 40% which, when added to the increases in transportation costs due to rising fuel prices in the earlier part of the year, have made it very difficult to meet necessary expenses. The Good People Fund has stepped in to underwrite part of her shipping costs. It is a pleasure to be part of Warm Woolies. The need for these warm articles of clothing coupled with the opportunity it provides volunteers to use their own special talents on behalf of others makes this group a winner in every respect. If you are a knitter or know someone who is, check them out.

» www.warmwoolies.org, warmwoolies@comcast.net

WELL-BEING

"Take care of yourself, and of your body very well" - Deut. 4:9

A Gift Of Comfort

isr

Who can forget the years between 2000 and 2006 when life in Israel was a succession of almost daily terror attacks? I can recall many mornings here in the States when the first thing

I would do upon awakening was turn on the TV and wait to hear if another bombing or shooting had occurred. To Ruth Shlossman, an American who made aliyah many years ago, one of these attacks took on personal meaning. She was standing only a short distance from Sbarro's pizzeria on that fateful day in August, 2001 when a suicide bomber walked into the restaurant and set off a bomb. Ruth could not forget the scene she witnessed. The disturbing images inspired her to just do something. What she did was to start a small organization called A Gift of Comfort, which enlisted the services of professionals involved in massage, reflexology and other alternative therapies, in order to bring relief to so many survivors who suffered both physical and emotional trauma. In time, Ruth's volunteer therapists even offered sessions to family members who endured the extreme emotional toll of such suffering.

Though the daily attacks ceased, Ruth's efforts have shifted in recent times to the trauma experienced by those living with the ongoing rocket attacks in Sderot and other communities bordering Gaza. She has organized groups of volunteer therapists who travel to the area and offer this special treatment. Numerous reports attest to the serious problems which this ongoing distress can cause and Ruth's therapists are doing their part in trying to reduce the suffering. Therapy is also offered to several soldiers who are no longer on active duty.

Our funds were used to cover the costs of running this very low-overhead but high-impact program.

» rshlossman@watershedassociates.com

Amuta (Non-profit) for the Emotional Support of Girlfriends and Fiancées of Fallen IDF Soldiers

Over the past nine years, the State of Israel and the United States have seen increasing numbers of military personnel die in service to their country. Each one of the fallen soldiers leaves someone behind to mourn—a wife, parents, siblings, children, extended family and friends. In Israel, there exists an extensive state-supported system for blood relatives and wives. For the girlfriend (or boyfriend) or fiancée there is no official recognition and there are no official support services available to help them deal with their grief. The Amuta (Non-Profit) for the Emotional Support of Girlfriends and Fiancées of Fallen Soldiers of the IDF was founded by Phyllis Heimowitz and her daughter, Tamar Heimowitz Richter, to meet that need. It was the Heimowitz's personal tragedy that led them to establish this innovative and critically important group which provides emotional (as well as occasional financial support) to women/men who have lost their loved one in

an IDF-related incident. The emotional support comes in the form of weekly group therapy and shared social engagements where the unique bonds that join each of these bereaved people are strengthened. Expenses are covered by private donations as well as limited government funding. It was the persistent hard work of Phyllis and Tamar, now joined by Rina Kahan (who lost her beloved in the Yom Kippur War), that has brought about the radical change in attitude towards the bereaved survivors. The girlfriend or fiancée is now recognized by Israeli society as a legitimate mourner and survivor and their loss is no longer dismissed as insignificant or unimportant. Their pain is real and with the support groups offered by the Amuta they can eventually deal with their loss and perhaps find love and happiness once again – something Phyllis happily shares with us from time to time.

Our funds were used to provide for some of the young women's individual needs that Phyllis identifies and for small wedding gifts for those women who have been fortunate enough to find a new love.

» www.girlfriendsidf.org.il, heimw@netvision.net.il

ATZUM

Nothing can erase the vivid memories we have of Israel during the six year period that began in the year 2000. With frequent terror attacks the number of people injured or killed rose daily. While the frequency of such attacks has certainly diminished, how many of us now stop to think about those who either personally survived an attack or lost a loved one in such an attack? How are they managing years later? Does the trauma ever go away? Can they resume normal lives? In many cases, the answer is "no" and that is where ATZUM steps in. Founded by Rabbi Levi Lauer in 2002, ATZUM is dedicated to helping survivors of terror attacks, Righteous Gentiles and victims of human trafficking access both public and private sources of assistance.

Our funds have been used to help with needs in the first two categories. Righteous Gentiles are those individuals whose actions saved Jewish lives during the Holocaust. Today, there are more than 40 such individuals (and/or their spouses) who call Israel home, and while many needs are covered by National Insurance, there are additional needs such as home health care aides, medical treatments and the cost of adult diapers. Terror survivors' needs continue to be a problem for many despite the passage of time. In such cases, ATZUM will step in with help when no other resources are available. Over the past few years, the needs of some Sderot residents, subjected to ongoing terror in the form of rocket attacks, have also been met by ATZUM's staff.

With an overhead that totals only 7%, we are proud of the work this small organization accomplishes and are happy to contribute to specific needs as we learn of them.

» www.atzum.org, lauer@netvision.net.il

Books, Bears and Bonnets usa

Cancer — the word evokes strong feelings for most of us. It is an illness that often brings heartbreak and anguish and sadly, sometimes death to loved ones. For Merrily Ansell, founder of Books, Bears and Bonnets, it was her sister's long battle with the disease which inspired her to do something positive in response to the sadness and despair she felt at her sister's death from the disease. Merrily never forgot the long hours she spent with her sister as she underwent treatment, nor did she forget the trauma she witnessed in all of the patients who lost their hair to the harmful chemicals that were unleashed to combat their illness. Books, Bears and Bonnets is devoted to providing a gift package to all patients undergoing chemotherapy in several hospitals throughout the Maryland-DC area, Atlanta and New Jersey. As you might expect, each package includes a stuffed bear, an appropriate book and a hat. Merrily's web site includes a list of suggested books that are needed and also a fabulous idea for beautiful centerpieces for Bar and Bat Mitzvah celebrants. Check it out!

» www.booksbearsbonnets.org
 » merrily@booksbearsbonnets.org

Casting For Recovery usa

"My body is tired but my spirit is renewed. I leave with memories of strong, beautiful women and a new experience to build on. I leave with the information that will help me to continue on as a survivor..."

The woman who wrote these moving words was one of the more than 3500 women who have been privileged to take part in a unique form of therapy provided by Casting for Recovery for survivors of breast cancer. CFR was founded in 1996 with the goal of helping women recover physically and emotionally through the unique benefits of fly-fishing...a sport which uses those very muscles most affected by breast cancer surgery. Couple the physical benefits with a weekend retreat in a beautiful natural setting, surrounded by other women experiencing the very same turmoil and also a group of volunteers committed in every way to making the event transformative, and you have a very special experience that can truly change everyone who takes part.

