

B'nai Tzedek Young Philanthropy Grant Program

PROJECT TITLE: The Jewish Experience in the Civil Rights Movement Trips

I. Proposal Summary (Executive Summary) for use on ballot.

The Proposal Summary should be about one paragraph of 1-3 sentences and should include the most general description of the use that will be made of the funds. Be concise and compelling, your readers are age 13-32.

Create a Jewish Family Education Program for multigenerational and multicultural experiences for Jewish teens and their families. This program will provide the opportunity for Jewish teens and their parents and even grandparents to travel to historic sites in the southern part of the United States that impacted Jews and the Civil Rights movement of the 1900s. It will educate them through experiencing the struggles faced by Blacks and the significant role that Jews played in the Civil Rights movement.

II. Project Description (Program Narrative)

What is the problem or need you are trying to address and how will you do it?

Do your best to keep this document to 1 page.

This program will consist of three bus tours, one trip per year, that will be subsidized by the grant with the goal of making the trips affordable and educational. All materials will be prepared in advance and arranged by the host organization. Speakers would be professionals and educators familiar with the topic. The trips would be 1-3 days depending on the distance and topic.

Many young people today do not know of the struggles that were faced by Jews and Blacks in the 1940-1960s in the fight for equal rights. There were many instances where Jews and Blacks were murdered as they attempted to gain even the right to vote, let alone eat at the same counter as their white counterparts. This important part of Jewish American history is vanishing and in some cases is already lost. It is our responsibility to preserve and learn the lessons from these past trials that our grandparents experienced. Our youth need to experience walking in the footsteps of Dr. Martin Luther King in Selma, arm in arm, with Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel.

For Example, on one of the bus trips we would recommend watching the movie [Selma](#) before walking across [Edmund Pettus Bridge](#) in Selma, seeing the bridge in person after learning about its history is an emotional moment for anyone.

Of all the museums and sites, the [National Center for Civil and Human Rights](#) in Atlanta is an excellent example of interaction with history. Because it is relatively new, the exhibits are very modern and interactive. The most powerful of all is the lunch counter exhibit. Visitors need to be 13 to participate, as it is very emotional. As you sit down, you don headphones, place your palms on the lunch counter, and close your eyes. It makes it seem as if people are all around you, screaming in your ears and hitting the back of your chair. It is raw and disturbing and puts you in the shoes of a protestor the way nothing else can. The Human Rights exhibit, which talks about the ongoing struggle for human rights around the world, profiling both the most evil violators of those rights, and the strongest advocates is very moving. This is just an example of the type of trip that would be planned once the grant is obtained and a final budget can be developed.

This is a three year commitment for each participant with the goal of having them return with the ability to speak to other youth and to become active in the fight for human rights and justice in our community. This will also prepare them for their college experience by providing a background on how activism can lead to change.