

Joyce Cohen, Vivian Dayan and Lillian Mizrahi

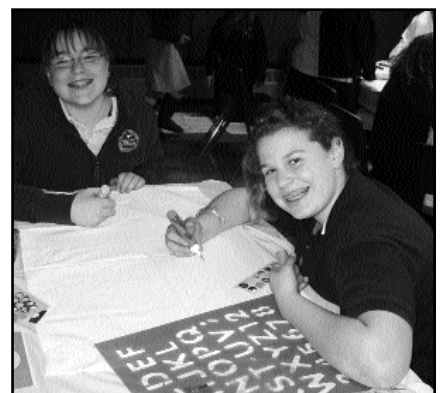
A Special Mitzvah for Hillel Yeshiva Students

Ellen Sutton

Recently the girls of Hillel Yeshiva were given an opportunity of a lifetime—the opportunity of doing the mitzvah of hesed.

It was the *yahrzeit* (anniversary of death) of Rachel, one of our matriarchs. Rachel was famous for handing over her marriage signs to her sister Leah, overlooking her own happiness. In return for this great act of hesed, Hashem overlooked the sins of the Jewish people and chose to save them in the merit of Rachel. We learn from Rachel the power of hesed.

Led by Special Education Coordinator, Devorah Munk, the students participated in the “Zichron Chana Bayla Kids for Hesed” program. This unique program was founded in memory of Chana Bayla, a five-year-old girl who was killed in a terrible fire. Tragically, one of her older sisters also passed away a few months later, but miraculously her seven-year-old sister survived. This sister suffered extensive burns and had to stay in the hospital for an extended period of time. It was during that time, as people visited this little girl, that they saw a tremendous



Rebecca Calvo and Rachel Tebele

need to help hospitalized children who are isolated from their friends and other children. These children need distractions and ways to occupy their time. It was then that the “we care” package program was originated.

The “we care” packages are created by children who want to make a difference. The packages are filled with games and activities to help occupy the time of hospital-

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ized children and help them feel less isolated by letting them know that other children care and are thinking about them.

Each grade was assigned a different project by Devorah Munk. The seventh grade girls worked together with high school ninth and tenth grade girls to create decorative pillowcases. Mrs. Munk brought in fabric markers, stencils and stickers so that the girls were able to design bright and cheerful pillowcases. She explained to the girls how amazing it would be for a sick child to come into their hospital room and see a vibrant, colored, brand new pillowcase waiting just for them.

As I watched the girls, I was so touched at how passionate they were about this special project. The spirit of love and hesed flourished throughout the room. After the projects were completed, the girls participated in a heartwarming sing-a-



Esther Leventer, Raquel Kassin, Rachel Benatar, Hailey Winitzky and Stephanie Adjmi

long to remember Rachel, our matriarch. The entire project was inspirational in creating a feeling of togeth-

erness and friendship amongst the girls who participated.

Devorah Munk also created different “we care” projects to involve the other grades. Sixth graders made adorable puppets and the fifth graders made fun packs to keep the children in the hospital busy and happy.

This very special day gave our students an understanding of the importance and value of hesed. It wasn't just any gift that the students were giving—the packages, created with sensitivity and care, were for children in difficult circumstances. We thank Devorah Munk for coordinating this incredible day at Hillel Yeshiva. In the merit of the children doing hesed for other children may Hashem send a “Refuah Sheleima” to all of the sick Jewish people in need. □



Norma Ashkenazi and Raquel Tebele

Ellen Sutton has three children attending Hillel Yeshiva. She is an active member of the board of directors and the board of education.