



RAMAZ

09

שנתון

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צדקה אין לה קצבה

LIVING A LIFE OF *CHESED*

Marianne Wilson

Elie Lowenfeld '05

Founder, Jewish Disaster Response Corps

"While at Ramaz, I learned the importance of being an involved member of the community. Ramaz taught me how to analyze a problem, and how to begin the work to fix it."

Spending a summer in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, with AmeriCorps after the record flooding of 2008, Elie Lowenfeld was struck by the fact that all the volunteer groups were Christian organizations. This realization led him to found the Jewish Disaster Response Corps (JDRC), ensuring Jewish helping hands in disaster response efforts.

The JDRC works with existing Jewish organizations to organize Community Emergency Response Teams, who then receive training in disaster preparedness. The group also helps mobilize Jewish communities nationwide to deliver resources and work productively at domestic natural disaster sites as part of recovery efforts. The group's mission is to enable first responders, bringing a strong, well-prepared, and skilled Jewish presence to recovery efforts.

In August 2009, JDRC members, including many Ramaz alumni, traveled to Cedar Rapids to help in the ongoing recovery efforts. In the summer of 2010, a standing group will be ready to respond quickly during times of need. Elie will direct the JDRC full time upon graduation from NYU.



Rebecca Shrag '04

Shalhevet Chesed Chair at NYU

"From what I learned at Ramaz, I not only find it important to be passionate and proactive in working with causes I believe in, but also to see and recognize the needs that surround us directly."

Rebecca Schrag is a student at New York University, where she is working toward a degree in social work and education. This past year, she received an NYU Presidential Service Award, largely for her work with Shalhevet as the *chesed* chair. Rebecca helped run blood drives and bone marrow drives, and also coordinated DOROT activities, *tzedakah* events, and Yachad initiatives. Rebecca travels to Israel regularly with Yachad, National Jewish Council for Disabilities. Through Yad B'Yad, she helps Yachad members experience Israel in an open and inclusive environment. Running Sunday programs and helping to network services for families, she also serves as the Westchester coordinator for Junior Yachad.

Rebecca's commitment to *chesed* is rooted in her time at Ramaz, where she was a member of the *chesed* committee throughout her Upper School career. She sold flowers for *tzedakah* and visited patients at Lenox Hill Hospital, in addition to providing student leadership in coordinating the annual Ramaz Ohel *Chanukah* party and the *Shavuot* cheesecake sale. Rebecca found herself greatly influenced by the passion exhibited by Ramaz faculty in bettering the world, both in small and large ways. She finds initiatives not only within the Orthodox Jewish community, but also throughout her immediate surroundings in New York City. While at NYU, she has tutored students at University Settlement House and worked with City Kids, starting a job readiness program for NYC teens.

