

JFCS YouthFirst Impact Year Service-in-a-Box Opportunities

Bring meaningful and engaging community service-learning projects to your school's Jewish clubs and affinity spaces. These "mini community service events" are a great way to learn about local causes, integrate Jewish values and give back to the community. **Each project can be customized to meet the timing and needs of your group.** Check out the options below and feel free to reach out to one of us with any questions!

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👐 Greeting with Good Fortune: Hamsah Project

Bring luck and good fortune to people's homes by creating a Hamsah: a traditional and multicultural symbol of protection often hung on a wall of a home's entrance! Learn about *Birkat Habayit*, the Jewish blessing for the home, and explore ways you can help new community members feel protected and safe.

This is a great project all year round, and especially for welcoming various communities that are new to a region or area. It can also be a great service for Sukkot (focused on temporary dwellings).



🌱 Seeding Change: Plant Native Seeds in Your Community

Concerned about climate change and preserving the earth for many generations to come? Join JFCS and teens across the Bay in revitalizing our local ecosystems. Embody the Jewish value of *Shomrei Adamah* (guarding/protecting the earth) by creating and planting "seed bundles" using native wildflower seeds and connect with nature and your community.

This is a great project all year round, and especially for celebrating Tu B'Shvat, a.k.a. Jewish Arbor Day!



Bee Kind to the Planet: Make Up-Cycled Pollinator Hotels

Get crafty with this fun environmental service-learning project that's all about the bees! Bee hotels provide space for shelter and rest for bees that are not part of a hive. *Shmirat HaTeva* (preserving nature) deeply relies on bees and other pollinators for producing fruit and seeds for all living creatures. Help those bees while also practicing *Bal Tashchit* (recycling/not wasting) by turning everyday trash into [temporary habitats](#) for solitary bees!

This is a great project all year round, and especially for celebrating Shavuot (celebrating land of milk and honey—bees!), Tu B'Shvat, a.k.a. Jewish Arbor Day, the Jewish New Year (bees-honey-sweetness-fruit), and Sukkot (temporary shelter)!



Mezuzah in a Box: Explore the Jewish value of Sh'lom Bayit (Peace in the home)

A staple symbol of a Jewish home is a mezuzah on a door post. One of the mezuzah's roles is to protect a living space and create *Sh'lom Bayit* (peace in the home). What happens when someone does not have a stable, reliable, or safe place to live? This is a unique service-learning experience that will bring more awareness to the growing struggles of families and individuals in the Bay Area who are unhoused, in the process of losing their homes, or facing on-going transitional housing. We'll be exploring these issues while making our own mezuzot and engaging in current advocacy efforts to address the local housing crisis

This is a great project all year round, and especially for celebrating Sukkot (temporary housing, welcoming in the stranger), Passover (welcoming strangers/Elijah-the beggar/wanderer-into the home, wandering in the desert), and Shabbat (palace of peace, welcoming strangers/Elijah, community).



Rock Painting: Cultivate Positive School Climate & Youth Mental Health

Staying positive is challenging in our modern world of "unprecedented times." One way we can support one another is through kind words, images, and actions as embodied by the Jewish value of *Chessed* (unconditional kindness). We'll explore ways to raise awareness about positive youth mental health while painting colorful rocks with

encouraging images and words to place around your school's campus or community space. Make a difference in your day and in your youth community with this mental health-focused beautification project!

This is a great project all year round, and especially for celebrating Tu B'Av (Jewish version of Valentine's Day), Hanukkah (tis the season fa-la-la), and World Kindness Day.



Animal Toys for Shelters: Treating Animals with Compassion

Many pet owners don't have the luxury of giving their pets special treats and toys, and most animals in shelters are left toyless, as well. JFCS is excited to invite you to have some fun and make pet toys to be donated to local animal shelters and pet owners in need. Come make an impact and embody the mitzvah of *Tza'ar Ba'al Chayim* (compassion for animals) as you channel your love for animals in this meaningful community service project.

