



Bar/Bat Mitzvah Project Guidelines

Celebrate Your Milestone by Helping Others Celebrate Theirs

Your Bar or Bat Mitzvah marks an important milestone in your life—a moment to be recognized, celebrated, and surrounded by community. For thousands of children living in shelters, milestones like birthdays often pass quietly, without the joy, recognition, and sense of belonging every child deserves.

Birthday Wishes changes that. We partner with over 200 shelters and transitional housing programs to provide trauma-informed birthday and milestone celebrations for children and teens experiencing homelessness. Each celebration includes thoughtful gifts, party supplies, and moments of connection that help children feel valued and supported as they grow.

By choosing Birthday Wishes for your Mitzvah project, your milestone will help other kids mark theirs—with dignity, joy, and lasting memories.

1. Fundraising for Birthday Wishes

When you raise money for Birthday Wishes, you help us plan and create the most meaningful celebrations possible. Your support allows us to cover everything from party supplies to special touches that make each milestone unique, sometimes even fulfilling a child's specific birthday wish.

We'll help you set up your own campaign on GiveSmart, where you can share your story, invite friends and family to join in, and see the difference you're making.

How your fundraising helps:

- **\$175** = Provides one child with a complete birthday celebration at their shelter through our Birthday-in-a-Box program.
- **\$500** = Covers celebrations for three children, including gifts, party supplies, and special touches to make each milestone unique.
- **\$1,000** = Funds a month of birthdays for all children at one shelter.
- **\$1,500** = Funds a month of birthdays for all children at one shelter *and* helps us fulfill individual gift requests or add extra touches to make celebrations even more personal.

Fundraising ideas:

- Host a lemonade stand or bake sale.
- Organize a car wash with friends.
- Run a craft fair or sell handmade jewelry.
- Offer dog walking or yard work in your neighborhood.
- Host a sports clinic for younger kids in your community.
- Offer face painting services for birthday parties in your community.
- Make a "birthday pledge"—ask for donations instead of gifts for your own birthday.

We'll provide instructions, tips, and sample messages so it's easy to share your project through social media, email, and text.

To create a GiveSmart fundraising page, please visit: <https://fundraise.givesmart.com/e/-yBycQ?vid=11045g>

2. Organizing a Gift Drive

Hosting a gift drive is another great way to make birthdays and milestones brighter for kids in shelters. Your efforts help us stock popular toys and supplies so we can keep celebrations joyful and exciting.

How to host a gift drive:

1. Pick a date and location (your synagogue, school, or community center).
2. Choose from our most-needed items list by referring to our Amazon Wish List.
3. Decorate a collection bin with signs about your project.
4. Spread the word through flyers, social media, and announcements at services or school.
5. Deliver your donations to Birthday Wishes so we can include them in upcoming celebrations. We have offices in **Sudbury, MA** and **Hicksville, NY**, contact us to schedule a drop off delivery. You can also create an **online gift registry** so people can purchase items to be shipped directly to our offices.

Gift ideas include:

- Toys, games, and craft kits for ages 0–17. To ensure fairness, we ask that individual gifts have a retail value of \$30 or under.
- \$25 gift cards for teens (Amazon, Walmart, Target).
- **Get inspiration from our most requested items lists here:** [New England Office Wishlist](#) and [Long Island Office Wishlist](#)

3. Combining Both

Many Mitzvah students choose to both raise funds and host a gift drive. This gives Birthday Wishes the ability to plan ahead, fulfill special requests, and have a ready supply of popular items for celebrations, making sure every child's milestone feels personal and joyful.

Next Steps

Children under age 18 must have parental permission before completing a volunteer project for Birthday Wishes. If you're ready to start your Bar/Bat Mitzvah project, please ask your parent or guardian to contact us at events@birthdaywishes.org to register your project.

Together, we'll celebrate your milestone by helping kids celebrate theirs—with joy, dignity, and lasting memories.