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Saving the Planet and Helping the Homeless, One Light Bulb At a Time

Bat Mitzvah project selling compact fluorescent light bulbs raises funds for Homefirst of Plainfield NJ

ROSELLE PARK, NEW JERSEY – January 18, 2011 - 13 year old Halley Needle of Scotch Plains, NJ wanted a Bat Mitzvah project that would make a difference. She came up with a project that combines her concern about the environment with helping others who are homeless. “I am very concerned about our environment and want to do what I can to protect it. After visiting an Ethiopian Absorption Center in Israel last summer I realized that I wanted to help people who aren't as fortunate as I am. My Dad is a builder and had gotten involved with Homefirst, so I decided to give the profits from selling the bulbs to them.”

She sold the compact fluorescent bulbs (CFL) at the Westfield Armory at the New Years Eve Family Fun Night by setting up a booth that displayed information about Homefirst. She also made up order forms so she could sell the bulbs to family and friends. Her efforts resulted in profits of \$190.00 that were contributed to Homefirst, an organization that supplies shelter and services to families who are in need of shelter.

Indeed, Haley had found a simple way to not only help the homeless but also to contribute to the saving our planet's environment. With the current trend of “going green” growing in popularity, these bulbs were an ideal method for raising money. If every American household changed one

conventional light bulb to a CFL bulb, over \$600 million in energy costs would be saved and greenhouse gas emissions would be reduced equivalent to removing 800,000 cars from the road.

“My parents are very proud of me for how long I sold them at the Armory and how well I did speaking to people about the bulbs and about Homefirst.” Haley plans on continuing this project indefinitely by selling to friends and family at their request. She said that she might also do a bake sale at school or a youth event to further raise funds for Homefirst.

Haley’s advice for young people her age who are looking to do a worthwhile service project (whether for Bat/Bar Mitzvah, scouts, community) is simple: “I would suggest that they find a charity/cause that they are passionate about and excited to get involved with.” Good advice, because that way interest won’t die, guaranteeing success over the long run.

“Homefirst would like to thank Haley for considering us in her fundraising efforts. It is uplifting to know that someone Haley's age cares enough about our planet and its people to spend her time on a project like this. We would like to invite other young people working on service projects to become part of our fundraising network.” remarked Susan Oldroyd Laffler, Director of Development and Public Relations, Homefirst, Interfaith Housing and Family Services.

Homefirst provides emergency shelter for the homeless through Interfaith Hospitality Network, along with transitional housing for homeless families to address and correct the issues which led to their homelessness;, permanent supportive housing for low-income disabled families, rental and utility assistance to community members to prevent homelessness, and support services and programs for everyone in the Homefirst family in order to promote personal development, self-sufficiency and community building. The agency currently owns 38 units of affordable housing in the county. Homefirst is located at 905 Watchung Avenue, Plainfield NJ.

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