



TORONTO — When it comes to bat mitzvahs, most 12-year-old girls are busy deciding on a theme, a dress and a DJ. When Sydney Cohn started thinking about her bat mitzvah, she wanted to make it a meaningful experience.

She decided to design bracelets to be sold to her family and friends, with all proceeds donated to charity.

“I wanted to make charity part of my bat mitzvah because when I become a woman, I want to help the community,” Sydney said.

Infusing meaning into Jewish rituals runs in her family. When her brother celebrated his bar mitzvah, he collected socks for Ve’ahavta, a Canadian humanitarian and relief organization.

A Grade 7 student at Robbins Hebrew Academy day school in Toronto, Sydney said the school's emphasis on tikkun olam (repairing the world) and her family's community-oriented values motivated her to start this project.

"A few weeks ago, the Beth Sholom bar and bat mitzvah program took the kids to Out of the Cold, to help serve dinner to homeless people," said Miriam Blumstock, Sydney's mother. "We have delivered Passover boxes, done book and toy drives and sponsored community dinners at shelters. We're always trying to make the kids aware of how fortunate they are and how important it is to help others."

Combining her interest in fashion and art, Sydney decided to design the bracelets herself, with the word "souperhero" written on the bracelets.

"When you're helping the community, you're a superhero, but I spell it 'souperhero' because the money is going to Soup Sisters, and to Leket Israel, the national food bank in Israel," Sydney said.

Soup Sisters is a non-profit organization that provides homemade soup to 20 residential shelters across Canada. The proceeds for Leket Israel will help fund their Sandwiches for Kids program, which prepares more than 7,000 sandwiches daily for needy children in 102 schools in Israel.

Sydney has sold 130 bracelets since she began this project in early March.

"I'm really proud of her. It's her idea, her design, her initiative and she's really taken the lead. I hope she sells them all and raises awareness. I think it will be a big feeling of accomplishment for her," Blumstock said.

For more information, visit www.facebook.com/areyouasouperhero.