

A Chinese Bat Mitzvah Project

By: Pnina Hirsowitz

"You were probably hoping for a party invitation, but instead this is an invitation to participate in my Tikun Olam project. I have chosen a trip to China to celebrate my Bat Mitzvah rather than a party. In China I am doing a project with an organization call *China Care*. This organization helps children who have been abandoned because they have birth defects or special needs. *China Care* organizes their surgery and nurses them back to health. The children are in foster homes or small orphanages all over China, and are being taken care of by volunteers. *China Care* then finds homes for the children when they are healthy. I have decided to collect supplies for these homes and was hoping you all would help me by donating the requested items." This was how I composed my letter to all the students in my grade, to let them know I needed their help for my Bat Mitzvah project. As well as sending out letters, I made telephone calls to each house of my fellow students with the help of a friend. Through this project I collected supplies for a foster home in Beijing, and donated money to the orphanage. Items that were needed and collected included infant sleepers, Balmex, Childrens' Tylenol, and bottle nipples. I also received a few checks. The money has been used for surgery, and medical supplies.

I think it is very important to help people who are not as fortunate as oneself. Doing good deeds are encouraged and valued by my family, community, and friends. I think that this impacted on my Bat Mitzvah, because I felt as if I was putting the mitzvah in the Bat Mitzvah. I also received many compliments about my project from my Bat Mitzvah guests. I have continued my project every day by thinking about it and try build upon in ways such as putting it on the discussion table when my homeroom wants to do a tzedakah project. My whole experience of having a Bat Mitzvah and my Tikun Olam project is one I will never forget and hope I will continue to live m life with acts of goodness and kindness.