



VOLUME 1

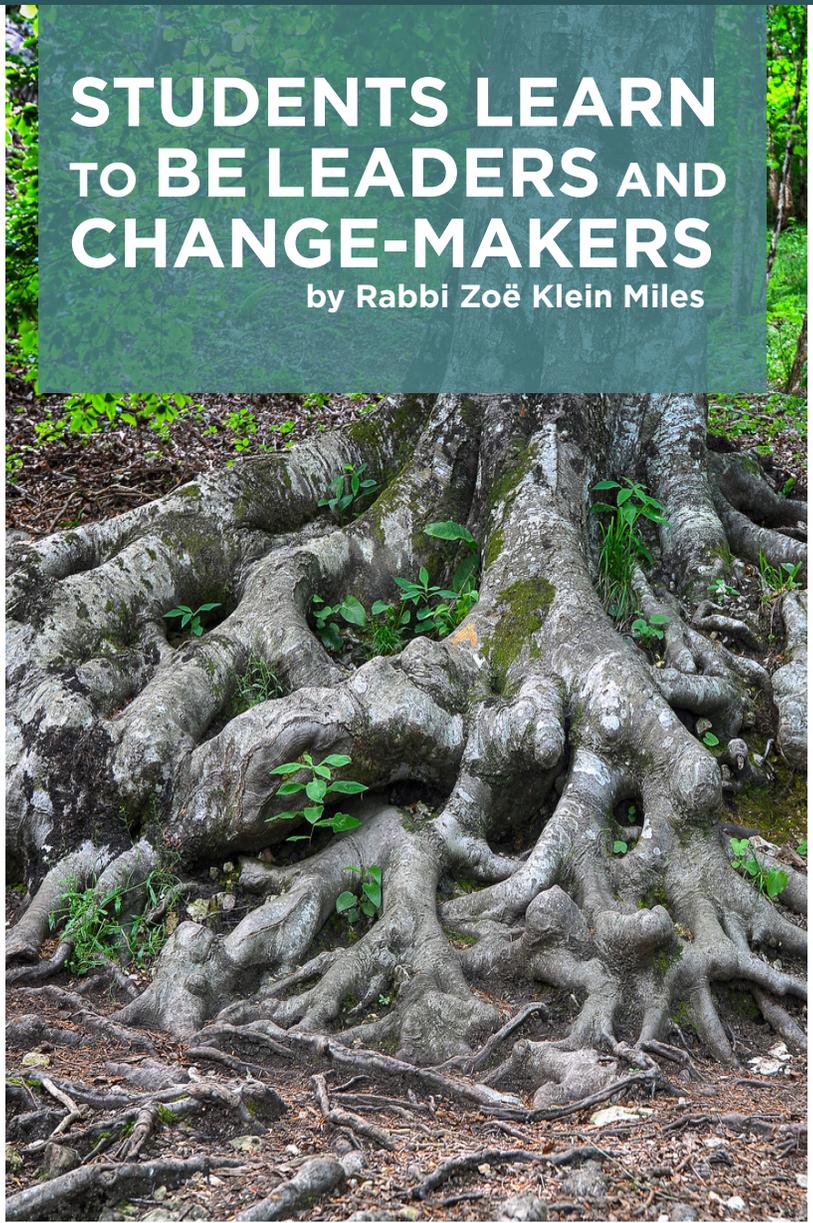
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"Blessings on the Home"

Made by Temple Isaiah 3rd and 4th-Graders



Is it better to seek wisdom, or is it better to do good deeds?



STUDENTS LEARN TO BE LEADERS AND CHANGE-MAKERS

by Rabbi Zoë Klein Miles

Of course, it is wonderful to do both! But if you had to rank them, our tradition has a teaching to help out. Talmud teaches that people whose wisdom exceeds their good deeds are like trees with many branches but few roots. They are beautiful; however, when the wind comes, these trees fall over. People whose good deeds exceed their wisdom are like trees with few branches but many roots: even if all the winds in the world come and blow upon them, they cannot be uprooted. In Religious School we care for the entire tree, nourishing roots so that they grow deep and strong as well as bathing branches with the light of Jewish wisdom. Through community service and social action, our students learn to be leaders and change-makers in the world, standing tall and upright, able to face the winds. Through study, our students refine their voice and stretch their minds, branching outward and upward. Together, we improve the world. Join us!



