

HIAS B'nai Mitzvah Project

Suggestions



Welcome the stranger.
Protect the refugee.

Mazal tov on your upcoming celebration! We are so glad that you would like to include HIAS in this special milestone in your life. There are several ways that you might consider shaping a mitzvah project that will allow you to become part of the movement of American Jews who are bringing awareness to the global refugee crisis and acting powerfully in support of the U.S. refugee resettlement program and on behalf of refugees around the world. Here are some suggestions for possible projects:

➤ ADVOCACY

Middle schoolers are some of the best advocates!

HIAS is spearheading a major advocacy effort to mobilize the American Jewish community in support of refugees. This is the most powerful action the American Jewish community can take right now to ensure that our government takes a leadership role in responding to the growing crisis. Our advocacy opportunities are always changing, so please check out our website at www.hias.org for the latest petition (click on “Get Involved” and then “Take Action” in the pink navigation bar at the top of the page) or call Rebecca Kirzner, HIAS Director of Campaigns, at (212) 613-1318 or Rebecca.Kirzner@HIAS.org.

Consider organizing an advocacy effort amongst your peers and their parents, your family, and your family friends to support the current petition. Organize a “petition drive” and try to gather as many signatures as possible. Set up an information table at a “high traffic” location (e.g., the school cafeteria or a local sporting event) and have tablets available for people to sign the petition online or have print versions of the petition available. You can request print versions of HIAS petitions from Rebecca at Rebecca.Kirzner@HIAS.org. Please note that minors and non-US citizens **can** sign HIAS petitions. If you use the print version, be sure to scan the signatures and email them to Rebecca.

You could also organize an advocacy party for your classmates at school, at religious school, or for a small group of friends at your home to write letters and/or make phone calls to your Members of Congress using our [HIAS talking points](#).

Check out the [HIAS Resource Page](#) for various materials that will provide background information as you do your advocacy work. You may even want to print out some of the resources to have on hand.

➤ VOLUNTEERING

Finding volunteer opportunities with refugee populations for middle schoolers can be challenging. However, we would be happy to connect you with the refugee resettlement agency in your area so you can explore what opportunities there might be for young teenagers – whether working directly with kids or holding a collection drive for needed goods. To be connected with the resettlement agency near you, contact Janna Diamond, HIAS Program Associate for Community Engagement, at (212) 613-1321 or Janna.Diamond@HIAS.org.

➤ EDUCATION

Host a salon-style program at your synagogue for your fellow B'nai Mitzvah students or the students in other grades to educate them about the crisis and mobilize them to take action to support refugees. You can also consider doing the same at school or with your peers. Contact Rabbi Rachel Grant Meyer, HIAS Educator for Community Engagement, at (212) 613-1363 or Rachel.Grant.Meyer@HIAS.org for a consultation on how to organize an education program.

➤ TZEDAKAH

You might consider asking friends and family to donate money to HIAS to support refugees across the globe in honor of your celebration. You can set up an individual fundraising page on the HIAS website with personalized text, educating your guests about the refugee crisis and talking about why you care about this issue. If you are interested in setting up a donation page, please contact Lisa Polakav, HIAS Director of Individual Giving & Development Operations, at (212) 613-1348 or Lisa.Polakav@HIAS.org.



NOTE: If you would like hard copies of the HIAS brochure to use as you do an advocacy, education, or *tzedakah* project, contact Janna Diamond, HIAS Program Associate for Community Engagement, at (212) 613-1321 or Janna.Diamond@HIAS.org.



Thank you again for thinking of HIAS during this special time in your and your family's life. We wish you all the best as you prepare for this major milestone, and we look forward to partnering with you to ensure the safety of some of the world's most vulnerable people.