



Dear RTFH Family,

Welcome to Virtual Mitzvah Day 2021 aka MD21!

While the gatherings for all of our exciting MD21 initiatives will be virtual, the good deeds you will be doing will provide very real help and support to people in need. Plus, you'll have opportunities to hear from experts about pressing topics and learn how you can become an agent of change.

As you look through this booklet, you will see a wide range of activities/presentations taking place on Sunday, March 14th, along with lists of any supplies you or your child will need to do the mitzvah projects. You'll also find instructions about how to access the sessions of interest to you. Please read through this booklet carefully to help plan the day for yourself and your children.

We are grateful to so many people for their help in planning this special day:

- * Rabbi Kaiserman for his incredible support of Mitzvah Day and many other Social Action Team initiatives
- * Cantor Pincus for adding song and joy to our gatherings and to our isolated neighbors
- * Faye Gilman for her invaluable feedback and skill in helping to plan and deliver the day
- * The MD21 Team and volunteers for their commitment to bringing Mitzvah Day to life.

And thank you for joining us in performing *gemilut chasadim* (acts of loving-kindness) and learning, as we strive together to fulfill our Temple mission of *tikkun olam*, to repair the world.

With gratitude,

Jerry Strauss
Lois Silverman
RTFH Social Action Team Co-Chairs



Virtual Mitzvah Day

Sunday, March 14, 2021

Participate on this day to perform acts of loving-kindness that bring happiness and hope to those whose lives we touch.

MORNING

- 9:00-9:30 Join all together for prayer and song with Rabbi and Cantor
- 9:30-10:00 Gift Bags for Forest View Center residents - 4th Grade
- 9:45-10:40 Presentation #1: "Food Insecurity in Queens" - Speaker: Brent Weitzberg
- 10:00-10:30 "Storytime with Lois: Shine Your Light" with Eagles Up!- Grades K-1
- "Connecting with Our Community" - 3rd Grade
- Care Packages for LaGuardia Community College students - 5th Grade
- 10:30-11:00 "Storytime with Lois: Shine Your Light" with Eagles Up! - 2nd Grade
- 10:30-11:30 "How to be an Ally" - 7th Grade – Facilitators: Deva Estin and Cecilia Lim
- 10:45-11:45 Presentation #2: "The Climate Crisis" – Speaker: Peggy Kurtz
- 11:00-11:30 "Saving Our Planet from Climate Change" - 6th Grade – Speaker: Mark Izeman
- 11:45-12:00 Stretch Break

AFTERNOON

- 12:00-12:30 Lunch with optional break-out rooms to socialize
- 12:30-1:30 "The New Voting Landscape" - DemocracyNYC & ToFHY for Adults/Teens
- 12:45-1:30 Days for Girls - Help Girls Worldwide Manage Menstruation for Adults and Children 9+ (RSVP by 3/6, see pp. 8-10)

- 1:30-2:15 “Every Day is Mitzvah Day: URJ’s Religious Action Center Initiatives—Racial Equity, Climate Justice, Immigration, and Economic Justice” Break-out rooms with Social Action Team members for Adults/Teens
- 1:30-2:30 Knitting & crocheting hats and scarves for Eagles Up!
- 1:45- 2:30 Cantor and the Junior, Tween, and Adult Choirs will entertain Atria residents--live and pre-recorded--via Zoom
- 2:30-3:00 End of Day Reflections with Rabbi and Cantor

MITZVAH DAY CONTINUES

March 15th

- 3:30 Cantor and the Junior, Tween, and Adult Choirs will entertain the Forest View Center residents--live and pre-recorded--via Zoom

Since we are unable to host our annual Larry Francos Memorial Blood Drive at the Temple on Mitzvah Day, please visit the New York Blood Center website nybloodcenter.org to schedule an appointment today!

If you have any questions about programming or need tech support on Mitzvah Day itself, please contact Marjorie Blackman at marjorie.blackman@gmail.com.

Enjoy the fulfillment of Mitzvot: Caring for and Supporting Others

Donations to MD21 can be made on our website via Chaverweb

Morning Schedule

Religious School Students will participate in MD21 activities during their Judaic studies session.

