

Submission to Mah Hadash, The Park Avenue Synagogue Newsletter

The Tzedek Fellowship is a new hands-on leadership training initiative in the PAS teen department. Teens applied to be part of the fellowship with a tikkun olam initiative they were already working on, or an idea to start one. Teen fellows attend monthly seminars where they learn crucial leadership/management skills to help move their initiatives forward. Each seminar has an action item attached to it. For example, our first session was about mission and vision statement. By the second session, each fellow established their mission and vision statement for their tikkun olam project. When we learned about public speaking, they will write and deliver an elevator pitch. Each fellow was paired with a clergy mentor to support them with their monthly action items.

The Tzedek Fellowship has been a great success. Teens connected with each other and members of the clergy at PAS and learned crucial leadership skills.

Hannah Raskin, Grade 10, Riverdale Country School, Teens Combatting Parkinsons

Growing up with family members who have had Parkinson's I was inspired to create a project involving the next generation within the Parkinson's community. I started Teens Combating Parkinson's, which the Tzedek fellowship has helped me grow through different presentations and meetings with my mentor. Often it is hard to find new ideas to involve the teens that I work with and this opportunity has been helpful in coming up with new ideas. Hearing from other teens who have been working on projects of all different types has been so inspiring.

link:

Andrew Hermann, Grade 10, Columbia Prep, Athlete Attire for Change

As a part of the Tzedek Fellowship I started a Tikun Olam initiative that will aim to enable hospitalized children around the city to make a difference by designing clothing that's profits would be put towards disease research and prevention. Despite coming into this program with confusion on how to utilize my passion to help others, I feel that with the help of my mentor, Rabbi Solmsen, I have gained clarity in this way and am excited about continuing my project in the future. I am grateful for this program for providing me with the opportunity to simultaneously do work that I love and help others.

Danielle Bessinger, Grade 11, Eleanor Roosevelt High School, Our Unique Minds

My name is Danielle Bessinger and I am an 11th-grade student at Eleanor Roosevelt High School. In the Tzedek program, I am working to build a website that both celebrates and informs people about our unique minds, from learning differences to mental health struggles. I will display resources for those who are looking to reach out for help, as well as anonymous stories surrounding mental health struggles, framed with hope and encouragement. As a teenager, it can feel difficult to make a significant change, but the Tzedek program has taught me that through community service and activism, I am capable of supporting others.

Alex Leichter, Grade 10, Horace Mann School, Calling Generations

This year I joined the Tzedek Fellowship where I have been receiving guidance in developing a program that connects PAS teens with older members of the Jewish community, with the hope of establishing meaningful intergenerational relationships. During meetings, we learn how to improve and further our projects, whether it be through discussions about our work, leadership workshops, or educating

ourselves about our community. Although my project is still in its early stages, my hope is that by next school year, it will be up and running, and both teens and older adults within the Jewish community will be able to learn from each other and enjoy each others company.

If you're interested in being a part of Calling Generations, [click here](#)

Aaron Egol, Grade 11, Columbia Grammar and Preparatory School

Ava Epstein, Grade 11, Riverdale Country School

Skylar Deutsch, Grade 11, Columbia Grammar and Preparatory School

The Tzedek fellowship has allowed us to build our task force aimed at providing a safe space for teens to discuss events relating to antisemitism in their lives. Another big goal of our task force is to create an action blueprint to make real change in our communities. Overall, the Tzedek fellowship has helped us improve our leadership and listening skills, and allowed us connect and learn from other teens.

Sloane Easton, Grade 9, Horace Mann School, Women Fund Women: [@womenfundwomen](#)

This fall, I started my project, Women Fund Women (WFW) which is a microfinance initiative that loans out small amounts of money to various independent business women in low income cities in Africa. I joined the Tzedek fellowship with the hopes of developing this project, which is something I have been able to do. Over the past months, I have continued to loan out money to countless women in Africa, and began getting repaid on these loans, allowing me to reinvest in more women's business endeavors. Through the fellowship, I was able to create a compact mission and vision statement for my initiative, allowing me to create a clear goal of how I hope WFW will continue to develop.