



Monmouth Reform Temple

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PRESS RELEASE **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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On April 2, the Monmouth Reform Temple held its annual Mitzvah Day, with many community service activities performed by the entire temple in the Jewish tradition of "Repairing the World." Pictured above are this year's organizers, Marcie Rachlin, Ocean, and Dean Ross, Farmingdale.

MRT Does God's Work on Mitzvah Day

Tinton Falls: Rabbi Marc Kline and Cantor Gabrielle Clissold gathered their flock in the Monmouth Reform Temple (MRT) Sanctuary for prayer and song on April 2, Mitzvah day. They then sent congregants and friends out to do God's work. Rabbi Kline stated, "For 63 years, MRT has been a leader in social action and community service." Mitzvah Day is one day emblematic of all the good work MRT does throughout the year, where the entire temple community gathers to perform numerous community service projects both in the Temple and outside in the community. This year's leaders were Dean Ross, Farmingdale, and Marcie Rachlin, Ocean Township.

World repair began with tilling the soil of the MRT community garden that sends hundreds of pounds of fresh produce to local community kitchens every year. A dozen volunteers cooked up hot meals for the Asbury Park center on-site in their kitchen. "Over 91 meals of meatloaf, yams and green beans, were cooked and packaged," states Cheryl Gaudette, who organizes the cooking project. She was particularly pleased to welcome 13 year old Ava Sokol to the program this year as part of her Bat Mitzvah project. Last Mitzvah day, Lyra Seligman had organized collections of diapers and other necessities for the Monmouth Day Care Center for her Bat Mitzvah project. It was so well received; she chose to do it again. Special collections were also made for the regional Charity Interfaith RISE, which is assisting the settlement of many Afghan refugees in New Jersey who fled war-torn Afghanistan this past summer. Donations were also made to area charities.

Joined by their parents, MRTs youngest children were involved in several projects including decorating and writing letters of appreciation for the veterans and on-going service personnel. They made colorful bird houses and shared an early Earth Day lesson about conservation. Organizer Karen Seligman then instructed them on how to build their own bug hotels which would share their family garden space becoming part of that local ecosystem.

Over 20 volunteers swept the beaches at Sea Bright, Avon by the Sea and the Henry Hudson Trails. Lots of trash and recyclables were collected over the course of two weekends.

Nine temple members spent three hours of their day taking a professional course in CPR and AED which was instructed by nurse and Emergency Medical Technician Beth Weston-Knotts. The program was arranged by Social Action Director Rickie Kashdan, who explained, "Nearly 1,000 people die every day from cardiac arrests and the vast majority happen at home, in public places and workplaces. This is an opportunity to learn a skill that could save a life." Everyone was given their own CPR manikins that simulate real life situations, except these dolls lit up with green lights when the student was applying just the right amount of pressure and compressions.

As all events Jewish, the active day of community service concluded with a meal, also provided by temple volunteers. In all, a very successful temple community day, which some might call "a blessing."

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(above left) Temple members prepare the gardens at MRT that grow food for area soup kitchens.

(Above right) MRT volunteers cooked over 90 meals for the Asbury Park Center on Mitzvah Day.



(above left) Dara, Giada, Jacob DeVincenzo display the cards they created thanking military personnel and veterans for their service to our country. (above right) Amy, Alan, Jorgyn, Ethan Tockerman display the bird house their family created in the conservation program held for the temples youngest members during Mitzvah Day.



(above left) Rabbi Kline, Lyra Seligman and Kara Lownstein staff the Monmouth Day Care Center collection table, organized by Lyra as part of her Bat-Mitzvah Community Serviced project. (above right) Her mom Karen Seligman displays the Bug motels she organized the temple's youngest members to create in a conservation project, as part of the Mitzvah Day theme of "repairing the world."



(above left) Jay Weisenfeld Phil Falcone received instruction from CPR instructor Beth Weston-Knotts on how to properly use the AED Defibrillators during their three hour CPR course offered to MRT volunteers during Mitzvah Day.

(above right) Rickie Kashdan practices CPR on an infant manikin during the same course as her classmates look on.



Pictured are just some of the 20 or so MRT volunteers who cleaned the Sea Bright beach during Mitzvah Day.