Though the national organization has achieved a great deal of success in the twelve years it has been in existence, we know

from our conversation with Jacki Lappen, CFR's Manager of Volunteer Services that there are several groups in specific geographic areas who have great difficulty in organizing and raising the funds necessary to sponsor a local retreat.

It did not take us long to come up with a solution to this problem. Could one of these groups use a little help in their fund-raising? After some initial conversations with CFR's staff, the group in Alaska was identified as a potential match for us...and what a group it is! With a dedicated, active foundation of women many of whom are already avid fly-fisherwomen, we know that the Alaska chapter will hold a successful retreat in what is probably the most beautiful natural setting to be found in this country. Our challenge to the group was that we would match up to \$2500 of "new money" they raise between now and their July retreat. The women with whom I was in touch were thrilled with the challenge and before long I received word of several fund-raisers being planned to help meet their goal.

» www.castingforrecovery.org
 » info@castingforrecovery.org

Gift Of Life usa

What started in 1991 as a truly grass-roots effort — one family's quest to find a suitable bone marrow donor for their son and brother, Jay Feinberg, has grown to a critically important institution within the Jewish community. Today, Gift of Life can proudly claim that nearly 1500 people received a match through its efforts and over 125,000 have registered to be potential donors. In recent years, Gift of Life has begun a Jewish cord blood registry which can help save the lives of individuals who have been unsuccessful in finding bone marrow or stem cell matches. With both of these registries in place, Gift of Life has positioned itself as one of the pre-eminent life-saving resources for Jews world-wide. It plays a critically important role in Jewish life today.

That said, Gift of Life is one of the organizations that has been seriously impacted by the financial meltdown and Madoff debacle that has destroyed so many good works.

While the organization did not lose funds, many of its principal donors have been adversely affected by recent events and will not be able to continue the support that they have offered in the past. We believe that Gift of Life holds tremendous importance to the Jewish community and have sent a donation to cover the cost of five donor testings. None of us will ever know when or if their services could be the key to our own survival.

» www.giftoflife.org, info@giftoflife.org

Hosts For Hospitals usa

About 20 years ago, Mike Aichenbaum was a husband and father of two youngsters, living the American dream. Within a few days his life was turned upside down with the diagnosis of advanced leukemia. Traveling to New York City for treatment at the renowned Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, Mike spent six months in-hospital with his wife and children and mother housed in a nearby apartment. Total cost? More than \$20,000. How do “normal” families handle these kinds of situations — life-threatening illness and the additional burden of housing expenses which can be devastating? For Mike, there was a good outcome, full remission. But he never forgot the experience and how much it cost to keep his family at his side to help him recover.

Fast forward ten years to 1988 when Mike learned about a Boston-based organization that provides free or low-cost housing to families and individuals accompanying a relative to treatment at a local medical center. This was what Mike wanted to do — provide that same type of housing support for people traveling to his home city of Philadelphia and the area’s major medical centers for treatment. Hosts for Hospitals was started in 1990 when Mike teamed with a woman who had similar experiences while battling a serious disease. With the formation of HfH, people traveling to the area would now have the option of finding free or low-cost housing within the homes of volunteer hosts. HfH has provided thousands of nights of free lodging to people from all over this country and around the world. Everyone who participates in this truly special mitzvah, from the hosts to the families burdened with the worry of a sick relative, cannot say enough about the importance of this service.

The Good People Fund’s donation helped cover increased expenses HfH has incurred as the demand for its services increases. We believe Hosts for Hospitals is a perfect example of a small, well-managed, grass-roots organization which provides critically important services to people already burdened by tremendous health issues and expenses.

» www.hostsforhospitals.org, hfhospitals@aol.com

Project Debby usa

Did you ever wonder what happens to hotel rooms that sit empty night after night? Few, if any hotels and motels have 100% occupancy 365 nights a year, particularly during these difficult economic times. In 1991, Naomi Berman-Potash, who was working in the hotel industry at the time, asked that very same question. It came to her after she read a news article that discussed the shortage of safe rooms for women who arrive at local shelters for battered women. Naomi thought

immediately of the empty hotel rooms she knew were to be found throughout the country, and had that *aha!* moment. Why couldn’t she connect the shelters with hotels in their area and solve a serious problem? Naomi knew that there were details that needed to be worked out but they were just that, details, and before long she started Project Debby. Today, more than 17 years since its founding, Project Debby has provided thousands of women with safe haven while hotels throughout this country work in cooperation with local shelters to make it possible.

Project Debby works with minimal overhead and in our last phone conversation with Naomi we heard about her latest successes in getting the program to more cities. Our funds were used to cover the minimal expenses she incurs in this life-saving effort.

» www.projectdebby.com, nberman822@aol.com

REMEDY usa

Conservation, ecology, green... today’s buzzwords. Finally, the world is beginning to pay attention to preserving natural resources and protecting the environment. In truth, many people promoted these values for years; and some even put their beliefs into very substantial efforts. Dr. Will Rosenblatt of Yale-New Haven Hospital was one of these visionaries. As an anesthesiologist at that hospital, Dr. Rosenblatt saw first-hand the “waste” that accumulated in the hospital’s operating rooms — unpacked and unused equipment and supplies. These items from operating suites and other medical locations nationwide often go into our nation’s landfills due to stringent insurance and legal restrictions that do not allow them to be used in other procedures even if they were never touched. REMEDY, Recovered Medical Equipment for the Developing World was started by Dr. Rosenblatt in 1991. Since that time, millions of dollars worth of equipment and supplies have been recovered and shipped to medical facilities in developing countries around the world where they are desperately needed.

What makes REMEDY even more important is that their efforts have been adopted by hospitals across the country, thus compounding the benefits of the program. The REMEDY web site serves as a link as well as a teaching tool for other facilities that have joined or are interested in becoming a part of the network.

Unfortunately, REMEDY is one of the many small non-profits that have been impacted by the current economic downturn. Despite their very modest budget, shortfalls in fund-raising have forced them to make several changes including the cutback of their minimal staff. Our funds were

designated to help them wherever the need was greatest. We believe that this is a program that must continue its good work which impacts both our environment and the well-being and health of people around the world.

» www.remedyinc.org, remedy2@yale.edu

Shalhevet

isr

For many years Miriam Freier has been a staunch advocate for Israel's adult disabled community. Forced for years to languish in institutional settings, many disabled people would only dream of an environment where they could maintain a certain sense of independence...to retire to bed when they might want to, to paint the walls of their room the color that they liked, to have dinner or not...what most able-bodied people take for granted. Miriam's dream was to make those simple comforts available to all disabled adults and that is what she has done with the completion of Shalhevet's apartment house situated on a lovely hill in Jerusalem. The units have been renovated in a way that makes them totally handicapped-accessible, and also includes a suitable room for a live-in caretaker. The building has a beautiful *moadim*, or common room where social events take place, and a part-time social worker who does whatever is needed to make the lives of each of these individuals as comfortable and meaningful as possible.

