

# Jewish Gift Closet given Good People Fund grant

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MILLBURN, New Jersey (Press Release) — As the result of a national online search to identify visionaries changing the world around them, the Good People Fund (GPF) has welcomed Helene Bortz and the San Diego based non-profit, The Jewish Gift Closet-San Diego Community G'mach as the latest grantee of the national *Tzedakah* micro-philanthropic fund ([www.goodpeoplefund.org](http://www.goodpeoplefund.org)). GPF seeks unique and highly effective programs led by good people, and invests in their exciting *tikkun olam* (repairing the world) work.



The G'mach was one of over 170 entities to apply to receive funding, professional development and guidance from The Good People Fund. The 12-week process included an intense crowdfunding campaign run on the Jewish crowdfunding platform Jewcer. The G'mach and five other non-profits were among the finalists that collectively raised through crowdfunding over \$19,000 and then received matching grants totaling \$21,000 from The Good People Fund. Together, the crowdfunding and matching grants generated over \$40,000. Since the completion of the campaign, the G'mach has joined the 69 other on-going GPF grantees in the US and Israel.

The G'mach, an acronym for Gemilut Chasadim or deeds of loving kindness, is San Diego's only gift closet. The G'mach is a place where people donate items they have no use for. Items donated to the G'mach are given for free to recipients in need from a warehouse located off of Miramar Road. The G'mach is unique since it also attempts to find solutions for those in need, including; professional adult mentoring & advocacy; rent subsidies; emergency cash needs; Shabbat and holiday meals, internships, youth group workshops and family life cycle needs.

The G'mach was founded by Bortz during the economic downturn in June 2009 when she became increasingly aware that many Jewish families were experiencing financial difficulties. Along with Myrice Goldberg, the two opened their first location in a building lent by a friend. Shortly after, donations of clothing, household appliances and baby equipment began to arrive which necessitated the rental of a local warehouse where they ultimately set up a no-cost shopping experience for those needing goods. As they spoke with clients, they soon became aware of the need for emergency services such as rent and job mentorship. Those services have also been added to what the G'mach provides.

They learned that many of those they were helping were isolated and disenfranchised and would benefit from connections with caring individuals and communities. "We decrease their social isolation and elevate their human dignity by connecting each family/individual client to a caring person in the community or opportunity to be part of a synagogue community especially over the Jewish holidays," explains Bortz. "Needs are assessed on an individual basis and many clients are not only impoverished but have special needs or may have mental illness. We treat each client with dignity and caring as we would want a family member to be treated."

Naomi Eisenberger, founding Executive Director of The Good People Fund explains "Helene and Myrice recognized that there was a significant vacuum for these families and individuals and their needs were going unmet."

So how did the G'mach go from crowdfunding finalist to GPF grantee? Naomi offers the following: "In

addition to raising funds during the crowdfunding campaign, they became a grantee because the G'mach actually lives the mission of the Good People Fund. They are passionate individuals who spend their time improving the lives of those who need help; visionaries who see creative solutions where others see problems or turn a blind eye. Like so many of our grantees, they want to make an even greater impact but just don't have the resources of a development staff or significant budget and that is where we step in."

In addition to supporting their current programs, the G'mach plans to apply the new funds to reach more single women with small children, and others who have recently become unemployed. They plan to distribute supplemental rent in emergency situations, while they help create a more stable long-term plan with vocational mentoring and networking for jobs.

Now housed in a permanent warehouse, the G'mach serves hundreds of needy families and individuals throughout the San Diego community with additional programs and services. Further information or ways to support the G'mach can be found at [www.goodpeoplefund.org](http://www.goodpeoplefund.org).

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Preceding provided by Good People Fund