



Sunflower Bakery Seeds Program *A Unique Mitzvah Project Opportunity for Bnei Mitzvah Students*

The Sunflower Seeds Program is scheduled for Sundays, 10am-12pm, in the Fall and Spring. The Seeds Program is designed around the concept of *Tikun Olam* – Building a Better World. The purpose of the program is to educate teens regarding the role of Sunflower Bakery and how they can help expand awareness of its mission, provide assistance in the bakery and help provide resources so it continues to be successful in working to meet the needs of the community. The Seeds Program is ideal for teens interested in making a difference in our local community and improving the lives of people with disabilities. Those with an interest in baking and/or pastry might find it especially engaging.

Each session has a learning opportunity as well as some hands-on project to assist the Bakery. Upon completion of the four sessions, teens will determine related volunteer projects to pursue. The overall goal of the program is to generate awareness of the needs being addressed by Sunflower Bakery and to develop ambassadors so the program can continue to grow and thrive. Students should participate during the school year in which they will become a Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

A Preview of the Four Sessions: Each session will have a volunteer component. Teens will be of assistance in performing various needed tasks either in the kitchen or office areas.

Session 1 – Teens will meet with an organization founder who will discuss the history of the bakery and ways in which the organization supports individuals with developmental or other cognitive disabilities. Teens will learn how young adults with disabilities acquire marketable skills and knowledge in an on-the-job setting, why a specialized program like Sunflower is necessary in our community and how it enables these young adults to secure employment.

Session 2 - According to Maimonides' Ladder, one of the highest levels of *Tzedakah* (charity) is helping a person to help themselves. Teens will meet with a local Jewish educator to learn about the Jewish values upon which Sunflower Bakery is founded. They will explore how the Jewish perspective on philanthropy and community service is integral to the mission of Sunflower.

Session 3 - Teens will learn about cognitive disabilities through experiential exercises to provide an understanding for what it is like to be a student at Sunflower. They will discuss the concept of inclusivity as well as how their peers and communities interact with individuals defined as having disabilities. Student will engage in a discussion about the particular needs of teens and young adults with such disabilities as they transition from school to work.

Session 4 – Teens will explore the role of mission-driven, non-profit organizations in our community and how they effectively communicate with the public. Teens will brainstorm ideas for a presentation on Sunflower to their peer communities.

For more information, please contact Laurie Wexler at laurie@sunflowerbakery.org.