Often working against tremendous odds – government regulations, continual and frustrating fund-raising – it is Miriam's passion and diligence that has made Shalhevet possible. How great it would be if every disabled person could live in this beautiful independent environment. Most of our donation was sent to us by donors who requested it be used to help underwrite the cost of running the building's elevator — a critically important piece of equipment that allows everyone accessibility and independence.

» zerem@zahav.net.il

Volunteers in Psychotherapy

usa

“I think feeling that one contributes some way to the community, or to the world or whatever, to others, may be an important part of one's self-identity. I think we all have that need to feel we are contributing in some way to our community, to others.”

So wrote one of the people receiving psychotherapy from a unique organization based in Hartford, Connecticut. Volunteers in Psychotherapy was the creation of Dr. Richard Shulman, a therapist who was alarmed by the privacy problems and lack of flexibility that come about due to managed care.

In return for completely free or greatly reduced fees, participants in the VIP program agree to volunteer at a charity of their choosing. It is that simple. In the almost 10 years since VIP began almost 360 clients have earned about 3000 sessions with 12,000 hours of documented volunteer service — quite impressive, we would say!

» www.ctvip.org, ctvip@hotmail.com

POVERTY

“Surely you shall raise him up with you” – Lev. Chap. 19

African Refugees Development Company – ARDC

isr

Yohannes Bayu is the founder of the African Refugee Development Center. Himself a political refugee who escaped Ethiopia and arrived in Israel in 1997 on a tourist visa, Yohannes found a less than warm welcome in his adopted country despite Christian Ethiopians' strong spiritual connection to Israel. Yohannes' family was subjected to torture, imprisonment, harassment, and “unspeakable horrors” in their native country and while some escaped to other countries, Yohannes was drawn to Israel—the country he heard his mother mention in her daily prayers.

It took five years and a Supreme Court order for Yohannes to finally achieve political refugee status and it was this very personal experience that led him to respond to the plight of the thousands of African refugees who have arrived in Israel over the past few years. Those who escape through Egypt, if they are not shot by soldiers in that country, are immediately picked up by Israeli authorities and imprisoned. When the prison is full, they are put on a bus and taken to Tel Aviv where they are discharged near the old bus station and the beautiful Levinsky Park. It was this humanitarian crisis to which Yohannes responded and the African Refugees Development Company, ARDC, became a registered non-profit. Yohannes and his mostly-volunteer staff provide clothing, food, medical care, some basic education components ... whatever it takes to make the refugees' lives a bit safer and more comfortable.

» www.ardc-israel.org, info@ardc-israel.org

Christian Service Program usa

When the residents of Shreveport, Louisiana find themselves a bit down on their luck they are fortunate to have The Christian Service Program in their midst. Started in 1970 by Sister Margaret McCaffrey, the program was designed to help individuals who may not have a roof over their head, sufficient and nutritious food, clothing, emergency medicine needs or just someone to listen. After Sister Margaret's death, Brother Giovanni Reid has stepped in to lead the way. We are excited by the program's addition of a learning center complete with brand new computers which will be used to teach computer skills and technology as well as proposed Re-Entry and GED Programs. All of these programs will certainly help get many of the center's clients on the road to permanent recovery and independence.

Our funds were directed to specific items needed for the new computer center. As we recently read of Br. Giovanni's plans for this year we cannot help but be heartened by the group's dedication to the area's most vulnerable residents.

» www.christianserviceprogram.org
 » cservice@shreve.net

Female Hebrew Benevolent Society usa

If you live in Philadelphia and want to see women-power at its best, you need look no further than the Female Hebrew Benevolent Society, now the longest-running Jewish charitable organization in the United States. This all-volunteer group provides a safety net for hundreds of people who find themselves in difficult circumstances. Many elderly women receive help with dental care, emergency response systems and chair glides, as well as monthly food needs. Help is also offered to families whose economic circumstances prevent them from sending their children to summer camp.

With our friend Eileen Sklaroff continuing to guide this dedicated group of volunteers we know that vulnerable individuals and families can find help for their difficult situations.

» www.fhbs.org, tikkun36@verizon.net

House to House isr

The very first thing you notice about Darla Oz, who founded House to House with her husband after they retired to Israel, is the passion in her voice. Her eyes light up when she shares the stories of people whose lives have been improved because House to House has stepped in to help. Darla is very com-

mitted to helping people in Israel who would otherwise fall through the cracks. As Darla and her husband (known by the name Oz) planned their first visit to Israel in 1996 people gave them money to use to help needy Israelis they might meet on their journey. This same scenario played out in future trips and when the couple decided to retire to Israel, Darla knew exactly what she wanted to do.

This is deeply personal tzedakah work. Funds are used to help with food, school expenses, shoes, clothing, needs for Elders including a special project directed towards the needs of Shoah survivors. As you can imagine, the list is endless.

In our meeting with Darla we asked what she could use to help her and Oz continue with their work. Her answer? A taxi fund. They have found that many of the people they help (particularly elders) need to use cabs, rather than public transportation, and the costs are considerable. The Good People Fund has committed to underwriting a taxi fund to cover those expenses over the next year. We are thrilled to be part of their mitzvah work...it is direct, efficient, menschlich and most definitely carried out with love.

» www.housetohouseinfo.org
 » Israel@housetohouseinfo.org

Israel Free Loan Association isr

Numbers — it is the numbers that really get your attention when you read about the Israel Free Loan Association. Founded and led by Dr. Eliezer Jaffe since 1990, IFLA underscores Maimonides' teaching that a loan is better than charity. Eligible borrowers can seek loans for education, small businesses, adoption, non-profit needs and more. Survivors of terror attacks, large families, single parents, Ethiopians, physically challenged people and immigrants comprise the largest categories of individuals who apply for loans. Since its inception, loans in excess of \$93,000,000 have been extended, with a rate of default that runs less than 1%. We can think of no better resource for Israelis who find themselves in need of some help.

This is one of the best tzedakah investments we can make with funds entrusted to us.

» www.freeloan.org.il, ifla@freeloan.org.il

Romema Families and Zev Birger isr

Trudi Birger, z"l, was an angel who helped so many families in the very poor neighborhood of Romema in Jerusalem. Years ago, Trudi was approached by Jerusalem's late and famous mayor, Teddy Kollek, who begged her to help these families

who had so little. In Trudi, Teddy saw that her fiery determination and drive would help her in this monumental task. Trudi's goal was to provide the families with food, school supplies, extra fund for medicines...whatever was needed. But, most of all, she wanted to stop the cycle of poverty that was so pervasive and she knew the best way was to help the children in each of these families receive a good education that would lift them out of poverty. Today, hundreds of people in Israel are known as "Trudi's kids"...they are professionals, teachers, technicians...and they support their own families because Trudi cared.

Sadly, Trudi died quite suddenly a few years ago and left her beloved husband Zev Birger to carry on her work. He is as compassionate and caring as Trudi was and he has continued her work beautifully.