This is a great project all year round, and especially for celebrating the New Year of the Animals (the 1st of Elul) and Simchat Torah (when we finish reading the Torah and soon re-start and will read about Noah's ark in the Torah in the 2nd week)



Trinkets for Tots: Handmade Toys for Children in Need

JFCS is dedicated to serving children in need. These needs vary from neurodivergent functioning to social-emotional learning. Many of these children who receive services and support from JFCS face challenges that affect their well-being and cause higher levels of stress. Help alleviate some of these stressors and support healthy child development by making fun and engaging toys that can be enjoyed by children of different ages. Your group can make toys such as: *groggers* (noisemakers) for Purim, musical instruments for everyday use, or puzzles to help stimulate the growing mind. Embody the Jewish tradition of *Veshinantam L'vanecha* ("And you shall teach your children") to help a child in need.

This is a great project all year round, and especially for celebrating Purim, Hanukkah, and Shavuot (Tikkun Leil S'lichot, learning all night).



🌸 **Flowers for Shabbat: Shabbat-o-Grams for Isolated Seniors and Families**

Create beautiful bouquets of paper flowers to be delivered to JFCS isolated seniors and families in need to brighten their living spaces. Help them decorate their home in time for *Kabbalat Shabbat* (welcoming the Sabbath) and bring a colorful smile to their weekend.

This is a great project all year round, and especially for celebrating or learning about Shabbat!



📄 **Notes for Healing: Shabbat-o-Grams for Hospital Patients**

Learn and practice the Jewish value of *Bikur Cholim* (visiting the sick) by offering words of healing to lift patients' spirits at local hospitals. Every Friday, JFCS Jewish Chaplaincy Services distributes special Shabbat bags to patients they support. In this mindful service event, we will design creative messages called Shabbat-o-Grams. These messages can take various shapes like handmade cards or paper flower bouquets. Bring joy to patients through your positive and uplifting notes!

This is a great project all year round, and especially for celebrating or learning about Shabbat!



◆ **Stained Glass for Happy Healing**

For many people, accessing and affording luxuries to decorate their living spaces are minimal. Bring joy and colorful light into any space by creating stained-glass window decorations to lift someone's spirits—whether it's a moment of respite to hospital patients, having a beautiful decoration to fill a temporary shared-housing space, or bringing smiles to seniors in centers, these stained glass window decorations are an easy and aesthetic way to brighten someone's space and make their day.

This is a great project all year round, and especially for celebrating seasonal holidays!



✿ Aroma Therapy Satchels: Relaxation for Survivors of Domestic Violence

Life can be hectic and filled with stressors and sometimes all it takes is a moment of peace to calm down and get centered. In this activity, we will embody the Jewish value of *Shmirat HaGuf* (taking care of the body) by creating potpourri-filled satchels with affirming messages that we'll send to survivors of domestic violence. We hope to help them find even one moment in their day to relax with the soothing and calming scents from nature.

This is a great project all year round, and especially for celebrating Shabbat!



✦ Havdalah Kits:

Havdalah is a ritual that involves many of our senses—sound, smell, sight, taste, and touch—and is practiced weekly to separate the sanctity of Shabbat from the rest of the mundane week. Many folks live in places that do not permit open flames and so we invite you to help us make flameless Havdalah candles, scented pouches as *besamim* (scented spices), and personalized *kiddush* cups (the ceremonial cup used in Jewish rituals) to provide the resources needed so that someone who wants to practice this multi-sensorial ritual can do so with integrity.

This is a great project all year round, and especially for celebrating shabbat and havdalah! This option can also make real Havdalah candles for populations who can have open flame.



✦ Piñata Party:

Practice *G'milut Chessedim* (acts of loving kindness) by helping an underserved child celebrate their birthday with style by making pinatas that can be used at birthday parties. Fun for all ages, these home-made pinatas can bring sweet joy and laughter to anyone's life.

This is a great project all year round and can be done together with a population of young children or those young at heart.