

Three Major Mitzvah Projects

And make sure I mention crayons and plants

Infant Car Seats:

1. Why? There are so many families “out there” that do not have car seats for their infants, putting the child at great risk.

2. How?

A. Finding the place that will accept and distribute the car seats: Make phone calls, meet the people in charge of distribution. Start with local social service agencies, Jewish Family Service, and law enforcement departments.

B. Most Important, #1: Federal regulations concerning standards for car seat design have changed considerably over recent years. You must announce in your written and oral presentations that many, if not most, of the car seats will be discarded because they do not meet federal regulations. Nevertheless, stress that the ones that *will* be distributed will save many lives.

C. Launch the drive.

Used Cellphones:

1. Why? Old cellphones still dial “911”, and the service is free. Old and de-activated cell phones are donated to victims of domestic violence and other people in need, such as school bus drivers, crossing guards, elderly people living alone, and similar vulnerable individuals.

2. How? Contact your local police domestic violence unit or the community’s domestic violence network. Most will accept and donate the phones to the appropriate recipients.

Important: Ask your police domestic violence unit or domestic violence network **how many phones are needed** and proceed accordingly. *Always* collect as many as you can. I cannot stress enough that some groups that do not need more phones may be selling them for their salvage value. This is *not* what you want. So check carefully when you make the arrangements. If they have more than they need, find another group that *will* distribute them on your behalf to people in need.

3. Do it: Having done your research, begin the collection at the synagogue, school, or other agency. Do not wait until you have large numbers of phones — take them in as frequently as possible as they come in. Each may be a life-saving Mitzvah cellphone.

Kid Videos:

1. Why? Kids in the hospital suffer from sickness, pain, fatigue, weariness of body and boredom of mind and soul. Videos make a difference, a BIG difference. Hospitals all have VCR’s, so videos are always in demand.

2. How?

A. Set up a meeting with a local hospital to tell them you are planning to organize a drive to collect gently-used videos.

B. The Breakthrough: Meryl Innerfield, a young woman celebrating her Bat Mitzvah in New York launched such a collection drive, but with the following all-important proviso — *the child in the hospital gets to take the favorite video home.*

C. This should be explained to the hospital staff, and only if they accept this condition, should you launch such a drive. The obvious problem that they may run out of videos is not the child-patient’s problem, it is the problem of the community to keep supplying them. After all, why should the child add one more element of unhappiness to the hospital experience by being told “No, you can’t take *The Lion King* home with you”?

D. Launch the drive in your synagogue, school, among friends. Deliver the videos. There are thousands and thousands of them out there waiting to be donated.