

## Repair the world

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# mitzvot

## I Helped Raise \$20,000

NATE FRIEDMAN, AGE 16

Why one teen decided to part ways  
with his Bar Mitzvah cash in order to  
help make a difference for others.



AP/WORLDWIDE PHOTO/ED WRAY

**I have to admit:** When I first heard about serving on the board of Jewish Youth Philanthropy Institute (JYPI)—an organization whose mission is to help Jewish teens learn responsible, effective philanthropy—I didn't want to do it. I had heard they helped raise money for good causes, but the program is targeted to start right after your Bar/Bat Mitzvah. After that cash cow of a celebration, who really wants to give their new funds away? I didn't, but my mom signed me up. I had no idea that the experience would end up shaping my life.

In the JYPI program, a group of 20 teens pooled \$500 each to accumulate \$10,000 to go to those in need. That money was then matched by JYPI, bringing our total grant pool to an astounding \$20,000. It was our job to listen to different organizations about why they needed money and, at the end of the year, pick the groups that we thought should receive it.

Before serving on the board, I didn't have any sense of how many organizations there are out there that give aid. Oh, sure, everyone knows about the International Red Cross and maybe Amnesty. But I was soon learning about all these other organizations with unique missions, locations, and finances. I was amazed at how many of these fantastic organizations are Jewish-based, and I soon realized how large an influence Jewish charities have locally, nationally, and across the globe.

In keeping with this theme, our group gave to international causes. In addition to giving to Jews in the U.S., we gave to Israeli Jews and Ethiopian Jews. JYPI teens fought Arab suicide bombers with Israeli ambulances, began the renewal of dead urban economies, and aided the special-needs chapter of the B'nai B'rith Youth Organization.

### IMAGINE WHAT JEWISH TEENS CAN DO

Mark Charendoff, president of the Jewish Funders Network, estimates that the overall wealth of the U.S. Jewish community exceeds one trillion dollars. Who inherits that money 30 or 40 years from now? That's right—we do. Imagine even a fraction of that wealth—as low as 1%—going to help the tsunami victims of Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and Thailand? That's 10 billion dollars. Total aid from the world hasn't even exceeded three billion dollars yet.

Imagine what we could do if we could just learn how to use the money we're so lucky to receive. JYPI's mission statement is to accomplish just that. Simply giving money to the first charity that comes to mind is fine, but it is our responsibility to investigate organizations that agree with OUR values—not our parents', not our teachers', but our own. Moreover, isn't giving money more effective in a group—where your own ideas can be balanced by those of your peers, multiplying your money and making a more informed decision?

An Acehese girl sits in front of wrecked fishing boats in Banda Aceh. The U.N. estimates that at least \$9 million worth of wood will be required to build new boats while a further \$20 million will be needed for nets, engines and other fishing gear.

I think so, which is why three years later after joining JYPI, I am still a member. I recognized what an important contribution I made to the community—in particular, the Jewish community. ★

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 413-736-2552 ext. 14 or visit us at [www.hgf.org](http://www.hgf.org).

## J-Serve Day is Coming

Sunday, April 17, 2005 will inaugurate J-Serve, the first ever national day of service for Jewish teens. This date corresponds with Youth Service America's National Youth Service Day. Each year on that day, hundreds of thousands of young people engage in tens of thousands of service projects, providing service to communities throughout the U.S. This year is also the 6th annual Global Youth Service Day, engaging youth around the world in acts of community repair. See "Social Action" section on [www.JVibe.com](http://www.JVibe.com) for more details.