

Answers to questions posed in the February 2015 edition of the Volunteer Professional Newsletter:

Do you have a creative model of engagement for Bnai Mitzvah students looking for service opportunities?

Our model is called Mitzvah Makers. Our team of volunteer engagement coordinators meets with youth and parents to find the right project for them. We offer a concierge service to help create a project and keep it going. If there is a hands-on project or fundraising project for JFS, great! We set up a personal fundraising page and all. If their interests are outside of our mission, we connect them to other organizations and partnerships. If they fundraise for another organization, we collect the funds and cut a check to the org at the completion of the project. All teens are highlighted online with a bio and photo. We also promote one of them monthly in our e-newsletter. You can see our MM site at www.themitzvahmakers.org and on our website at www.jfssd.org

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JFS East Bay is looking for input on software modules used for volunteer sign-up via your website. Do you have a company you use and like?

We use Volgistics. They have online volunteer applications and a scheduling component. All of our volunteers schedule themselves for Food Pantry distributions, serving meals at senior centers, etc. It has a lot of possibilities, but we haven't tapped into them all yet.

Melinda Wilkes, MA, CNP, CVA

Does your agency have opportunities which allow families to volunteer together?

Families are welcomed and encouraged to volunteer together at our food pantry. Many families also participate in our Bikkur Holim program. We have families deliver holiday packages to older adults. We do not have specific opportunities that are for family volunteering only. We fit them in where it is appropriate. I volunteer with my child providing rides to older adults. Super fun and easy! :)

Melinda Wilkes, MA, CNP, CVA

Do any of you provide volunteer referral services to agencies outside your own?

We definitely do this for mitzvah youth. We will be gearing up to be a volunteer hub for the Jewish community soon - so synagogues and the like can contact us for volunteer projects. If we do not have anything, we will refer them to other organizations.

Melinda Wilkes, MA, CNP, CVA

Many thanks go out to Melinda for providing input from JFS San Diego. If anyone else wants to contribute to the conversation – please email your answer to jbeckman@ajfca.org