It is an honor for us to be able to help Zev as he keeps Trudi's memory alive by providing these families with whatever they may need. Our funds were used to help with food, education-related needs, underwriting large heating bills for the cold winter months—whatever Zev feels he must do to help.

» bzev@netvision.net.il

Sunday Friends

usa

Twelve years ago, Janis Baron was a typical suburban Mom with three teenage kids enjoying a comfortable life in sunny California. The one "problem" that gnawed away at her was that her kids never really knew adversity — not that she wanted them to be anything other than happy, but she knew that they really had to learn how others lived, that everyone did not lead an easy and comfortable life. She also knew that volunteerism, which was an important part of her own life, was something her kids and many of their friends never really experienced.

With the hope that she could somehow change that situation, Janis arranged to take her kids and some of their friends to a nearby homeless shelter where her hope was that the kids would interact and develop a connection. She could not have been more disappointed with the outcome — the shelter kids just did not "connect" with their visitors. But...that all changed when she came up with the idea of having the kids work together to clean up the grounds around the shelter. The reward for cleaning up was stickers which seemed to somehow inspire the kids (and then their parents) to do more. From cleaning up to creating original artwork to beautify the shelter, Janis had discovered the key to a successful program.

Today, Sunday Friends runs a twice-monthly program in a local San Jose (CA) school. The program attracts the area's

poorest families (mostly first or second generation immigrants) who work together with volunteers "empowering families in need to break the cycle of poverty. Children and parents earn basic necessities while they contribute to their community, learn life skills and develop self-sufficiency." They contribute to their community by offering the participants classes in parenting, developing a good work ethic, perfecting job skills and other critical "life lessons". One of the activities that we particularly like involves kids and/or parents sitting down to write thank you notes to donors who contribute to Sunday Friends. Here they learn several skills and also perfect their language and writing.

In return for involvement in the day's program, participants earn credits which they can use in the "Sunday Friends Treasure Chest" which contains very important basic necessities everyone needs — diapers, school supplies, personal items.

The Sunday Friends model works. A visit to their web site describes many successful pieces of this program that change lives for the participants and also for the volunteers who contribute their time to make it all happen. San Jose is not unlike many other parts of this country. Think of how many people could be helped if this model was adopted in other regions.

Our funds were used to stock the "Treasure Chest"— something that is becoming harder and harder to do with the increased demand and the decrease in donations.

» www.sundayfriends.org, mail@sundayfriends.org

The Forgotten People Fund

isr

The Forgotten People Fund is an all-volunteer group that works in Netanya, home to Israel's largest Ethiopian population, most living in very poor conditions. FPF volunteers, led by our friends Aida Miller and Anne and David Silverman, establish personal relationships with many individuals and families and offer them friendship and also help with food, education costs, health education, clothing...the list is endless. They are a true lifesaver for so many in that city.

When we visited Israel this past February we enjoyed a visit with Aida and Jan Gaines, one of the American volunteers who spend several months in Netanya. It was inspiring to hear about the group's many programs particularly the work they do with senior Ethiopians — lectures, a choir, an *ulpan* and a nutritious breakfast that is served three days a week.

This past year the group celebrated its 10th Anniversary and also received an award for outstanding volunteer service from Netanya's mayor. We have always been proud of the work that we do with the FPF — they are all-volunteer and nearly 100%

of the funds they raise are directed to helping families and individuals with their most basic needs. We can't wait for the 20th anniversary celebration!

» www.fpf.org.il, hihosilv@netvision.net.il

The Redistribution Center – Ranya Kelly

usa

Ranya Kelly is the dedicated and indefatigable founder of The Redistribution Center in Colorado. Over 20 years ago, while searching through a dumpster for a carton in which to mail some gifts, Ranya discovered over 500 pairs of brand new shoes discarded by a nearby store. It was that discovery that led to the formation of The Redistribution Center, Ranya's organization which has rescued, since its founding, over 665,048 (by latest count) pairs of new shoes and millions of dollars worth of other brand new, perfectly usable clothing, bedding, building supplies and more from local and national retail outlets. (Totaling more than \$39.1 million since starting her work). What was destined for a landfill is now filling the needs of impoverished people in the Denver area and also other parts of the United States. Ranya has sent two 53' trailers to the Gulf Coast of Mississippi, ravaged by Hurricane Katrina three years ago and her efforts have also benefited our nation's soldiers who have returned from fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In addition to the considerable ecologic and humanitarian importance of recycling all of these hard goods, Ranya began a small food pantry and has been able to fill it with both donated and purchased food items from manufacturers and local food stores. There has never been a shortage of recipients for the food but recently Ranya is seeing increasing numbers as traditional food pantries have to turn people away. The need is outpacing the available supply and to-date she has distributed more than 400,000 pounds of sustenance.

In the past few months Ranya has shared more and more stories about returning veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan who have sustained unspeakable injuries, and are now back home with insufficient resources to help them get on with their lives. Their stories are tragic... a female soldier who, after returning from Iraq, resumed her life, became pregnant and delivered a baby girl. Soon after, she was diagnosed with colon cancer, she and her husband lost their rented home and her husband lost his job. What did they need? Diapers. They did not have enough money for diapers. In addition, Ranya tells us that she has six veterans waiting for couches... couches! While the VA may get them a place to live, they do not necessarily furnish it.

The stories are endless and our funds are sent to Ranya to help

wherever we can make a difference.

» www.redistributioncenter.org,

» rci-kelly@earthlink.net

THE WORLD OVER

“All the world is really just a narrow bridge” – Pirkei Avot 1:6

Cuba–America Jewish Mission

Based in Berkeley, California, June Safran, head of the Cuba–America Jewish Mission (CAJM), has dedicated a good part of her life to improving the lives of the remaining Jews living in Cuba. For years she has traveled on her own or with groups, introducing them to this small and yet vital community. She and the many volunteers who work with her have encouraged and fostered a return to Judaism, both culturally and religiously.

Over the past year Cuba was in the path of both Hurricanes Gustave and Ike which were the greatest natural disasters in the history of the island. No aspect of life in Cuba has been untouched — hundreds of thousands of homes destroyed, infrastructure ripped asunder, and the country's agriculture (critical to both those living on the island and for export) nearly completely destroyed.

Our donation to CAJM was directed to resolving some of the many problems that resulted from these devastating storms.

» www.cajm.org, mission@cajm.org

The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee – JDC

During the past year, the world has witnessed several human and natural disasters. Within only a few days we learned of the huge loss of life and infrastructure in earthquake-stricken China, and also the tragedy in Myanmar where a cyclone devastated so much of the land and left thousands dead. In addition, the Republic of Georgia in the Former Soviet Union endured a major humanitarian crisis during the Russian invasion last August which left many without food and other

critical needs.

Because the JDC works in many remote areas we rely on their expertise when dealing with these types of situations. We are comfortable knowing that our funds will be used quickly and efficiently. In each of these disaster situations, the Good People Fund sent funds to help in the relief effort.

