

# Schools

## Giving Is Part of Our Education at Charlotte Jewish Preschool

By Kim Maguire and Becca Weiner

At the Charlotte Jewish Preschool, part of our children's education incorporates giving tzedakah and performing mitzvot. As we celebrated the holiday of Sukkot, we were reminded of how

thankful we are for what we have. During Sukkot, and especially around this secular time of year, we are also reminded of people that are less fortunate than we.

Many Americans, upon seeing a decorated Sukkah for the first time are reminded of Thanksgiv-

ing. Sukkot, a harvest festival like Thanksgiving, includes feasts. We are reminded of how thankful we are to eat and have a roof over our heads. The children at CJP are taught the concept of giving, as they give tzedakah each Friday at Shabbat either by bringing in

coins and dollar bills or by contributing to our monthly tzedakah project.

Each month the CJP engages in a social action tzedakah project. Our CJP families generously donate items of necessity – students proudly bring in their items and happily deposit their donations into our oversized tzedakah box. In September, we collected school supplies for the sister schools of Temple Beth El and Temple Israel - Sterling Elementary and Hunt-ingtowne Farms Elementary, respectively. We collected paper, notebooks, folders, pencils, glue, scissors, markers, crayons, highlighters, and other supplies to which students have limited access. These items were donated to children who cannot afford their own.

In honor of the harvest festival of Sukkot, in October we donated food items to the Jewish Family Services food pantry. We collected canned goods and dry goods to help stock the pantry. Some classrooms collected their own baskets of canned goods as well and the children brought the goods to JFS themselves. The students were so proud to bring their items and get a peek at the pantry and the shelves lined with food.

At the Charlotte Jewish Preschool our community frequently rallies around a cause in order for those less fortunate than us to benefit. For example, two years ago when there was a devastating tsunami in Japan, families from the CJP quickly raised more than \$600 to donate to the Tsunami Relief Fund. And, when a CJP parent ran for Charlotte Man of the Year last year we donated a month's worth of tzedakah to the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, the organization for which he raised money during his campaign.

The tzedakah we collect each Friday has helped many organizations over the years. We have donated to local and international organizations that benefit children and families. Each year we donate tzedakah to Shalom Bayit, our local Jewish organization that works to eliminate domestic violence. Additionally, we make contributions to Room in the Inn at Temple Israel, Temple Beth El, and the Levine JCC. Annually we make contributions to A Child's Place and this past year we donated tzedakah to The Freedom School. The Freedom School op-



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erated on our Shalom Park campus this summer to provide summer school and programming for students while school was out of session.

Furthermore, annually we adopt a tzedakah project that directly impacts Israel. Two years ago we raised enough money to plant 80 trees in Israel through the Jewish National Fund (JNF), and last year we donated over \$500 to the JNF Parsons Water Fund which helps provide potable water to Israel. This year we have chosen Every Child Deserves a Heart. This Israeli organization provides cardiac care and surgeries to kids who are unable to afford it.

Giving is part of our education at the Charlotte Jewish Preschool. We give money on Fridays for Shabbat, we bring in items for the less fortunate. We learn how to get along with each other and help other people. We talk about performing other mitzvot by spending time in our Sukkahs having a snack, eating a meal, or even sleeping in it. As we approach Thanksgiving, we teach our children to be thankful for what we have and to be generous to those who do not. Just watch a child tell you about their good deeds. Their eyes light up, they become very animated as they tell us what they have and why.

You do not need to be a member of CJP to donate to these causes. We are happy to accept any donations. If you are interested in seeing our tzedakah calendar and participating in any of our projects, please contact our Judaica Specialist, Becca Weiner, at [bweiner@shalomcharlotte.org](mailto:bweiner@shalomcharlotte.org).

For more information about having your child Learn, Grow, and Connect with us, please contact Alyson Kalik, CJP registrar, at 704-944-6776 or [akalik@shalomcharlotte.org](mailto:akalik@shalomcharlotte.org). Half day enrollment for the 2012/2013 school year for children ages 1-5 is currently underway. ✨



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—J. Robert Oppenheimer