

Repair the world

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Bring on the Talent!

BY EMILY ABRAMOVICH

Seventeen-year-old Emily A. has a great way for you to have a blast this winter vacation while helping to heal the world.

What can you do on your winter break

to help make the world a better place? Well, many of you know about donating food to a local food pantry; volunteering to work at a local soup kitchen; collecting clothes for a clothes drive; and gathering gifts to bring to an orphanage or children's hospital. Each of these acts helps the needy, and there are plenty of volunteer programs that organize these activities wherever you live.

However, if you have extra time and energy to invest this winter, here's a really fun idea you may not have considered: put on a variety show.

You and your youth-group chapter or group of friends can put on a variety show to benefit any organization of your choice. You actually have the power to donate a thousand dollars or more to help an organization doing work that you feel is

important. How can putting on a variety show raise that much money? In addition to selling tickets, you can use the show to "leverage" other monies. Here's how.

STEP 1: Choose an Organization

The first step is for you and your group to sit down and discuss which organizations you really care about and, eventually, agree on one to support. Once decided, goals should be set for how much money you would like to raise in order to feel the program has been successful.

STEP 2: Plan the Show

Next, create a committee for organizing the event. Jobs should be identified and assigned, including: creating and selling tickets, planning refreshments, finding a place to hold the event, advertising it, and, of course, finding participants. It's important that your group members all volunteer to participate in the show, which will make the process of planning easier and set a good example for other potential volunteers. Members of your family synagogue, friends, and friends of family in the area are good people to ask if they would be willing to participate. Think of skits and acts that would be entertaining and impressive, and then ask people if they want to get involved. Grab friends you know who sing, dance, or play in a band. Music is a surefire hit in a talent show, and even simple acts like juggling or baton twirling can be great.

Once the designated person in the committee finds enough acts, make plans for where the show will take place and what the setting will look like. Tickets can be sold in your neighborhood, at your temple, in school, and among family and friends. If you're in a youth group, everyone on the chapter board should be given a stack of tickets to sell.

Lastly, remember that a talent-show rehearsal is crucial; no winging it.

STEP 3: Provide Donation Cans

A profit will be made from the selling of the tickets alone, but placing donation cans outside the room will bring in even more funds. The cans should have the name of the organization the event benefits, along with a description of the organization, such as what it does and why it is important. Now it's not just a variety show, but an opportunity for people to learn about your organization and give money.

STEP 4: Find Money Matches

Have your committee create a list of people they or their parents know or who own businesses in the local community who might agree to contribute. You can approach them with a letter and then a phone call or in-person visit that explains why you care about your organization and why you're asking them to match whatever money you raise. Many philanthropists are thrilled to see young people taking initiative and would be glad to give \$500 for every \$500 you raise (or whatever amount).

STEP 5: Enjoy Yourself!

As a result of the variety show, people (including you) will feel good about helping the organization you selected, and the organization will continue to grow. Have fun practicing Tikkun Olam, because healing the world is not done by people who are forced; it is done by determined people who want to make a difference. ★

Content is provided by **THE HAROLD GRINSPOON FOUNDATION**, which runs the B'nai Tzedek Teen Philanthropy Program in Western Massachusetts and assists other communities nationally in the field of Youth Philanthropy. For more information, call K'vod Wieder at 413-736-2070 ext 14 or visit us at www.hgf.org.

