

Friday, July 16, 2021

## JCC Camps Lead Initiative for National Camp Kindness Day

*More than 700 campers and students will join the efforts to spread kindness on July 20*

**WHAT:** More than 700 campers and students from the Jewish Community Center of Greater Pittsburgh, Hosanna House in Wilkinsburg, and South Hills Interfaith Movement in the South Hills will join the efforts to spread kindness on July 20 for National Camp Kindness Day.

**WHEN:** Activities during the week of July 20; National Camp Kindness Day is July 20.

**WHO:** Jewish Community Center of Pittsburgh (JCC) participants include James and Rachel Levinson Day Camp (J&R), South Hills Day Camp, Early Childhood Education Center in Squirrel Hill and South Hills, PJ Library in Pittsburgh and the Center for Loving Kindness. Day camp programs at Hosanna House in Wilkinsburg and South Hills Interfaith Movement (SHIM) in the South Hills will join the efforts to spread kindness.

National Camp Kindness Day is an initiative sponsored by the American Camp Association with the intention of highlighting the kindness and generosity found within the camp culture. In a project spearheaded by the JCC's J&R Day Camp, during the week of July 20 more than 700 campers at seven sites will color and decorate canvas bags. The bags are printed with artwork created by teen participants at J&R, SHIM and Hosanna House. In addition, the campers at Hosanna House were able to screen print one third of the 750 bags created for the project using their onsite makerspace.

Once these reusable shopping bags have been decorated, the bags will be delivered to JFCS, AgeWell, SHIM Food Pantries, The Free Store Wilkinsburg, Wilkinsburg Community Ministry, Hosanna House Family Center, Saint Mary Magdalene Parish Food Pantry, Cross Roads Church Food Pantry, and Garden City United Methodist Church Food Pantry among other recipients. The hope is that the shopping bags will make the recipients feel seen and cared about all while helping cut down on the use of plastic bags.

"Kindness is not a one day effort, and neither is our project" said Rabbi Ron Symons, JCC Senior Director of Jewish Life and Director, Center for Loving Kindness. "In the weeks leading up to Camp Kindness Day, campers learned about kindness and the impact one small thing can have on another person and the environment. With a wide variety of populations being impacted through the project, campers were able to learn about food insecurity, needs of the elderly, and other agencies supporting people throughout our community. Preparing for Camp Kindness Day was also an opportunity to build connections between the campers at the various sites. Each site created their own unique Flat Stanley and shared their creation with the other sites. Throughout the week leading up to Camp Kindness Day, the sites exchanged photos of the various Flat Stanleys experiencing camp activities."

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