

Schechter Students Draw on the Power of Giving



Showing a poster highlighting the federation's support for programs strengthening Jewish identity among kindergartners in Russia are fifth-graders, from left, Aviva Kamens of Highland Park, Gabrielle Hartman of Hillsborough, and Joel Herniter and Jonah Rosen of Highland Park. Photo by Debra Rubin

by **Debra Rubin**
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Students at the Solomon Schechter Day School of Raritan Valley raised \$395 in their annual follow-up to the Jewish Federation of Greater Middlesex County's Super Sunday fund-raiser.

On Dec. 7, each class at the day school presented bags of bills and coins to federation officials who came to the East Brunswick school for what has come to be known as Magnificent Monday.

The students also showed off the artwork they created highlighting an aspect of the federation's support for local Jewish programs and projects in Israel and elsewhere overseas.

Among the highlighted projects were meals-on-wheels for county seniors, health care for new immigrant children in Israel, the federation's chaplaincy program, and suicide prevention programs for at-risk teens in Israel.

This year they also connected their projects to Thanksgiving, writing thank you notes to God and pledging to give *tzedaka* and collecting boxes of food and toys for the Kids to Kids program of the Jewish Family and Vocational Service of Middlesex County, a federation beneficiary.

Linda Benish, a social studies and language arts teacher and Magnificent Monday coordinator since its inception 20 years ago, thanked the federation leaders for the inspiration. "It's nice to help them help federation," she said.

Ira Whitman, federation board liaison to Schechter, told the students, "I really want you all to know how caring you are, how bright you are. When you work for federation you help others in programs around the world and here in Middlesex County."

Head of school Dr. Howard Rosenblatt said that “because federation has been so generous to Solomon Schechter, a number of children who couldn’t afford to go to school are able to. Federation helps Jews everywhere in the world and in our community, and it is important we learn to be part of Jewish federation.”

As youngsters came up with their posters, they explained the creative process behind the art.

Aviva Kamens of Highland Park noted one of her fifth-grade classmates “made Russia” for a poster showing support for Jewish identity programs for kindergartners there. “It’s really nice to know we helped kids who have it hard and have to make it with less,” she said.

Maya Weisberg, a kindergartner from East Brunswick, said her class focused on Shabbat meals for Rutgers University students because “it is important to celebrate the holiday.”

First-grader Joseph Wolkoff of North Brunswick said his class chose as its subject the Lalin Library, a community library and learning center in Safed, Israel.

“They want to do stuff, but they don’t have the money to do it,” he explained. “We wanted to help them learn so we gave them the money to learn.”



Ira Whitman, federation board liaison to the Solomon Schechter Day School of Raritan Valley, accepts student donations on Magnificent Monday from lower-school student council president Haley Bernstein of East Brunswick and middle-school student council president Jennifer Greenberg of Edison.

Photo courtesy Jewish Federation of Greater Middlesex County