» www.jdc.org, info@jdc.org

Jewish World Watch – Do Not Stand Idly By



Jewish World Watch was the response of Los Angeles-area synagogues to the genocide being carried out in Sudan and neighboring Chad. The original founders were brought together by Rabbi Harold Schulweis and included synagogues from all major branches of Judaism. The group has been guided by the remembrance of the Holocaust and the wish to prevent any further genocide in the world. Their efforts have been directed to advocacy, divestment, youth involvement, conflict resolution and other important measures which will contribute to bringing an end to this nightmare.

Funds sent to JWW were donor-designated and directed to their very successful solar-powered cooker project which allows women in the refugee camps to use solar cookers to prepare healthy meals for their families. By using solar power, the women do not have to leave the safety of the camps to gather firewood and thus risk the likelihood of attack.

» www.jewishworldwatch.org
» info@jewishworldwatch.org

Kulanu



“Kulanu”, a Hebrew term which refers to “all of us” is also the name of a small, grass-roots organization dedicated to discovering and assisting little-known Jewish communities found in remote corners of the world. Founded in 1994 by a group led by Jack Zeller, today Kulanu is headed by the very capable Harriet Bograd.

We have followed Kulanu’s work for many years and can recall their first contacts in the mid-90’s with the now-famous Abuyudaya community in Uganda. Today, Kulanu supports two schools, agricultural programs, women’s programs, clean water projects, health, micro-credit financing, tourism, and other social and economic programs in the region. They have also been instrumental in providing training to the community’s first Rabbi, as well as to a student from Ghana who is studying to become a rabbi in that country.

Our funds have been used to cover food costs for several children in the Abuyudaya schools as well as for the costs involved in training the Ghanaian rabbinical student.

Indeed, it is olam katan — a truly small (Jewish) world in which we live and we are delighted to be part of Kulanu’s fine work.

Attention! Bar and Bat Mitzvah students — the organization’s web site has several exciting ideas for projects — check them out.

» www.kulanu.org, info3@kulanu.org

MayaWorks



MayaWorks is dedicated to the welfare of Guatemalan women and their community by promoting and marketing the beautifully crafted products the women produce. Our connection to them is through one of their most successful products. Who would have ever thought that Maya women in remote parts of Guatemala could produce the most beautiful kippot using their exceptional sense of color and expertise in crocheting? How would they even know what a kippah was? In what was perhaps the most amazing example of mitzvah-thinking we have ever known, Becky Berman, z”l, a volunteer for the organization was more than familiar with the stunning hackeysacks so many of the women created. In one “Eureka” moment, she realized that if they could make hackeysacks they could certainly produce kippot, and before long some prototypes were produced and eventually sales began to pick up here in the States. We have seen the beauty and quality of these kippot improve each year. Take a visit to the group’s web site — you are sure to be dazzled by what you see. If you are about to celebrate a simcha, the Maya kippot make a special statement about both your taste and your tzedakah values. You will not be disappointed.

» www.mayaworks.org, info@mayaworks.org

Check out
www.goodpeoplefund.org/voices
for inspiring words about mitzvahs,
tzedakah and good people written
by our guest writers

ANIMAL-HUMAN INTERACTION

“Tzar Ba’alei Chayim” – Treat animals with kindness, cause them no harm

Humans and Animals in Mutual Assistance-Israel (HAMA Israel)

HAMA is the acronym for Humans and Animals in Mutual Assistance, a well-suited definition of the work carried out by HAMA’s founder Avshalom Beni and his human and animal staff. Animal assisted therapy is complementary therapy used in many different medical and psychological settings. We all know about more traditional forms of AAT; what makes HAMA special is that the animals Avshalom uses, his co-therapists, are often victims of abuse or abandonment, as are many of the clients they help. The fact that they can become an integral part of a therapeutic team to help others is significant and most remarkable when you see the therapy in action.

Avshalom’s expertise in this special therapy has been directed to several different populations in distress. For many years he has worked at two hospitals which house elderly Shoah survivors diagnosed with schizophrenia. It is amazing to observe the animals and the elders interact and Avshalom has documented extraordinary inroads in professional journals. He has also had success working with students with ADD-ADHD as well as with troubled father-son groups.

We have met many of Avshalom’s “staff”. Frankie, affectionately known as Frankie-the-Crocodile-Dog, due to the disfiguring trauma his jaw suffered at the hands of abusers, does look remarkably like a crocodile, albeit one who is gentle and kind! Avshalom’s first therapy animal was Doobie...a gentle Canaan breed who Avshalom rescued after serious trauma. Despite losing one of his front legs to the abuse and enduring severe trauma to other parts of his body, Doobie went on to live a noble and meaningful life as one of Avshalom’s staff. (Sadly, Doobie succumbed to heart disease a few years ago but not before helping so many others regain their strength and self-respect.)

As one would imagine with a “staff” of more than 25 therapy animals, Avshalom’s dog food bills are fairly substantial and some of our funds were used to underwrite that cost.

» www.hama-israel.org.il, hama-israel@ghi.org.il

Israel Guide Dog Center for the Blind

Several years ago we read a short piece that the Israel Guide Dog Center for the Blind shared in one of its newsletters. The story has stayed with us and we use it here to explain far better than anything else we could write just how important the work of this organization is to blind Israelis. The Center received a short note from a man who had been given a guide dog...“Generally people like my dog very much, but there are some exceptions. Once I was sitting on a bus and a woman who saw Shadow (his dog) refused to enter the bus because she was afraid. A passenger who sat near me said in Yiddish, ‘Madame, you should not be afraid of him - he is not a dog, he is a Tzaddik - he makes Mitzvot.’”

For blind Israelis, the IGDCB is the place to go to attain independence and mobility by using a guide dog. Noach Braun and Norm Leventhal, his America-based co-founder, have worked for decades to make the Center what it is today. Should you be planning a visit to Israel and want to see these miracles-in-action, we suggest you make an appointment to see the Center — the combination of warm hearts, wet noses and soft, fluffy fur make it a perfect place to see one of the best examples of animal-human interaction.

Our donation was donor-designated.

» www.israelguidedog.org, info@igdcb.org

Israel National Therapeutic Riding Association – INTRA

Anita and Giora Shkedi, founders of the Israel National Therapeutic Riding Association (INTRA), have been in the forefront of advancing this unique and highly effective form of therapy in Israel for decades. The horse is an animal unique in that its stride most closely approximates the movement of a human being. Someone who is disabled due to a brain injury, blindness, neurological impairments, (in truth, the list is endless), sits atop a horse and the horse’s movements will stimulate muscles and nerves normally unaffected by traditional therapy. We have witnessed this treatment numerous times and can attest to the amazing improvements participants experience.

