

# B'nai Tzedek Youth Philanthropy

## Frequently Asked Questions



**What is the B'nai Tzedek Program?** The B'nai Tzedek Program is a teen philanthropy program started by the Harold Grinspoon Foundation in Western Massachusetts. The new St. Louis program is part of a network of 40 communities in the United States. To date, 3,896 teens participate in B'nai Tzedek. There were 638 new participants in 2007. \$673,367 has been allocated since the program began, with \$492,454 allocated last year alone.

**How does the St. Louis B'nai Tzedek Program work?** Teens in their Bar/Bat Mitzvah year (and those older for the first year of the program) learn how to become philanthropists by starting their own philanthropic accounts.

The St. Louis-based Kranzberg Family Foundation has provided the Central Agency for Jewish Education (CAJE) with a generous grant to match student contributions. An initial contribution of \$500 (\$250 from the Kranzberg Foundation and \$250 from the congregation and/or student) per student allows a teen to create a philanthropic fund. The monies are invested by the Jewish Federation and managed by CAJE with the intent of providing the student with an annual 5% to be donated to any Jewish non-profit (501c3) organization in the world.

Although the monies are pooled for investment, each teen will maintain a separate B'nai Tzedek account. This operates much like the Passport to Israel funds.

The foundations will be called the Teen's Name B'nai Tzedek Philanthropic Fund. Anyone may contribute to the fund on behalf of the teen – parents, grandparents, etc.

*B'nai Tzedek is funded by a generous grant from the Kranzberg Family Foundation of the Jewish Federation and by the Harold Grinspoon Foundation. CAJE is a beneficiary agency of the Jewish Federation of St. Louis.*

**What are the activities throughout the year?**

The Director of the B'nai Tzedek program will plan 2–3 programs per year which are designed to teach about the philanthropic allocation process. These fun-based programs will teach the tools of being a philanthropist...from deciding how to *raise funds* to the actual *learning* of the allocation process! Students will learn the basics of philanthropy, including how to raise funds, how to evaluate an organization as a potential recipient of funds, and how to become part of a philanthropic community. There will be a hands-on component and a lot of learning! Teens will be required to attend 2 programs per year.

**What is the Teen Leadership Board?** In the second year of the program, teens will form a Leadership Board. This Board will use their new skills to raise monies for a donation from the teens as a *group*. They will decide as a Board and as a committee how to raise money, whom to donate to, and the process of allocation.

**Can I participate after my Bar/Bat Mitzvah year?** You may begin any time after your Bar/Bat Mitzvah year if there is funding available during the year you apply.

**What if I decide to stop participating in the B'nai Tzedek program?** You would consider your account as a donation...the original \$250 granted to you from the Kranzberg Family Foundation will go back to fund another teen.

**Questions?**

Cindy Becker, Director  
B'nai Tzedek Youth Philanthropy Program  
Central Agency for Jewish Education  
314-442-3776  
cbecker@cajestl.org

