Pay it forward

Does doing a good deed for satisfaction’s sake, or to feel good, lessen the deed? What motivates our actions? These are great questions when you think about teaching children about the concept of “Paying it Forward” – especially as it relates to tikkun olam or the “responsibility for repairing the world.”

If you’re looking for opportunities to teach your children to pay it forward – here are some suggested activities that can help instill this important value in children of all ages.

Create a Scavenger Hunt

Walk on a street by your house or in the city you are visiting and try some of the following:

Do a quick scan and count the pieces of trash you see on the ground between two points. Who do you think is responsible for keeping the streets clean? City workers, citizens, a company?

Set distance perimeters (over the next mile or next six blocks) and observe the people. Name any community needs made obvious by what you see. Is there a need for homeless shelters, food banks, grocery stores, mental or physical health centers or access to social services?

While waiting in line at the museum or aquarium

Have your kids count the total number of names on the donor wall. Do they recognize any? Is there more space on the wall? Why is that? Ask the kids why they think the names are on the wall and why people gave money to be there.

Volunteer

Here are a few agencies to check out:

Jewish Family & Children’s Service
Arizona Humane Society
Council for Jews With Special Needs
Habitat for Humanity

Teaching our children about the value of giving and about the impact our giving has on others is best demonstrated by experiences our children can take part in. Volunteering allows us to put our Jewish values into action and creates a powerful learning opportunity.

Older children have plenty of volunteer choices available to them and there are many Jewish organizations in the Valley that promote tikkun olam (repairing the world) experiences – The Friendship Circle, B’nai Tzedek, local youth groups and congregations to name a few.

In the past, families with younger children may have struggled to find mitzvah opportunities their families could participate in. Enter Alex Sklar and Lisa Geyser, founders of Families Giving Back. These women created FGB because they were looking for volunteer experiences their families could participate in but were not able to find a lot out there to accommodate young children. After speaking with many other families, they realized the interest was there but most parents did not have the time or the knowledge to seek out these opportunities.

Families Giving Back works with nonprofit organizations to develop volunteer events that work for families with children of all ages. They host two to three events per month and also promote other family-friendly volunteer opportunities from other nonprofits.

According to Alex and Lisa, most of the events are short but children observe firsthand how a small amount of time can make a huge difference in someone’s life. Through FGB events, young children are exposed to the “real world” and develop a compassion for others who are less fortunate.

Families Giving Back has a volunteer experience coming up that is perfect for Family Fun Page families. On Oct. 20, FGB will be working with Keep Phoenix Beautiful at PHX Renews Project Site – part of Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton’s vacant lot initiative. Volunteers will be helping to clean and beautify the park area. To learn more or to find out about other volunteer opportunities, visit www.familiesgivingback.org/site/event-calendar.

Here is an article from Rabbi Lawrence Troster to help you get your family ready for a mitzvah experience of caring for the earth: http://bit.ly/1e8u2ri

Kol H’Kvod to all our Family Fun Page families who spend family time volunteering!

NO place for HATE®

By participating in No Place for Hate®, your school will join with a larger initiative taking place across the nation to reduce bullying, name calling and other expressions of bias, while creating safer learning environments that promote inclusion, appreciation of diversity and respect for others.

Contact the ADL Arizona Regional Office to receive the School Intent Form.

http://arizona.adl.org/no-place-for-hate/

Have questions about No Place for Hate®?
Contact us at (602) 274-0991.