BUILDING JUSTICE, ONE SMALL MUSCLE AT A TIME

by Debra Silverman, VP Social Justice

Doing justice is like exercising a muscle. If you do it often, your muscles remain strong and healthy. You're able to lift more, pitch in more often, and may have a strong association with the good feeling that comes with being a changemaker. Like muscles, though, when not exercised, our urge toward doing justice may atrophy, become more difficult over time; the task of change making, with weak muscles, might seem overwhelming and exhausting. Temple Isaiah's Religious Schools students are developing strong social-justice muscles capable of a lifetime of doing. As these pages illustrate, our students connect deeply with the hands-on experience of doing (and feeling) good. The result: compassion, connection, community, and capacity. With strong muscles (and values) our students have the tools they need to lift up justice for many years to come.

SETTING THE FOUNDATION FOR SOCIAL ACTION

Starting in grades K-3 our Religious School sets the foundation for our students to have the knowledge and drive to be active participants in social action and social justice throughout their lives.

Our Religious School builds children's social responsibility vocabulary by teaching the concepts of:

תיקון עולם

TIKKUN OLAM (repairing the world)

צדקה

TZEDAKAH (justice)

מצוה

MITZVAH (commandment)



According to our tradition, "Tzedakah is equally important as all the other mitzvot put together," (Baba Batra 9a). Throughout the school year, our students collect Tzedakah. At the end of the year, classes collectively choose where to donate the money they have amassed. Past donations include supporting Magen David Adom, Israel's national emergency medical, disaster, ambulance and blood bank service, or purchasing animals through Heifer International, an organization that gifts animals to communities in need. Our K-3rd-grade students create Tzedakah boxes to take home so that they can uphold the value of tzedakah even when not at Temple Isaiah.

THE ART OF TIKKUN OLAM

Hands-on art projects are also an avenue through which our youngest Religious School students engage in Tikkun Olam. Last year, the kindergarten class made two beautiful canvases, one with flowers and one with stars. The art was donated to the library at Upward Bound House, an organization that provides housing for homeless families.





ISAIANS FEED THE HOMELESS

4TH GRADE

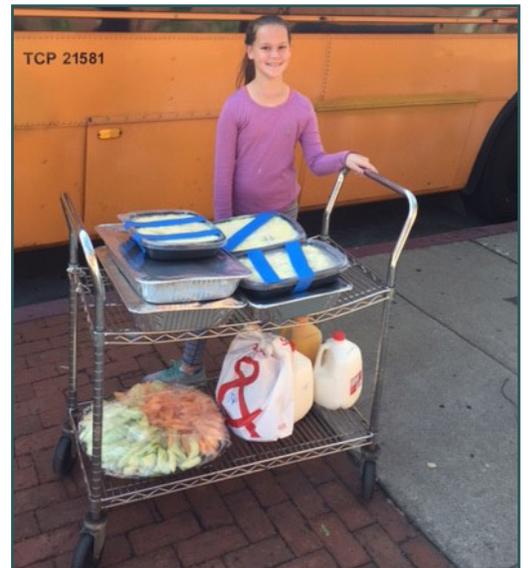
The Prophet Isaiah said, “If you shall pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday,” (Isaiah 58). Feeding the hungry and helping to care for those in need has been a part of Jewish tradition from the very beginning. Temple Isaiah’s Religious School teaches the importance of feeding the hungry throughout its curriculum, specifically focusing on this topic in the 4th grade.

Part One: Together with their families, our 4th graders learn about homelessness and expand their understanding of the needs of the homeless by assembling hygiene kits. Shelters express a continual and urgent need for these kits to meet the needs of their clients. These kits are given to two shelters that the 4th graders visit for the second-part of their family education program.

Part Two: 4th graders wake up bright and early and come to Temple to make breakfast. The students and some of their parents then take these delicious meals to Samoshel and Turning Point Shelters, and serve breakfast to the residents. Both these shelters provide interim housing and a broad range of programs for men and women.

