

## More than Just a Mitzvah

By: Eden Adler

For my Bat Mitzvah I didn't just want to do a mitzvah project I wanted to do a mitzvah. Over one year ago I joined the knitting group at the Fleischman Residence, a Jewish Home for the Aged. I enjoyed knitting so much that I decided to knit hats for kids going through chemotherapy because so many young children have cancer. I feel so hurt when someone that young is enduring that kind of pain, and along with the pain of chemotherapy there is the terrible after effect of hair loss. It is very hard to tolerate going through chemotherapy, but it is even harder to tolerate the embarrassment of walking out of their houses with no hair, so to comfort the kids, and to ease their pain I decided to knit hats for them. I asked the women in the knitting group to help me fulfill this mitzvah, and they were enthusiastically willing to help.

Fleischman is a very special place for me because my great great Aunt Esther lived there, and my family would visit her weekly. Fleischman became a friendly and comforting place for me to be. After my great great aunt passed away I only came to Fleischman when my family called bingo in her memory. I missed that friendly and comforting place, so I decided to again come to Fleischman once a week. Every Sunday at the knitting group we knitted hats and just talked. We were named the "Koffe Klatch". I knew that knitting the hats was not the only mitzvah I was doing, I was enlightening lives of those who need a young face to look forward to seeing.

While doing this project with the women I received much more than I gave. This experience with the women of Fleischman has been unforgettable. These women are so intelligent, humorous, and are full of interesting stories. The women have taught me so much about knitting, and have even introduced me to crocheting, and with those skills I was able to make my own Tallit. At first my goal was to knit at least fifteen hats by my Bat Mitzvah, but the hats just kept coming and by my Bat Mitzvah not only did the our knitting group make fifteen hats, but there were over 110 hats! At my bat mitzvah luncheon, the hats were displayed on each table as the centerpieces, and the women who made those hats were more than thrilled to see their own creations being adored by everyone. I thought I would have a great impact

on the women at Fleischman, but it turns out that they had a greater impact on me.

After my Bat Mitzvah was over my mom and I brought the hats to Mott Children's Hospital in Ann Arbor, Michigan. I was unable to see the children who would receive a hat, but I know that to do a mitzvah anonymously is the best mitzvah of all. I know that they will appreciate knowing that someone was thinking of them, which will hopefully help put a smile on their faces.

It was also important for me to remember and honor my family's Holocaust history. My Hebrew name, Eden Esther, was in memory of my great grandmother Esther Adler who was killed in the Holocaust. So, in her memory and in memory of all the millions of Jews who were killed in the Holocaust, my friends, family and I made a mosaic depicting a synagogue window broken on the night of Kristallnacht. Protruding from the shattered window is a yellow star bearing the word *Jude*, which was what the Nazis made all Jews wear during the Holocaust. The inspiration for this mosaic was taken from a patch on the Kindertransport Quilt. The survivors of the Kindertransport each made a patch that contributed to the quilt. The beautiful mosaic is now permanently installed in the main corridor of the new Holocaust Memorial Center, in Farmington Hills.

I am continuing to go to Fleischman every Sunday, and I know that this experience was just the beginning of a lifetime full of opportunities to do a mitzvah, and I hope to grab every opportunity to change someone's life, for the rest of my life. This project was more than just a mitzvah to me; it was a life changing experience.