- * Grades K-1 “Storytime with Lois: Shine Your Light” with Eagles Up! (10:00-10:30 am)
- * 2nd Grade “Storytime with Lois: Shine Your Light” with Eagles Up! (10:30–11:00 am)
- * 3rd Grade “Connecting with Our Community” (10:00-10:30 am)
- * 4th Grade Gift Bags for Forest View Center residents (9:30–10:00 am) – see pp. 3-4 for supplies
- * 5th Grade Care Packages for LaGuardia Community College students (10:00-10:30 am) – see p. 5 for supplies
- * 6th Grade “Saving Our Planet from Climate Change,” Speaker: Mark Izeman (11:00–11:30 am)
- * 7th grade “How to be an Ally” facilitated by Deva Estin and Cecilia Lim (10:30–11:30 am)

Adults/teens may independently contribute to the 4th grade gift bags for Forest View residents, 5th grade care packages for LaGuardia CARES students, or 2nd grade Eagles Up! card writing for military personnel.

More information and lists of materials can be found below in event descriptions. Any questions about Religious School MD21 activities, please email Faye at edleader@rtfh.org.

9:00 – 9:30 am

WELCOME TO MD21

We’ll usher in Mitzvah Day with prayer, song, and an overview of today’s events.

9:30 – 10:00 am

4th Grade

Gift Bags for Forest View Center residents

◇ Suzanne Rosenberg, Captain

The seniors at Forest View Center, which is just a block from Temple, will be so happy to receive special care packages from our 4th graders. Your gift bags will be appreciated this year more than ever, as Forest View residents have been isolated due to COVID-19.

Please assemble 2-3 gift bags, if possible, but even a single bag helps!

Suggested items to purchase* in advance:

(Please choose 4-5 items per care package)

small pad of paper

colored pencils

regular pencils

deck of cards

small word game magazine (crossword puzzle, word search, etc.)

gift bag(s), sealable plastic storage bag(s), or brown paper bag(s) - sized to hold items chosen

lip balm/chapstick

tissues - travel pack

emery board nail file

hand cream - travel size

*Available at Dollar Stores, pharmacies, and online. If purchasing on Amazon, please remember to use smile.amazon.com and support RTFH!

Before, during or after our session:

Your child can create a card or note featuring a drawing, poetry, cheery greeting, etc. for each resident. The card can be hand-written or computer generated...anything which will bring a smile to the recipient!

Gift Bag Drop-Off:

Open from noon to 5 pm in front of the Temple that afternoon Sunday, March 14th. Please maintain social distancing when dropping off your packages.

9:45 – 10:40 am

Presentation #1 (Adults and Older Teens, i.e. non-religious school students)

FOOD INSECURITY IN QUEENS: Helping to Feed Our Neighbors

◇ Marcia Parness, Captain

The job loss and economic fall-out from the pandemic has resulted in an unprecedented number of Queens residents struggling to put food on their tables. Our dynamic speaker Brent Weitzberg will describe the scope of food insecurity in our borough, what's being done to combat it, and how you can help.

Brent G. Weitzberg, Esq., Deputy Chief of Staff and Queens COVID Czar as part of Borough President Richards' COVID response, is a seasoned attorney, policy strategist, and community advocate. Serving in both city and state government, Brent has managed ambitious initiatives impacting thousands of New Yorkers.

10:00 - 10:30 am

Grades K- 1

“Storytime with Lois: Shine Your Light”

◇ Lois Silverman, Captain

The Kindergarten and 1st Grade will enjoy an uplifting program with Temple leader Lois Silverman, “Storytime with Lois: Shine Your Light.” There will be a special guest Toni Seinfeld from Eagles Up!, an organization which supports our military personnel and their families, to tell the children how they can “shine their light” to brighten a service member’s day.

Please have materials available (construction and/or computer paper, markers, crayons, stickers, scissors, glue stick, etc.) for your child to make a card(s) for a member of the military.

Please mail your cards to:
Eagles Up!
493 Marvin Drive
Long Branch, NJ 07740

For the return address, please use:
RTFH
PO Box 750649
Forest Hills, NY 11375

3rd Grade

Connecting with Our Community

◇ Lois Silverman, Captain

The 3rd Grade will enjoy an intergenerational session with our Temple seniors: “Connecting with our Community.” In class prior to Mitzvah Day, the students will be thinking of questions to ask the older members of our Temple family. The small-group conversations will enable the children to learn from the seniors’ life experiences and brighten the seniors’ day.

5th Grade

Care Packages for Homeless and/or Food Insecure College Students

◇ Suzanne Rosenberg, Captain

Through **LaGuardia CARES** (College Access for Retention and Economic Success), you and your child will help support LaGuardia Community college students right here in Queens who struggle to pay basic living expenses such as housing, food, rent, and clothing. The session will include a presentation by Rhonda Mouton who will share more about the organization and the impact the care packages will make.