The Center is located on a spectacular piece of land on the Mediterranean beach near Netanya, which in itself, provides a therapeutic experience. During the years of ongoing terror attacks, Anita and her staff worked with scores of people, both civilian and military, trying to bring about improvement to bodies and minds wracked by physical and emotional trauma. As we write this, plans are in the works for a major program that will involve people suffering from PTSD due to war-related actions.

If you cannot travel to Israel to witness this special type of therapy, we suggest you visit one of the hundreds of centers found throughout the United States. You will not be disappointed.

Part of our donation was donor-directed towards the purchase of a new horse as well as towards some of the important therapeutic work INTRA is carrying out with specific populations.

» www.intra.org.il, friendsofINTRA@aol.com

Other Tikkun Olam...

“In a place where there is no good person, strive to be a good person”

– Pirkei Avot 2:5

African American Jewish Coalition

Organized in the 1980's, the AAJC exemplifies the meaning of grass-roots activism and desire to promote racial harmony on the local level. Larry Linkov and Phil Lefton were retail business partners in a small N.J. community. Eddie Lewis was initially a customer who soon became a friend. In time, the three extended their friendship and home visits eventually grew to sharing their religious experiences as well. The more time they spent together, the more they realized “*we are more similar than different.*” The African American Jewish Coalition was the product of their friendship.

Though many years have passed since the group's inception, the founders' goals still guide their work. Their non-religious focus includes three programs each year which bring together Jewish Americans and African Americans in a bond of true brotherhood. A Freedom Seder, celebration of the life of Dr.

Martin Luther King, and a mid-December multicultural holiday celebration are programs implemented by the adults and also the youth group which they have developed and encouraged.

The group works on a minimal budget and our donation was used to help underwrite the costs of the Spring Freedom Seder.

» www.aajcnj.org, rk@aajcnj.org

A Package From Home

Barbara Silverman's resume as a volunteer is pretty impressive. She spent endless hours advocating for Soviet Jewry in the 1980's, as well as preparing home-cooked meals for Israel's soldiers she would meet on the road. Barbara is now the founder and inspiration behind A Package From Home which began in her living room immediately after the start of the terror attacks in Israel in 2000. Dedicated to helping Israel's chayalim bodedim (lone soldiers) and other soldiers, Barbara, with the help of volunteers and one part-time staff person, prepares packages which contain both essentials and “treats” that provide a measure of comfort to those who serve on the front lines. Throughout the terror attacks that began in 2000, the Second Lebanon War in 2006, the recently completed Operation Cast Lead, and during the uneasy peace that prevailed in between, thousands of soldiers have benefited from both the practical and the modest indulgences Barbara includes in her packages. In winter, soldiers are so grateful to receive the gatkies (long underwear) or gloves and in summer nothing is better than a new clean t-shirt to absorb the summer heat. This past year, an Israeli woman developed a pattern for a hand-knit hat for the soldiers and as a result, hundreds of people around the world have been knitting these hats for Barbara to include in her package. (Instructions for the hat may be found on the Package From Home web site).

The many letters and emails Barbara has received from grateful soldiers confirms just how important this is to the soldiers' physical and emotional well-being. With almost 150,000 packages to her credit, we wish Barbara the strength to keep going to 300,000!

All funds donated to APFH were donor-recommended.

» www.apackagefromhome.org

» emess@netvision.net.il

Hurricane Katrina and its Aftermath

usa

August, 2009 will mark the 4th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina which struck the Gulf Coast of the United States on August 28, 2005. Today, the country is left with a humanitarian crisis which has yet to be fully resolved. We have traveled to the area on several occasions and can attest to the serious destruction of both infrastructure and housing. Rural areas seem to be the last to be helped and people who were profoundly poor before the hurricane are still poor, but are now dealing with the additional effects of the storm. Our work in the region has been two-fold. With the help of local residents whom we know well and trust, we have been able to respond to many personal needs such as paying an overdue utility bill or purchasing medications when no other resources are available. We were also successful in bringing a group of religious school and day school students together in order to pool their tzedakah funds to purchase overhead projectors on behalf of a Mississippi public school that was opening its new facility after the destruction of their original building during the storm.

The second part of our efforts involved a nearby family that wanted to make Hanukkah more meaningful for everyone by traveling to New Orleans for a week of mitzvahs and holiday celebration. We helped them connect to Samantha Lakin, a Teach for America volunteer working with a special education class in one of the area's poorest neighborhoods. Within a very short time the family contacted Samantha's class, exchanged letters and eventually provided all of her students with new books, teaching materials for the classroom and gift cards for holiday food.

The needs in this part of the country have not been resolved. We hope to be able to return to the region again to help in whatever ways we can identify.

Peace Through Humor

usa

We have known Maureen Kushner, the founder of Peace Through Humor for many years — she is a fine example of a woman-with-a-passion as well as a woman-on-a-mission. Her passion and her mission is the Peace Through Humor Project which she started several years ago. Formerly an art teacher, Maureen worked in the New York City schools and has also used her considerable talents with kids who experienced terror attacks and life-threatening illnesses in Los Angeles, Oklahoma and other parts of the country.

Peace Through Humor has been Maureen's focus for more than ten years. She has traveled throughout Israel visiting kids in Israeli, Arab, Bedouin and Druze schools where she worked

with them to develop original paintings based upon the theme of war and peace. The artwork has become part of a traveling exhibit which was adopted by the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs and has traveled more miles than most of us will ever do in our lifetime.

Despite its impressive run, the expenses of the exhibit have been primarily borne by Maureen, including framing, captioning, art supplies, and shipping costs. Our donation is used to help Maureen cover many of these expenses so that the message in the children's artwork will never be forgotten.

» 122 Park Place, Brooklyn, NY 11217

» maureenkushner@hotmail.com

Sderot

isr

We made our first visit to Sderot when we visited Israel this past February. It was an eye-opening experience. As you travel the streets of the city, outwardly nothing looks particularly different. It all looks "normal" with neat homes and gardens, an abundance of traffic circles that can surely confuse you as you navigate, seeking a particular address. Even the bomb shelters that appear here and there do not seem out of place. What does grab you, though, is a visit to a small grassy knoll, strewn with garbage and papers and an occasional wildflower blowing in the constant wind. It is from this modest hilltop that you look westward and see, with no need for binoculars, Gaza. It is close — very close. It wasn't difficult to count the number of floors in the apartment complexes nor could you miss what was once the flourishing fields that produced so much of Israel's famous fruit and vegetables. It is at that moment that you understand the strategic importance of that part of Israel.

It was with this startling revelation that we also came to understand the prolonged trauma and unrest that the area's citizens have endured for years. It is no wonder that so many people walk around with symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder; that kids are still wetting their beds despite the fact that they are long past their toddler years; that people suffer from constipation and never know the luxury of a more than one-minute shower because you don't know when the *tzeva adom*, or color red alarm will sound and you have but a minute or two to reach a shelter.

Our work in the region has been carried out by various individuals and organizations that have taken on the task of providing respite trips for kids and Shabbat weekends for families, help for individuals whose situations have become known to us through trusted individuals, help with food needs...the list is long.

