



RESPECTABILITY

Mitzvah Menschen

Gateways: Access to Jewish Education

Executive Director Arlene Remz and Director Nancy Mager

March 2016

Special Thanks to:





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Mitzvah Menschen

Fostering a Social Life Through Social Action

Introducing Arlene Remz and Nancy Mager

Arlene Remz is the Executive Director of Gateways: Access to Jewish Education, the central organization for Jewish special education in Greater Boston. Arlene began her career in special education as a counselor in the Tikvah Program at Camp Ramah in New England, but for many years her professional life in special education was separate from her volunteer work in the Jewish community. Through Gateways she has brought together these two passions—working to ensure that every Jewish child can access a Jewish education.



Nancy Mager is the Director of Jewish Education Programs for Gateways and has worked in the field of special education as a teacher and consultant, and administrator for over 20 years. Nancy has extensive training and experience in autism spectrum disorders, applied behavior analysis, and Social Thinking™. Nancy holds a Master's in Education from Simmons College through the New England Center for Children's partnership program, and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from Boston University.



Mitzvah Mensches:

An Inclusive Philanthropic Youth Group



- A Mitzvah is a good deed.
- A Mensch is a good person who does good deeds without being asked first.

The Mitzvah Menschen Philosophy

- Give teens with and without disabilities a reason to be together
- Give teens something meaningful to talk about
- Give all teens the “tools” to “give back”
- Empower all teens to make a difference in something they care about

The Mitzvah Menschen Way

- We are embedding social skills within social action projects and building a community of like-minded teens.
- We are creating a social life through social action and we are supporting individual differences with structured activities, visual supports, small group work, projects that are relatable and meaningful to the teens.

We start by creating a community with unique shared experiences



Structure everything for success (for all)

Visual supports level the playing field so that everyone can participate in activities

Mitzvah Mensches Schedule

	Arrival and Games
	Wheel of Mitzvah
	What's It All About?
	Snack With a Twist
	Reflections
	Goodbye!

Visual supports level the playing field so that everyone can participate in activities

Cookie Decorating Directions



1. Choose one cookie to decorate



2. Use the tools and candy to decorate your cookie so that it reflects the initiative you are most excited about:

-  Environment
-  Israel
-  Children



3. Show the cookie to one of your team leaders



4. Eat your cookie!

We find out what matters to the teens

What Kind of Giver Are You?

At Mitzvah Mensches, I like to...

1. think about ways we can do mitzvot
2. help the teachers set up and clean up
3. do things to earn Mitzvah Money
4. do craft projects



Imagine that the Mitzvah Mensches decide to help a food bank. I would like to help by...



1. collecting cans of food to donate
2. serving food to people who are hungry
3. having a bake sale to raise money for the food bank
4. making a meal to donate



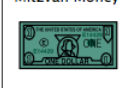

What do you think makes people in need feel happy?

1. getting the things they need
2. meeting people who want to help them
3. getting money for the things they need
4. getting handmade cards







We find out what matters to the teens 2

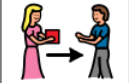



At Mitzvah Mensches, I like to...

1	2	3	4
think about ways we can do mitzvot	help the teachers set up and clean up	do things to earn Mitzvah Money	do craft projects
			