We'd appreciate it if your child could assemble 2-3 care packages, but even a single bag helps!

Suggested items to purchase* in advance:

(Choose 4-5 items per care package)

Bar of soap

Comb or brush

Shampoo - travel size or small bottle

Toothbrush and/or toothpaste

Washcloth

Can of tuna fish

Healthy snack bar

Small box of crackers

Box of juice (100% juice, not juice drink please)

Sanitary pads

Gift bag(s), sealable plastic storage bag(s), or brown paper bag(s) to hold items chosen

*Available at Dollar Stores, pharmacies, and online. If purchasing online, please remember to use smile.amazon.com to support RTFH!

Care Package Drop-Off:

Open from noon to 5 pm in front of the Temple that afternoon Sunday, March 14th. Please maintain social distancing when dropping off your packages.

10:30 – 11:00 am

2nd Grade

“Storytime with Lois: Shine Your Light”

◇ Lois Silverman, Captain

The 2nd Grade will enjoy an uplifting program with Temple leader Lois Silverman, “Storytime with Lois: Shine Your Light.” There will be a special guest Toni Seinfeld from Eagles Up!, an organization which supports our military personnel and their families, to tell the children how they can “shine their light” to brighten a service member’s day.

Please have materials available (construction and/or computer paper, markers, crayons, stickers, scissors, glue stick, etc.) for your child to make a card(s) for a member of the military.

Please mail your cards to:

Eagles Up!

493 Marvin Drive

Long Branch, NJ 07740

For the return address, please use:

RTFH

PO Box 750649

Forest Hills, NY 11375

10:30 – 11:30 am

7th Grade

“How to be an Ally” Workshop

◇ Sue Izeman, Captain

The 7th grade students will be participating in a social justice workshop, "How to Be an Ally." The workshop will be led by Deva Estin and Cecilia Lim, two community activists who work right here in Central Queens to build strong, diverse networks of people who respect, love, and protect each other. The workshop will lay the foundations for future work on solidarity and upstanding.

10:45 – 11:45 am

Presentation #2 (Adults and Older Teens, i.e. non-religious school students)

**THE URGENT REALITY OF THE CLIMATE CRISIS:
What We Can Expect and What We Can Do as Individuals**

◇ Barry Wollner, Captain

Recent UN Climate Reports have made clear the urgency of the climate crisis. It is imperative that we take action now to avoid runaway climate change. Trained by Al Gore’s Climate Reality organization, Peggy Kurtz will speak to our current reality, what to expect in the next 50 years, and what can be done about it.

A long-time, EPA award winning environmental leader in her community, **Peggy Kurtz** currently works as Community Coordinator for Joule Community Power, an innovative renewable energy initiative. She is the former Director of Cultural Arts & Jewish Heritage Programs at Commonpoint Queens, formerly known as the Central Queens Y.

11:00 – 11:30 am

6th Grade

“Saving Our Planet from Climate Change (Hint it isn’t recycling)”

◇ Sue Izeman, Captain

The 6th grade students will hear from Mark Izeman, an engaging environmental advocate, speak on the topic of "The Secret to Saving Our Planet from Climate Change. (Hint it isn't recycling.)" While recycling is good, he'll address what's more important-- learning about environmental issues and getting involved in long-term change.

An expert in the field, **Mark Izeman** is the New York Regional Director and a Senior Attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC). Mark is also a member of our extended Temple family--he's the younger brother of Temple leader Sue Izeman.

11:45 am – 12:00 pm

Stretch Break

Afternoon Schedule

Event times overlap, so please choose programs with this in mind.

12:00 – 12:30 pm

Lunch - Participants can optionally join break-out rooms for casual conversation

12:30 – 1:30 pm

Presentation #3 (Adults and Older Teens, i.e. non-religious school students)

THE NEW VOTING LANDSCAPE:

Voter Registration and the New Ranked-Choice Voting Process

◇ Harry Cooperman and Alvin Calo, Captains

In a 2019 ballot measure, 73.5% of New Yorkers voted "Yes" to Ranked Choice Voting--but what exactly is it, how does it work, and how will it affect the way you vote? ToFHY representatives team up with DemocracyNYC, a division of the Mayor's office, to share information about early age voter registration, the new ranked-choice voting process, what positions are on the ballot this cycle, and ways you can get involved to ensure all eligible New Yorkers are registered to vote.

ToFHY Social Action VP **Sophie Cleary** and ToFHY Ambassadors **Ella Rosenblatt**, **Clayton Frank**, and **Jackson O'Brien** will join **DemocracyNYC** as co-presenters for this informative presentation.

