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## Hundreds of Local Teens Join Fire Safety Professionals for Day of Service

By JLNJ Staff | May 10, 2018

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(Courtesy of Jewish Federation in the Heart of New Jersey) Hundreds of Jewish teens from Monmouth and Middlesex counties came together, hosted by the Middlesex County Fire Academy in Sayreville, for the global teen service initiative, J-Serve, on April 22. The stated goal was to make the world a better place.

In addition to performing various community service projects, teen participants learned, through live fire and rescue demonstrations, how public safety professionals carry out their commitment to serving the community in times of danger, crisis or need.

This year's J-Serve planning was led by a teen advisory committee—among them Jake Robbins of Manalapan and twins Ava and Emily Schwartz of Highland Park.

"It is my responsibility as a member of the Jewish community to educate the next generation," said Robbins. "That is what I do to serve my community and that's what J-Serve does for the Jewish people as well."

"Being on the teen committee for J-Serve was a great experience! It gave me the opportunity to reach out and help my community in a way I had never done before," said Ava Schwartz. "After working hard to plan the event, it was rewarding to see other teens help those in need. I am so glad to be a part of this meaningful project."

Emily Schwartz added, "Working on the teen committee for J-Serve 2018 was very inspiring to me as a Jewish teen. I learned a lot about planning and communication as well as why it is important to give back to the community, and how this can be done in such a fun and impactful way. I learned a lot from J-Serve and I hope that the day inspired all of the Jewish teens who attended to continue service for their community and gain an understanding of why this is so important."

Participants earned community service credits—recognized by public and private schools, the National Honor Society, and on college applications—for engaging in such hands-on projects as:

- Helping at a local food pantry
- Starting a garden for preschool children
- Making teddy bears with children with special needs
- Decorating mezuzahs and candle sticks for Houston families who lost their homes in Hurricane Harvey
- Making video greetings for lone IDF soldiers in Israel
- Visiting with Holocaust survivors to hear their stories, then making commemorative gifts for the survivors
- Learning how to advocate for Israel
- Learning basic emergency response with Hatzalah EMS
- Socializing with seniors at an assisted living home

"J-Serve encourages teens to consider the causes they care about and participate in efforts to help those who are less fortunate," said Susan Antman, the Jewish Federation's executive vice president. "The Federation is proud to inspire young people to act on their values of caring. It's thrilling to witness them discovering that their contributions matter."

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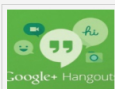
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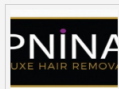
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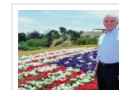
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