Though the *tzeva adom* alarm rings less frequently these days, we doubt that the problems this city faces will disappear very quickly. We were happy that donors allowed us the privilege of being able to step in when necessary.

The Bookman

usa

If you ever wondered where the lonely Maytag repairman goes when he retires, look to Irwin Herman, more popularly known as The Bookman. Once in the appliance business in cold and windy Chicago, Irwin and his wife retired to sunny San Diego, figuring anything was better than Chicago's frigid winters. Before long Irwin realized that retirement was not for him. It took a visit with a friend to a nearby prison for Irwin to discover something that really "got him". The friend delivered books to prison inmates who truly appreciated these gifts. Books, something we all have in abundance and something for which we all are usually trying to find good homes. Soon Irwin found himself at garage sales and book stores and anywhere else he could find books at greatly reduced prices. In very little time Irwin ran out of space to store all of these tomes and he had to find even more storage space.

Today, The Bookman and his merry band of volunteer "elves", working out of donated warehouse space, distribute books free of charge to schools, prisons, libraries and more, worldwide.

» www.bookman.org, bookmansandiego@yahoo.com

Tzvika Levi and the Lone Soldiers Program

isr

While service in the Israeli army is compulsory for every Israeli who reaches the age of 18 (with the exception of those who agree to National Service), many more young people from around the world choose to enlist as *chayalim bodedim*, or lone soldiers. For these young men and women, army life can be doubly difficult without the support of close family nearby. Where do you live when you are not on active duty? With whom can you share a holiday or Shabbat meal? Many of these lone soldiers are fortunate in that they have been assigned to Lt.-Colonel Tzvika Levy (ret), one of the IDF's officers responsible for this group (as well as for soldiers who come to the army from very poor families). Tzvika is a warm and caring army officer who takes a deep interest in each of his charges and becomes their *eema* and *abba* in absentia. He organizes homes for them on *kibbutzim*, often pairing them with an adoptive family who can step in when needed. If you do not have a toaster-oven, a fan, a blanket, a fleece jacket — Tzvika is the one you can count on to help. We have known him to fly a parent to Israel to see their child when they would

otherwise not be able to cover the cost of a ticket...or to step in when serious health issues arise and parents cannot be there. He is a true surrogate parent who gives far more than what his job requires.

Funds expended for Tzvika's important work went to numerous items of comfort for his soldiers and were all underwritten by donor-recommended grants.

Yaakov Maimon Volunteers

isr

We know that Israel is the ultimate melting pot of diverse cultures and that since its inception in 1948 numerous groups have migrated to the country from all over the world. How do all of these immigrants adjust to their new home? How do they navigate the bureaucracy? Learn the language? For many, Yaakov Maimon Volunteers have provided that support, be it emotional, practical or social. The group was founded by Yaakov Maimon, a colorful man who approached students and anyone else he could find and pressed them into service on behalf of the recent *olim* (immigrants). They taught Hebrew and showed them the way in their homeland. It has been more than 50 years and though Maimon died, the organization continues its all-volunteer work, now under the fine leadership of Eiton Green.

Today, much of the group's focus is on the Ethiopian and Russian migrations which have impacted the country in many ways. From after-school activities to social programs for senior citizens, tutoring, holiday celebrations, trips...the Maimon volunteers facilitate it all with not one shekel spent on personnel. When you think that the group operates on a budget of only slightly more than \$40,000 yearly you realize just how important they are to those new to the country. Without programs such as the Maimon Volunteers, the State of Israel would never be able to offer the appropriate amount of support that all *émigrés* need as they adjust to their new lives. Our funds were used to help the Maimon group provide for these needs.

» eiton@tzuba.org.il

Check out
www.goodpeoplefund.org/voices
 for inspiring words about mitzvahs,
 tzedakah and good people written
 by our guest writers

HUMAN NEEDS AND SELF- SUFFICIENCY

“Let other people’s dignity be as precious to you as your own”

– Pirkei Avot 2:15

Special Individual Needs

 

While the vast majority of our work is done with established organizational efforts, the Good People Fund is also committed to providing help when other resources are either not available or are too cumbersome or slow to respond to an emergency need. How we do this is dependent upon very trust-worthy individuals we have known for years. Many are social workers, medical professionals, teachers...individuals working with populations that are often over-burdened and under-served. They are our eyes and ears in both Israel and the United States. While we cannot always step in, the times that we do we know that our funds are making a profound difference. Over the past several months we have been able to use our donors’ tzedakah for needs as wide-ranging as helping to make a Jewish funeral for a woman who died with no resources or family to help; paying the rent so that a family of five would not lose their home; purchasing a computer for an accomplished young student whose family can barely put food on the table...the list is long and in each case, we know that we have effected a profound change for someone on behalf of the donors who have entrusted their tzedakah to us. It feels so, so good.

Shoah Survivors and Righteous Gentiles

 

As the years pass, the number of Holocaust survivors and Righteous Gentiles who live out their final years in poverty still shocks us. In Israel, almost 25% of the 233,700 survivors residing there live below the poverty line. In the United States

data from only a few years ago indicates that of the approximately 174,000 survivors living in this country, a similar 25% live below the poverty line with a comparable number still too poor to provide even the basics needed to survive. Most survivors face increased medical needs that come from both the normal aging process as well as the circumstances of their earlier experiences, putting even more demands on an already minimal income. Because of relationships that we have developed over the years with social workers, doctors and others, we are able to step in when additional resources are not available. Funds have been allocated for rent assistance, food needs, transportation and utility bills. With most survivors in their 80’s and 90’s, the time to help them is quickly slipping away. The need to step in is critically important.

(Further information on our work with Righteous Gentiles can be found in the entry marked ATZUM under the title, Well-Being.)

The Blue Card



Originally established in Germany in the 1930’s to help Jews who were affected by the rising specter of anti-Semitism, it was at the end of that decade that the organization established itself here in America, hoping to assist the very early refugees who were able to escape Europe during the war.

Today, The Blue Card helps nearly 1000 survivors, many of whom, though not all, live in the New York area. The funds that they distribute to survivors who are often ineligible for other Holocaust-related support, provide for health-related needs, emergency response systems for elders living alone, food assistance and other emergency needs. The majority of people being served by The Blue Card live under federal poverty guidelines and without this assistance would have tremendous difficulties.

The fact that 100% of donations go directly to help survivors, makes any contribution very powerful. As time passes and survivors grow older and more frail, the urgency of The Blue Card’s work increases.

» www.bluecard.org, blue.card@verizon.net

Check out
www.goodpeoplefund.org/diaries
for more Good People stories

Additional Notes

Movie Night

We are happy to announce that we have two special DVD's available to anyone interested in viewing first-hand some of the very same good people we have described in this report.

