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**BAR AND BAT MITZVAH-AGED CHILDREN CUSTOMIZE MITZVAH PROJECTS
THROUGH UJA-FEDERATION OF NEW YORK'S GIVE A MITZVAH-DO A
MITZVAH PROGRAM**

12-year-old Moise Safra always knew that his bar mitzvah would include a mitzvah project in the service of others. As the time neared, Moise worked with UJA-Federation of New York to design a project that reflected his interests and where he could make a difference in the lives of other kids. After learning that several local community centers have tween and teen spaces in desperate need of refurbishment, Moise dedicated his project to making those spaces more fun and inviting and selected four local organizations that collectively serve hundreds of New York teens.

On a chilly January day, Moise and several of his friends headed to the Kings Bay Y in Brooklyn where, alongside teens who use the Y, they worked to refurbish the teen lounge. The revamped lounge now features a new foosball table, air hockey table, pool table, and coffee bar. The walls are adorned with a mural the kids painted, and professionals gave the room a makeover with a new ceiling and freshly painted walls. To top it off, Moise donated three new computers, three televisions, and Xboxes. Moise's vision didn't stop there. His project is also bringing a facelift and new furniture to the common area at JCCA's Edenwald Center in Westchester, new electronic and educational resources for the teen lounge at the Hebrew Educational Society in Brooklyn, and a new food pantry and state-of-the-art educational technology at Westchester Jewish Community Services.

Other local tweens have championed personalized mitzvah projects like Moise, and UJA's Give a Mitzvah - Do a Mitzvah program tailors every project to their personal interests. Grace Kollander, 12, from the Upper East Side, worked with UJA and her family to reflect her passion for sports and running. She learned that the sports facility at Bet Elazraki Children's Home in Netanya, Israel, was unsafe and unusable and decided to help renovate the facility for the two hundred at-risk children who live at the home. Leading up to her February bat mitzvah, Grace created buzz among her friends and community for her project with a 12krun and post-run event in her home, which included Bet Elazraki's executive director as a guest! By requesting donations in lieu of gifts, she raised funds to tear down the current sports facility and build a new complex and community gathering space. Grace is also regularly in contact with bar and bat

mitzvah-age residents at Bet Elazraki through FaceTime, and will be visiting her new friends and the new space when it is complete in April.

Give a Mitzvah – Do a Mitzvah offers bar and bat mitzvah-aged kids opportunities to create individualized funding and volunteer projects. It allows them to take their first step into the world of philanthropy, empowering them to give back in a way that is personally meaningful to them.

For more information on Give a Mitzvah – Do a Mitzvah, please contact Ellie Benjamin at 212.836.1460 or benjamine@ujafedny.org.

About UJA-Federation of New York

Working with a network of hundreds of nonprofits, UJA extends its reach from New York to Israel to nearly 70 other countries around the world, touching the lives of 4.5 million people each year. To date, UJA has allocated \$67 million to help respond to the devastating impact of the coronavirus pandemic. Aid has supported New Yorkers facing food insecurity, UJA partner organizations providing essential health and human services to New Yorkers, Jewish Community Centers, low-income students, single parents, and dignified Jewish burials. For more information, please visit www.ujafedny.org.