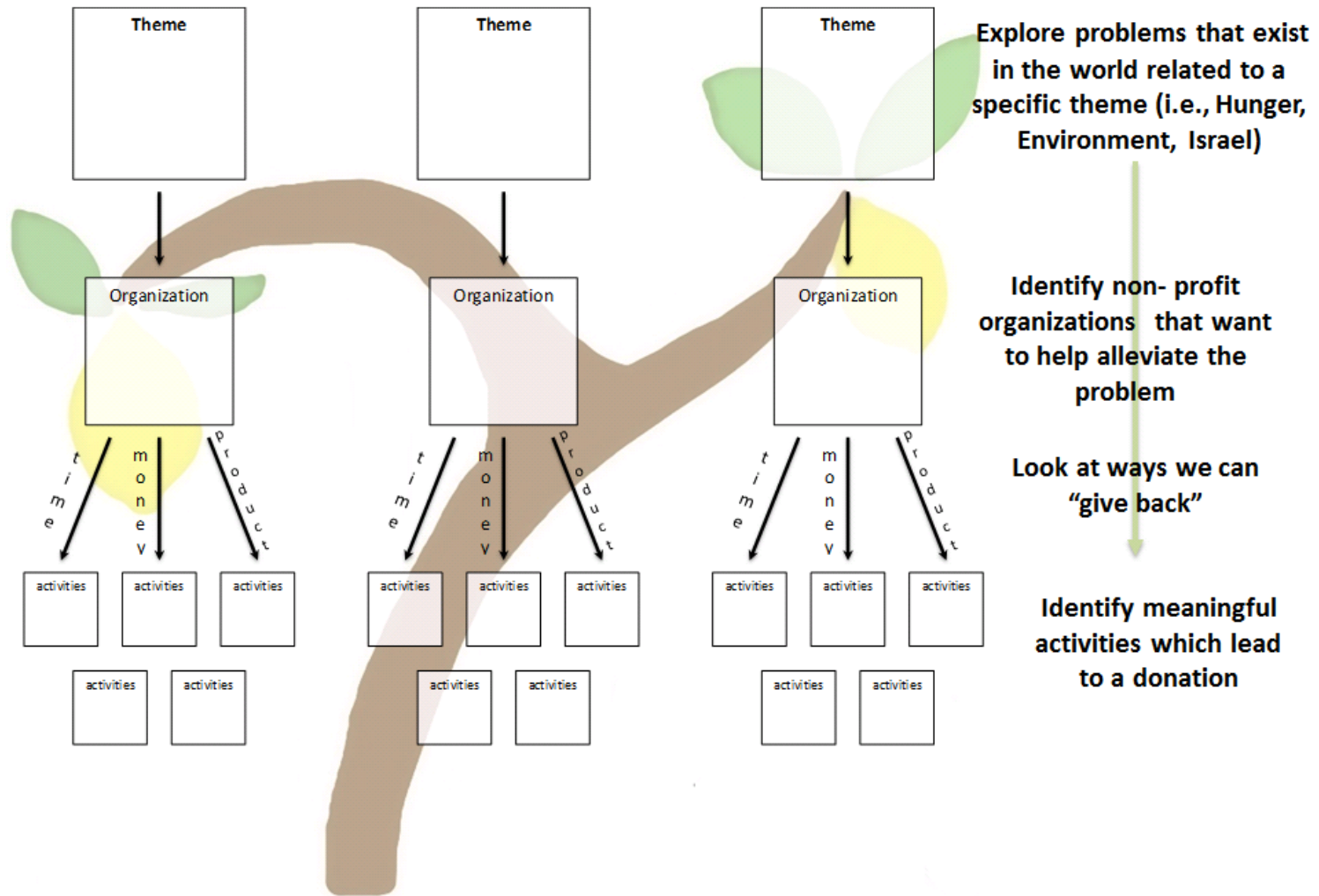
Imagine that the Mitzvah Mensches decide to help a food bank. I would like to help by:

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collect cans of food to donate	serve people who are hungry	have a bake sale to raise money	make a meal to donate
			

What do you think makes people in need feel happy?





1	2	3	4
getting the things they need	meeting people who want to help them	getting money for the things they need	getting handmade cards
			

We use teen interests to drive the curriculum and match interests with organizations that need our support



Examples of themes the teens selected from this year



<input type="checkbox"/>	Children and <i>Healthcare</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Children and Education	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Children and ISRAEL	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Children and Bullying	

Once an organization is chosen the teens learn about their mission, vision and needs



**The Israeli Red Cross,
Magen David Adom**



Teens decide how they will give back and create a budget for their projects



Or write grants to fund their work



The teens sometimes donate their time



A book drive is followed by an evening of volunteering at “More Than Words,” a used book store that employs and rehabilitates “at-risk youth.”

Or give back with needed materials or a product



Wrapping gifts for “Birthday Wishes.” We wrote a grant to get seed money to purchase the gifts and party supplies.

Assembling dry soup mix to send to Dnep, Ukraine for an elder hostel



Teens work together to accomplish their goals and make connections with one another.



We bought and built 10 adaptive bikes to donate to other kids

They plan fundraisers to raise money

Creating items to sell:



They build community with group activities and things they might not have tried before

- **Our “Zumbathon” was adapted so all teens could participate**
- **We raised over \$500, dancing the night away!**



And then, they donate to the causes they care about
(over \$1100 from our Zumbathon and blankets and greeting card sale to the
Israeli Red Cross)



Finally, we Celebrate our shared success and our Mitzvah Mensches community!



The video-game bus was a huge hit and gave teens, with varied interests and skills, something to talk about!



We are building skills and forging relationships

- ◆ Silly, fun community building activities give teens something to talk about and forge unlikely friendships
- ◆ Schedules and visual supports help everyone participate
- ◆ A curriculum guided by teen interest
- ◆ Teens learning to raise money, ask for donations, hold fundraisers
- ◆ Learning social skills to participate in social action successfully
- ◆ Learning to follow a “group plan” with voting and choices (things don’t always go your way)
- ◆ Learning to speaking in front of a group/making small talk (campaigning for a cause you care about)



Mensches Rock!



For All Teens 13 thru High School

An inclusive philanthropic youth group, where activities are structured so all can successfully participate

For more information

Gateways: Access to Jewish Education

<http://www.jgateways.org>

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