12:45 – 1:30 pm

For Adults and Children ages 9+

DAYS FOR GIRLS - Helping Girls Worldwide Manage Menstruation

◇ Kathy Francos, Captain

Days for Girls (DfG) has provided sustainable sanitary supplies to more than 1.7 million girls around the world who would otherwise have to miss a week of school and/or work. The DfG Kits include liners, pads, soap, panties, and a washcloth... all expertly packed in a fashionable, hand-sewn drawstring bag. Visit DfG's website daysforgirls.org

to learn more about the organization and the DfG Kits as well as to watch some inspiring videos about their impact.

We will meet on Zoom to learn from a DfG NYC Chapter volunteer about the organization and how to fold washcloths and underwear so that they will fit properly into the DfG Kit. We will also be cutting and preparing ribbon for the drawstring bags.

*If you would like Temple to provide supplies, please RSVP by 3/6 (see below)

DAYS FOR GIRLS Supply List

If you would like to participate on Zoom on Mitzvah Day, you can either:

- Buy your own supplies (see suggested items below) **OR**
- Pick up supplies from Temple on Thursday, March 11th from 3:30-5:30pm
You must **RSVP [HERE](#) by 3/6** if you want Temple to provide your supplies.

Or you can support the program financially:

Send a check preferably before Mitzvah Day to the Reform Temple of Forest Hills, PO Box 750649, Forest Hills, NY 11375 Attn: MD21. Please make the check payable to “RTFH Mitzvah Day” and write “Days for Girls” in the check’s memo line.

Suggested items for purchase:

Feel free to purchase items in any/all categories.

Ribbon

[VATIN 1/2" Grosgrain Ribbon, 50-Yard](#) (pick your favorite color) \$9.99

The drawstring is cut to be extra-long so that girls can carry their DfG Kit like a backpack. After all, many girls have to walk long distances to school or work, and this makes it handy for her to carry her pads ... and whatever else she needs.

Washcloths, 12 x 12

[BEST TOWEL 24-Pack Washcloths](#) \$11.95

[Simpli-Magic 79148 Cotton Washcloths, 60 Pack, Taupe/Turquoise/Lime/Powder Blue/Raspberry 60 Pack](#) \$29.99

Underwear: size 12,14, or 16 (no faces or insects)

[Limited Too Girls' Underwear –Cotton Bikini Panties \(10 Pack Bulk\)](#) \$12.99

[dELiAs Girls Cotton Bikini Underwear Panties \(10 Pack\)](#) \$12.95

[Fruit of the Loom Girls' Cotton Hipster Underwear \(20 pack\)](#) \$17.98

[Hanes Ultimate Girls' 5-Pack Cotton Stretch Bikini Panties](#) \$11.58

If ordering with links provided, please be sure to use smile.amazon.com to support RTFH!

Packing Up DfG Items:

Scissors (needed only if you purchase ribbon)

Sharpie or marker/ tape to label storage bag (needed only if you purchase underwear)

Sealable gallon-sized plastic storage bags for folded underwear, folded washcloths, and/or ribbons cut to size

Drop Off

Open from noon to 5 pm in front of the Temple that afternoon Sunday, March 14th.

Please maintain social distancing when dropping off your items.

Any questions, please contact Kathy Francos at kalafrancos@yahoo.com

1:30 – 2:15 pm

Interactive Session (Adults and Older Teens)

MITZVAH DAY IS EVERY DAY: The URJ's Religious Action Center (RAC) Initiatives and How You Can Engage through RTFH

◇ Sue Izeman, Captain

We will learn about the work of the URJ's RAC and some of their initiatives: **Racial Justice, Environmental Action, Immigration, and Economic Justice** in a discussion led by **Sue Izeman**. Participants will then move to break-out rooms with facilitators to focus on an issue of interest. We will talk about what RTFH is doing now to advance these causes and identify some immediate steps we can take so that we can repair the world year-round.

1:30 - 2:30 pm

KNITTING/CROCHETING for EAGLES UP!

◇ Judy Hendelman and Kathy Francos, Captains

Experienced knitters and crocheters--join Judy Hendelman and Kathy Francos in making hats and scarves for service members supported by Eagles Up!.

Eagles Up! serves, supports, and assists our military personnel, our wounded, our fallen heroes, and their families. They actively engage communities with activities that foster a better understanding of our country's true heroes and their families.

2:30 - 3:00 pm

End of Day Reflections with Rabbi and Cantor

Join together as we reflect on our day of doing mitzvot and learning ways to repair the world.