The films were originally created for Ziv Tzedakah Fund and have been used by educators and lay people to inspire and teach anyone viewing them just how they can make a difference. The Israel version features eight stand-alone segments which highlight the work of people you have read about in this report... Anita Shkedi, Barbara Silverman, Avshalom Beni and others. The U.S. version features ten stand-alone segments which include the work of Ranya Kelly, PK Beville, Syd Mandelbaum and more.

These films are tremendous teaching tools for the classroom (a Teacher's Guide for each is available on our website) as well as for family viewing. Please contact Naomi Eisenberger at Naomi@goodpeoplefund.org or go to http://goodpeoplefund.org/Mitzvah_Movies to order your copy.

The Good People Fund, Educators and the Bar and Bat Mitzvah

We invite you to check out the Education and Simchas tabs on our web site. In each category you will find ideas for projects, lessons for educators, families and students and much more.

We also invite anyone seeking ideas about meaningful mitzvah projects to be in touch with us directly. There are innumerable ways that we can suggest to make the project both personal and effective.

A Final Note From the Executive Director

We thank you for taking the time to read this first account of our activities. We hope that we will be blessed to continue to do this good work for many years to come. It is, without a doubt, one of the most personal, direct and meaningful ways to give tzedakah.

As I sit at my desk day after day, I often wish that everyone could observe the process as we learn of needs and are able to act quickly and efficiently to meet them. It was that wish that led me to develop the Tzedakah Diaries that appear on our website. Other than sitting at my side day after day, those diary entries are the best way anyone can *feel* this good work and experience the same high I receive as I go about my day. Someone recently shared that he reads the entries faithfully as they provide him with a good boost of endorphins!

One final note... I would be remiss if I did not mention a small group of people who deserve a very big Yasher Koach for their work on behalf of the Good People Fund. Without the support and wisdom of our Board of Trustees and a few others who believed in this effort, we would not be here today, just one year since we began this work. Each of these people has taken on the responsibility of guiding our efforts with thoughtfulness, wisdom and a personal desire to better lives. They have willingly and enthusiastically given their time to travel to the metropolitan New York area to meet as a board several times each year. As I listen to their deliberations and discussions, I often think how fortunate I am to be able to work with them.

We encourage you to share our work with others and if you want to join us on this journey, please consider a donation towards our efforts.

Please use the attached envelope or,
you can make an online donation at:
www.goodpeoplefund.org/donate



Statement of Activities and Functional Expenses (unaudited) for the Period March 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009

Support and Revenue:				Total
Contributions				\$839,313
Investment Income				642
Total Support and Revenue				839,955
	Program Services	Management and General	Fundraising	Total
Total Grants:	523,429			523,429
Salaries*	33,918	4,240	4,240	42,398
Payroll taxes*	10,812	1,352	1,352	13,516
Webhosting and Development	5,731	716	716	7,163
Credit Card Fees	3,309	414	414	4,137
Other Salaries	2,542	318	318	3,178
Travel (Donee site visits)	2,000	250	250	2,500
Administration	1,373	172	172	1,717
Professional Fees	1,280	160	160	1,600
D&O Insurance	1,184	148	148	1,480
Telephone	701	88	88	877
Advertising*	676	85	85	846
Postage and Shipping	627	78	78	783
Bank Charges	461	58	58	577
Insurance (Workers Comp)	455	57	57	569
Payroll Processing Fee	426	53	53	532
Office Supplies	410	51	51	512
Printing	299	37	37	373
Software	203	25	25	253
Filing Fees	182	23	23	228
Office Equipment	127	15	15	157
Total Expenses	590,145	8,340	8,340	606,825
Change in Net Assets				233,130
Net Assets at March 1, 2008				-
Net Assets at March 31, 2009				\$233,130

*These costs were underwritten by specific donations made available for the purpose.

Notes:

1. Our fiscal year is July 1-June 30. We commenced work in March, 2008 and have not prepared a separate audited report for our first three months of operation. Instead, we will complete a special 15 month audit (that includes both the initial three months of operation in 2008 and full fiscal 2009) following the end of the fiscal year at June 30, 2009.
2. Some expenses listed above are non-recurring start-up expenses.



Allocations

Organization Allocation

HUNGER

General	16,339.43
Beit Frankforter	1,055.00
Clara Hammer	5,085.00*
Darchei Tzion	500.00
Family to Family	3,650.00
Fugee Fridays	257.54
Miryam Torres	500.99
Postville	4,137.00
Rock and Wrap It Up!	5,850.00
Stop Hunger Now	360.00
Table to Table	850.00*
The Bagel Brigade	1,000.00
Tova Cohen	500.00
Zehava and Karyn - Neighborhood Food	1,676.58

ELDERS

Alice Jonah	5,000.00
Am Echad	3,000.00
Challah for Heroes	50.00
Project Ezra	4,500.00
Second Wind Dreams	550.00
SongWriting Works™	3,250.00

KIDS

Bet Hayeled	10,075.00
Big Brothers Big Sisters	16,156.00*
Birthday Angels	3,483.00
Dental Volunteers in Israel	295.00*
Homerun Hopefuls	750.00
Lev Leytzan	1,700.00
St. Joseph's Baby Corner	1,537.03
The Quincy Kids	1,874.57
Warm Woolies	400.00

WELL-BEING

A Gift of Comfort	600.00
Amuta for Emotional Support	2,724.00
ATZUM	4,150.00
Books, Bears and Bonnets	1,000.00
Casting for Recovery	1,000.00
Gift of Life	270.00
Hosts for Hospitals	500.00
Project Debby	750.00
REMEDY	3,500.00
Shalhevet	2,700.00
Volunteers in Psychotherapy	2,500.00

Organization Allocation

POVERTY

African Refugees Development Center	800.00
Christian Service Program	1,549.96
Female Hebrew Benevolent Society	250.00
House to House	300.00
Israel Free Loan Association	5,750.00*
Romema Families and Zev Birger	7,600.00
Sunday Friends	2,750.00
The Forgotten People Fund	52,244.00*
The Redistribution Center	7,500.00

THE WORLD-OVER

Cuba America Jewish Mission	750.00
JDC - The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee	650.00
Jewish World Watch - Do Not Stand Idly By	185.00*
Kulanu	1,500.00
MayaWorks	1,440.00

ANIMAL-HUMAN INTERACTION

HAMA	10,701.00
Israel Guide Dog Center for the Blind	875.00*
Israel National Therapeutic Riding Association	20,275.00*

OTHER TIKKUN OLAM

African American Jewish Coalition	250.00
A Package From Home	201,739.23*
Hurricane Katrina	4,979.58
Peace Through Humor	650.00
Sderot	10,180.00
The Bookman	500.00
Tzvika Levy and the Lone Soldier Program	31,112.41*
Yaakov Maimon Volunteers	2,500.00

HUMAN NEEDS AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Special Individual Needs	35,954.41
Shoah Survivors and Righteous Gentiles	6,034.99
The Blue Card	500.00

* A significant portion of this grant was donor recommended.

To make an online donation go to
www.goodpeoplefund.org/Donate