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If you want to get involved contact our Social Action Coordinator Cantor Lilah Sugarman lilah@templeisiah.com
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To learn more about the shelters visit www.opcc.net
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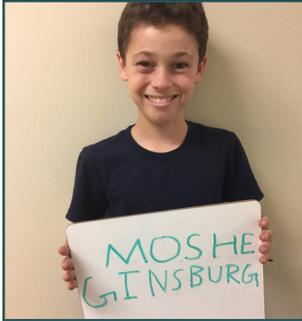
JOIN US ON THESE DATES:

Sunday, April 15: 4th Grade Family Learning Day

Saturday, April 21: Cooking Meals and Shelter Visit

ISAIANS HELPING THE HOMELESS

5TH GRADE



“I learned that Upward Bound House only takes homeless children and parents. I would like to decorate a room for them at some point!”



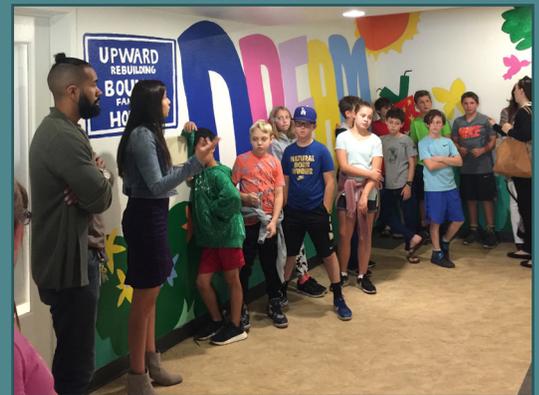
Christine Glasgow, Executive Director of Upward Bound House, visited Temple Isaiah to introduce our 5th grade students and parents to the important work of the organization. As Glasgow described, “The mission of Upward Bound House (UBH) is to eliminate homelessness among families with children in Los Angeles by providing housing, supportive services, and advocacy.” Glasgow spoke about the vital need for housing in the Los Angeles community, the work of her organization, and taught the students how the work of Upward Bound house connects to the Jewish values of helping those in need and welcoming the stranger. According to a 2017 study there are 57,000 individuals experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles County on any given night, 34,701 of who go unsheltered — they literally live on the street!

Our 5th grade families donate non-perishable food items (or hygiene supplies) from their home pantry for Upward Bound House clients, and the students participate in an interactive game of “Life.” They learn how to budget and many are surprised by the realities of balancing a budget and paying mandatory taxes. Others realize how expensive necessities can be and become sad when they understand they would have to choose between going to the movies or buying presents for family and friends. After these simulations, they all express gratitude for their lives.

Later in the year, our 5th-graders jump on a bus and head to the Upward Bound House facility in Santa Monica to learn more about the organization and to tour the facility.

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Merrin Chapnick describes the trip:

“At Upward Bound House we saw a unit, which was like a tiny apartment with a fully functional kitchen, bathroom, a living room with one bedroom with one bed. We also saw the ‘Pantry,’ which was like a grocery store, except it was free. Finally, we saw the Treasure Box which was also like a store, with toys and clothes. It was interesting to see what they provided for families. They also help the parents find jobs that provided enough money to buy a house and care for their family with food, water, and electricity.”



Chloe Nejad said: “I loved the place and it was kind of like a life lesson with no words. So overall, it was an amazing experience. But I also thought that the people living there must be very grateful”.

Students and their families will be collecting items to sponsor the decoration of one of the apartments they visited. The family whose residence we sponsor will then be able to keep any of the items collected when they transition from Upward Bound House to permanent housing. Join Moshe, Chloe Merrin and all the 5th-graders and get involved in housing for the homeless by contacting our Social Action Coordinator Cantor Lilah Sugarman lilah@templeisaiah.com.

For more information about Upward Bound House visit <http://upwardboundhouse.org>



NER SHEL TZEDAKAH

(CANDLE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS)

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL WIDE EVENT

The frenzy of 'Holiday Shopping' impacts and magnifies our tradition of Hanukkah gifting. Just as the Maccabees struggled with the influence of Greek culture on their lives, we modern day Jews also wrestle with how much to let secular culture influence our daily lives.

