

**An End to Genocide**  
**By: Sarita Rosenstock**

As a member, not only of the Jewish community, but of the world, it is imperative to give back as much as possible. We need to do our share in helping innocent people overcome unnecessary struggles that face their daily lives, such as poverty, disease, and in the case of my chesed project: genocide.

Before about five months ago, I thought that since the Holocaust, we humans had learned our lesson. I now realize that I was completely ignorant. I had no idea that since then there has been much genocide all over the world. In February of this year, my friend Aislinn's mother took her and me to see *Hotel Rwanda*. We were both moved by the movie, and upset that the United States' government, although obviously aware of the situation, did nothing about it. When we found out that a similar crisis was developing in Darfur, a western region of the Sudan, we were not going to simply sit back and let history repeat itself. A few days after seeing the movie, Aislinn and I read an article in the *New York Times* containing a quote from former Senator Paul Simon. He said, "If every member of the House and Senate had received 100 letters from people back home saying we have to do something about Rwanda, when the crisis was first developing, then I think the response would have been different." That quote inspired us to start a letter writing campaign.

Before we started, we did our research, and what we found was very depressing. The genocide has left 3 million people displaced and over 180,000 dead (now over 400,000). Plus, due to the constant violence, 15,000 innocent people continue to die each month. The killers are the government-backed militia called the janjaweed.

Dated August of 2004, a classified document from the African Union was recovered. "Change the demography of Darfur and make it void of African tribes," the document urges. It supports "killing, burning villages and farms, terrorizing people. Confiscating property from members of African tribes and forcing them from Darfur." Additionally, many occurrences of rape have been reported. One thing that really upset me was the drawings from young children that lived in the Darfur area. The drawings were of

soldiers on horseback shooting people with machine guns, helicopters dropping bombs, and dead bodies. Something has to be done.

With the help of Aislinn's mom, we wrote letters to President Bush and to Congress, urging them to take action. The Princeton Public Library has supported us from the beginning. They allowed us to make a stand by the library's entrance, which we have done 7 or 8 times, and they even offered to pay for the postage of the signed letters.

The campaign was a huge success. We now have over 800 signed letters and, without even asking for donations, about 500 dollars, which we plan to give to an organization providing humanitarian relief in Darfur.

Coincidentally, my chesed project had quite a lot to do with my parsha, "Balak." Balak's goal was to wipe out the Israelites, which, by definition, is genocide. Doing this project helped me understand the parsha, and the significance of Balaam's famous words; the words that we now call the "Mah Tovv."

Since then, Aislinn and I have recruited members, and founded R.A.D:D (Raising Awareness Destination: Darfur). We organized "Dance for Darfur: An African Dance Party for relief" and are currently working on an event for the spring.

I hold the subject of genocide particularly close to my heart because my grandmother was a Holocaust survivor. I could barely even stand reading about her experience, let alone live it, as millions do every day all over the world. Something must be done, and although I know I cannot do it alone, I hope that by raising awareness, many others will do their part, and a little goes a long way.