

# Triplets' mitzvah projects keep on giving

ABIGAIL KLEIN LEICHMAN

If two heads are better than one, it stands to reason that three heads can do anything they put their minds to.

That was the idea behind Triplets 4 A Cause (<http://www.triplets4acause.com>). "Co-CEOs" Noah, Julia, and Anna Greenblatt are 12-year-old Teaneck, N.J., residents whose b'nai mitzvah project is a full-blown organization to facilitate ongoing chesed (kindness, or charity) work way beyond their religious coming of age.

"Last year for my sisters' bat mitzvah we decided not to do just one project and then be done," said Noah, like his siblings a sixth-grader at the Rosenbaum Yeshiva of North Jersey in River Edge. "Chesed is for life, so we wanted to do many projects throughout the year."

"My parents came up with the name Triplets 4 A Cause," Anna explained.

For their first event a year and a half ago, the triplets staged a "Cookies and Cocoa" bake sale in front of their mom's office in Englewood to benefit Darfur refugees in Israel. Last year, Noah designed five different Rosh HaShanah greeting cards for captive Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, and the triplets set up a table outdoors and asked people walking or driving by to sign them. The cards were later to be delivered by the Red Cross.

"Our shul, Keter Torah, was sending cards to Gilad so we decided to do more of them," Anna said. They added 50 or 60 to the total.

Before her bat mitzvah with Julia, Anna did a little research with her dad, Jason (Dov), and discovered Lev Lalev girls orphanage in Netanya, Israel. They donated Purim baskets to the girls and

now want to sponsor a bat mitzvah party for residents turning 12.

"It is a special goal to be able to help another girl celebrate this important milestone," they wrote in a letter to friends and relatives. "Our goal is to raise \$1,800, to pay for all of the expenses including a gift, a hairdo, a dress, shoes, and a party for 150 girls."

They plan to do this by designing and selling camp postcards for people to give their daughters before sleepaway camp this summer. Postcards for boys are being sold to benefit Connections Israel, an organization founded in 1998 to strengthen Jewish unity. The money will go toward gift baskets for Israeli soldiers for the Jewish holidays.

Why the focus on Israel?

"Israel is our home, so we want to help out as much as we can," Anna said.

"Sometimes we get e-mails from people that need help, like someone last year asked if we could help a person with cerebral palsy who needed a bike adapted for him," said Noah. By selling food packages for campers, the triplets raised enough toward this goal.

The Greenblatt triplets absorbed the lesson of helping others from their parents.

"We spend a lot of time in family discussions about the importance of understanding the world beyond them," said their mother, Naomi Greenblatt. "We use others' projects as a springboard for our kids to understand chesed." At the start, she and her husband generated most of the ideas. Now, she said, "As time goes on, they are really driving the project."

"One of us will usually put in more effort on each project," said Julia, "but in the end we all agree on what to do."

The triplets also volunteer in a Manhattan soup kitchen every Thanksgiving and they attended the eight-week MVP (Mitzvah Volunteer Program) in Paramus organized by the Friendship Circle of Bergen County. This Chabad-sponsored project teaches teen volunteers how to interact with children with special needs, said Noah, whose bar mitzvah is scheduled for December.

The threesome, who are the oldest of six children, do a lot of activities

together. "I think we're like regular siblings, but being the same age lets us do more things together," said Julia. "Noah enjoys a lot of sports and Anna likes art and making necklaces out of seashells. I love reading and writing and soccer."

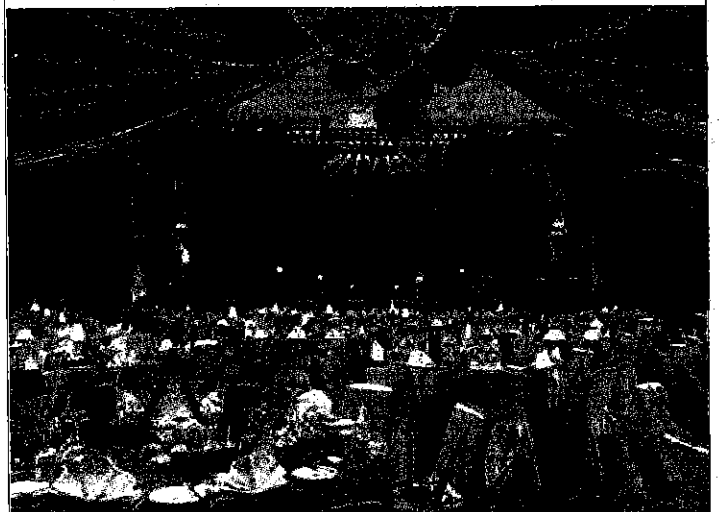
She and Anna have donated their hair for children undergoing chemotherapy, through the Israeli organization Zichron Menachem. This summer, they hope to visit Zichron Menachem as well as Lev Lalev, on a triple bar/bat mitzvah journey to Israel.

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From left are Noah, Anna, and Julia — Triplets 4 A Cause.

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