Reform Judaism has created a wise compromise: Ner Shel Tzedakah, the Candle of Righteousness Project. The initiative encourages people to devote the sixth night of Hanukkah to learning about poverty and donating gifts (or their value) intended for that night to an organization helping those living in poverty. Inspired, our religious school implemented the following program school-wide and created and participated in these inspiring social action projects.

- Kindergarten made Tzedakah boxes to engage in Tzedakah through the year not just on Hanukkah.
- 3rd grade made blankets and encouraging cards to give to those in need.
- 5th and 6th grade classes created activity packets for children in Children's Hospital Los Angeles. The children found making the activity packs very meaningful and expressed gratitude for their own health.
- Students made amulets for people whose homes were affected by the California fires.

Each student, regardless of their grade or project, was able to contribute to the greater community. Students across the board expressed how participating in this day sparked a sense of gratitude for their lives.



WHAT IS A MITZVAH PROJECT?



Judaism is an ever-changing tradition. It moves and grows along with us and throughout our lives. In spite of these changes, some things remain constant and an example of this is our commitment to Tikkun Olam. In Preschool our students make sandwiches for PATH, in religious school they learn about Tzedakah, doing Mitzvot, and participate in hands on service field trips. As a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, our students are asked for another commitment, a Mitzvah Project, a special project that marks their becoming a Jewish adult.

“An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity,” (Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.). A Mitzvah Project is a project in which a Bar/Bat Mitzvah student dedicates his/her time to service work. Doing a Mitzvah Project reminds us that we can express our Jewish identity by using our heads, our hearts, our hands, and our feet.

Students can work with Temple Isaiah’s social actions groups, one of Temple Isaiah’s partner organizations, or choose any non-profit that is working to bring wholeness to the world.

We welcome collaboration with friends and family or, if people prefer, a solo project.

KEY POINTS:

- **A Mitzvah Project is designed by the individual teen and taps into their passions**
- **A Mitzvah Project takes about 10 hours of the teen’s time**
- **The Mitzvah Project happens within the year of becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah**

For more information about your Mitzvah project or for ideas please reach out to our Social Action Coordinator, Cantor Lilah Sugarman at lilah@templeisaiah.com

ART & ACTIVISM

Art is an important tool for expressing identity as well as creating, and inspiring, change. Our 7th and 9th grade classes have the amazing opportunity to participate in Art and Activism. Over three to four class sessions students are given the opportunity to hear from different social action organizations and learn from Adam Vine, President of Wake the Beast,

a non-profit whose mission is to produce videos that move the needle on today’s most pressing issues. Students then team up, pick an organization or issue they are passionate about, and create a public service video. Below, two lay leaders share their unique experiences helping to facilitate the program and empowering our teens to use art as a tool for change.

2018 Art and Activism Dates:

7th grade: February 13, February 20 & February 27

9th grade: January 9, January 16, January 23 & January 3



Gail Solo

“For two years, I have been overjoyed to be part of the Arts and Activism program offered to our 7th and 9th grade religious school students. This program teaches our students how to use social media to create public service videos that not just touch, but grab, hearts and minds. Several social justice programs pitch their causes, and I have urged students to engage and educate about human trafficking. Our kids have embraced the challenge with incredible enthusiasm, creativity, and downright genius! It has been breathtaking to observe how our kids are making social activism a part of their DNA: they are our future leaders and have shown true brilliance in becoming the media messengers of social justice. Our ally, CAST, the Coalition Against Slavery and Trafficking, has been effusively grateful for our students’ participation in this phenomenal program.”



David Chui

“The first time Jessica Dabney and I were asked to talk to the religious school teens for the Art and Activism project, I was secretly a little nervous. Teens can be a tough audience! So I decided to be direct. I said, ‘Many activists I know say they care about climate change because of their grandchildren’s future. Well, kids, those grandchildren... are you. That’s your future. And while that can be scary - I’m worried, too - it’s also an exciting opportunity. You get to build the world you’ll live in. It’s your political and consumer choices that will shape decades to come. You can give us the hopeful sci-fi future that earlier generations were promised.’ Two out of the three groups ended up picking climate change as their topic, so I’d like to think that approach worked.”



