

Addressing Crisis: Resources for Jewish Teen Philanthropy



Jewish teen philanthropists are in a unique position to have a direct impact during or in the aftermath of a crisis or tragedy. During times of crisis, teens may feel overwhelmed by the choices they have to make. It is important to support the group by offering a space for processing, further discussion, and sharing current resources, while also offering flexibility within the giving process.

Teens may consider incorporating crisis relief into their long-term mission and funding strategy or to long-term planning towards recovery efforts.

This resource highlights different Jewish text, conversations prompts and suggestions for how to apply Jewish teen philanthropy during a crisis situation. These tools can be applied in many challenging situations facing our world including times of crisis, tragedy and natural disasters.

JEWISH TEXT: WHAT IS OUR OBLIGATION IN A CRISIS?

RESPONDING TO A CRISIS



"Do not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor" - Leviticus 19:16

"Whoever saves one soul, it is as if he had saved a full world." - Sanhedrin 4:5

Discussion:

- What do you take away from each text? What do you think they mean?
- How do you define someone as your neighbor?
- What are some actions, big and small, we can take to create a larger impact?



EMERGENCY NEEDS VERSUS ONGOING NEEDS

"You are not obligated to complete a task, but nevertheless you are not free to leave it." - Pirkei Avot 2:20

"One day as Honi was walking along he saw a man planting a carob tree. Honi asked him, "How many years until it will bear fruit?" The man answered: "Not for seventy years." Honi asked him, "Do you really believe you'll live another seventy years?" The man answered: "I found this world provided with carob trees, and as my ancestors planted them for me, so I too plant them for my descendants." – Talmud Balvi Taanit 23a

"What is might? When you see people about to fall and rescue them."- Midrash Tehillim 52:24

Discussion:

- What do you take away from each text? What do you think they mean?
- In thinking about the recent events how can we help right now? How can we help in the long-term?
- Even though we cannot see the final outcome, why is it important to contribute to the process?



TAKING CARE OF YOUR COMMUNITY

"When the community is in trouble do not say, "I will go home and eat and drink and all will be well with me."...Rather, involve yourself in the community's distress as was demonstrated by Moses . . . In this way Moses said, "Since Israel is in trouble, I will share their burden." Anyone who shares a community's distress will be rewarded and will witness the community's consolation." - Talmud Bavli Massekhet Ta'anit 11a

"The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in the land of Egypt." – Leviticus 19:34

"We owe a responsibility not only to those who are in Israel but also to those generations that are no more, to those millions who have died within our lifetime, to Jews all over the world, and to generations of Jews to come." – Golda Meir

Discussion:

- What do you take away from each text? What do you think they mean?
- What is our responsibility to our wider community?
- What is our responsibility to the Jewish community?
- How can we use our experiences as Jews to combat injustices that we see in the world?
- How do we take care of ourselves during this time to better support others?

WHAT ARE SOME DIFFERENT WAYS WE CAN ADDRESS A CRISIS IN A JEWISH TEEN PHILANTHROPY PROGRAM?



1. **Grant permission to the group to consider flexibility in the mission statement:**

- Stick with the current mission statement, and consider if/how giving toward this crisis may fall within the focus areas.
- Re-evaluate the mission to specifically address crisis prevention and intervention.

2. **Set aside a portion of the grantmaking pool for the immediate crisis, and continue with the process (and mission statement) with the remaining funds available in the grantmaking pool.**

Please note: Be sensitive to the fact that now may not be the appropriate time to ask for proposals directly from those affected. Do research about coordinated efforts from organizations within the community. The teens may come to a consensus on a new organization and make an allocation accordingly.

3. **Fundraise for and then allocate additional money (outside of the expected grantmaking pool for the year), using the skills learned in the teen foundation about responsible grantmaking.** This could be an opportunity to channel money that your community is already prepared to donate towards the crisis through your teen foundation, providing an educational opportunity for your teens.

4. **Provide opportunities for volunteering, fundraising and social advocacy outside of the teen foundation's grantmaking process.** Continue with your teen foundation as planned (if the current climate allows), and encourage your teens to join any larger institutional initiatives or other local organizations in these efforts. Consider sending your teen foundation as a delegation, so that they can share the experience and then process together afterwards. If teens are able, add an extra session and organize a letter-writing campaign or volunteer project.

5. **Consider the long-term impact.** Remember, over time events will fade in our memory, but there will be a long-term impact; consider funding opportunities for the long-term needs of the community. Be willing to fund research or advocacy activities that result in policy change at the local, state, or national level. Funding research is often overlooked because it isn't always as exciting as funding immediate need. However, this is an area with great potential for ongoing impact. With it, we can learn and change behaviors based on credible evidence of need.