PHILANTHROPY WITH 9TH GRADE ISAIANS

by Samuel Klein 9th Shevet Noar Teacher



In our 9th grade teen program, we elevate our understanding of tzedakah to another level. At the culmination of the year, students are given a generous budget of \$3,500 to donate to non-profit organizations of their choosing. In the past, some of the organizations that students have donated to include: Saban Community Clinic, a free healthcare clinic in Los Angeles, The Trevor Project, which provides crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to LGBTQ youth, and United Friends of the Children, which empowers current and former foster youth by providing resources, services, and education. Students focus on issues that they have researched and care about, and, they benefit from in-depth presentations by representatives of these organizations. But first, we dive into the concept of tzedakah. Students study tzedakah when it first appears in the Tanakh, the Hebrew Bible, and follow how it is understood throughout later rabbinic texts. This complex,

ethical system has guided Jewish giving from a grassroots level and has existed for nearly two millennia. We turn to examining tzedakah in the modern period, analyzing non-profits as organizations, including their methods, challenges, and how they are perceived in society. Students finish the year empowered and experienced in Jewish philanthropy, and thus engaged in their Jewish practice in a meaningful and powerful way.

CIVIL RIGHTS – SOUTHERN JOURNEY’S TRIP

by Stephanie Schwartz , Assistant Director of Educational Engagement



Our 11th-graders have a phenomenal opportunity to participate in our Civil Rights Southern Journey’s Trip. Civil Rights activists, including Abraham Joshua Heschel and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., marched from Selma to Montgomery in March of 1965. In referring to this march, Heschel said, “When I marched in Selma, my feet were praying.”

On this trip, students learn about the struggles of African Americans to gain equality in the 1950’s & 1960’s as well as how Jews were involved in the Civil Rights movement. We delve into how the introduction of rock-and-roll music into popular culture helped break down the walls of segregation. Our students walk away understanding why Jews, a people who have known oppression, must care and act when others are oppressed.

The journey includes Atlanta, Montgomery, Selma, and Birmingham. Visits include the site of Leo Frank’s lynching, the Rosa Parks Museum, the Voter Rights Museum, the Edmund Pettus Bridge, the Southern Poverty Law Center, Freedom Park, and The Civil Rights Institute.



“When I marched in Selma, my feet were praying.”

-- Abraham Joshua Heschel



This Year’s Trip Dates: February 16-19, 2018

For information contact Stephanie Schwartz, Assistant Director of Educational Engagement at stephanie@templeisaiah.com

FIGHTING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT WITH TEMPLE ISAIAH YOUTH GROUP



by Julie Dabney and Claire Saguy



As Social Action Vice Presidents of the Isaiah Temple Youth (ITY) Board, we chose to focus on environmental issues this year. So far, we have created and carried out three programs, two of which were at the Teen High Holiday services and one at the annual ITY Beach Bonfire event.

At the Rosh Hashanah Teen Service, we talked to Temple Isaiah teens about Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. After splitting up into groups, we all wrote letters to synagogues in Texas and Florida affected by the storms, wishing their communities a Shana Tova. At our Yom Kippur Social Action program the following day, we reflected on our year by educating teens about climate change, its effects, and what people and organizations have done about it during 2017. We shared this information in a Kahoot, an interactive game similar to Jeopardy, in which we elaborated on the answer to each question after revealing it.

During ITY's annual Dockweiler Beach Bonfire, we led a program that educated participants about marine debris and the threats it poses to both marine life and people. Following the presentation about the far-reaching negative effects of marine debris, teams participated in a trash pick-up competition. We are planning more exciting events for the remainder of the academic year with the hope of inspiring Isaiah teens to become active members of the community, and ultimately, the world.



FPC FAMILY PHILANTHROPY CLUB



The Family Philanthropy Club (FPC) was born out of the desire to help Temple Isaiah families engage in deep, meaningful and sustainable partnerships with nonprofit organizations concerned with a variety of issues facing Los Angeles. Issues that FPC engage with include, but are not limited to, hunger, homelessness, child and teen welfare, and sustainability.

The mission of the FPC is to establish deep connections between communities that are close geographically but worlds apart economically, socially and religiously; to open our children's hearts and minds to issues and struggles beyond their own backyard; and, to provide a forum for Temple Isaiah families to do this work together.



HOW TO GET INVOLVED:

The FPC will have 10 volunteer events in 2018 that support the environment, food insecurity, dog shelters and more. There is sure to be one event that will suit your family, and probably many more!

To see event details please visit the Temple Website (www.TempleIsaiah.com), go to the Social Action/Tikkun Olam tab and there you will find the FPC calendar. To be placed on the FPC email/RSVP list please email Jessica Dabney at jdabney@northamericanrealty.net.

WE HOPE TO SEE YOU AT OUR NEXT FPC EVENT!

- FEB/TBD A Place Called Home or LA Food Bank
- MAR 10 No Limits
- APR 2 LA Family Housing--Chavez
- MAY 13 Foster Care Counts
- JUN 3 Ballona Wetlands
- SEP 15 LA Family Housing--North Hollywood
- OCT 14 SOVA
- NOV/TBD WAGS AND WALKS
- DEC 8 11th Annual Toy Boutique, Children's Bureau

3 QUICK JEWISH SOCIAL ACTION FACTS

צדק צדק תרדף

- 1.** *Tzedek, Tzedek Tirdof*, translating to, “Justice justice shall you pursue,” is a famous phrase and at the heart of Temple Isaiah’s values. This phrase is prominently displayed above the Ark, that holds our Sifrei Torah. Often attributed to the prophet Isaiah, the text was in fact originally in the Torah, in Deuteronomy 16:20.
- 2.** Tzedakah is often thought of as giving money. Interestingly, the direct translation of Tzedakah is “justice”. Giving money to those in need is just one way of creating justice in our world, there are many other ways. Look through this newsletter to find different ways of doing Tzedakah.
- 3.** The principle that is most mentioned in the Torah, showing up 36 times, is welcoming the stranger. An example of one of the 36 occasions is when, in Exodus, the Torah says, “You know the feelings of a stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Exodus 23:9). Throughout this Newsletter we offer examples of ways that Temple Isaiah works with the greater community and welcomes the stranger.

1750 MEALS

Approximately 1750 meals have been cooked and served by 4th grade Isaians and their families for Los Angelinos in need.

8 APARTMENTS

Eight apartments have been decorated by 5th grade Isaians and their families.

צדק צדק תרדף



OUR TIKKUN OLAM OPPORTUNITIES

Am Tzedek - Isaiahs Pursuing justice: Am Tzedek is the umbrella under which Temple Isaiah does all types of justice work, partnering with OneLA and Reform California. It is a group made up of a core team of Temple Isaiah members and lay leaders.

PATH Beyond Shelter: PATH is a non-profit organization founded in 1988 in response to increasing numbers of homeless families in Los Angeles and the need for a more comprehensive approach to serving them.

Thanksgiving Market: Thanksgiving Market (works with PATH) to provide families with Thanksgiving meals. All assembled and packaged by Isaiah students before the Thanksgiving holiday begins.

Abolition of Human Trafficking Initiative - ISIAH's partner with CAST and NCJW: Temple Isaiah's anti-human trafficking initiative was established to help promote awareness in of human trafficking and slavery,

GLAC - The Gun Legislation Advocacy Committee: GLAC advocates for sensible gun legislation and educates to prevent future gun violence.

The Green Team: The Green Team focuses on education and advocating for environmental issues, green activism, and creating green initiatives at Temple Isaiah and in the larger community.

FPC - Family Philanthropy Club: The FPC was born out of the desire to help Temple Isaiah families engage in deep, meaningful and sustainable partnerships with non-profit organizations concerned with a variety of issues facing Los Angeles, including, but not limited to, hunger, homelessness, child and teen welfare and sustainability.

Roots & Wings: Roots & Wings is a program that has connected students at Santee and University High School with mentors from Temple Isaiah since 2008.

SOVA: SOVA, a part of Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles, provides free groceries and an array of supportive services to over 12,000 individuals of all ages, ethnicities, and religions each month.



IF YOU ARE INTERESTED AND WANT TO GET INVOLVED WITH ANY OF OUR SOCIAL ACTION PROGRAMS CONTACT:

CANTOR LILAH SUGARMAN
Social Action Coordinator
lilah@templeisaiah.com
310.277.2772



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DATED MATERIAL