

Proposal for 15-hour Seminar/Mini-Course on Danny's Siegel's Method of Practical, Personalized Tzedakah, Mitzvahs, and Tikkun Olam

Background:

Several years ago, Siegel conducted courses as described below for HUC students in New York and in Cincinnati. Reviewing the results now, years down the road, it is evident that the course plays an active role not only in the *thinking* of the former students (now rabbis and educators), but also in their *teaching*, and most of all, in the way they, themselves, do their own unique form of Tikkun Olam and encourage others to do similarly: namely, to find what is how the students can do it best, their own way.

The Topic and The Need:

Siegel's approach to the topic is tri-partate:

1. Traditional Jewish texts
2. Mitzvah projects
3. A study of the nature, essence, and Tikkun Olam work of Mitzvah heroes.

Most familiar to students is #2. Many have done text study to a greater or lesser extent relating to Tzedakah and Tikkun Olam. Least familiar is a grasp of the absolutely essential nature of Mitzvah heroes and how they are a crucial part of the entire way of accomplishing Tikkun Olam to the greatest possible extent for any individual. It is this element - the Mitzvah hero's role and its interplay with text and projects - that Siegel considers his most important contribution to North American Tzedakah. Mitzvah heroes go beyond "role models", are more all-encompassing in the student's being once the student has come in contact with and begun to apprentice himself/herself to the Mitzvah hero, either through reading about that person or through personal contact.

Purpose:

To: (1) offer the student a more complete understanding of the Jewish way of Tzedakah, (2) to introduce them to the concept and reality of Mitzvah heroes, and, most of all, (3) to provide *practical* guidance for using their talents, time, energy, and money for Tikkun Olam.

The Course Itself - Logistics:

15 hours, consisting of 5 three-hour sessions.

Sessions to be scheduled conveniently to the local community (5 consecutive Wednesdays,

2 X 2 midweek + another midweek, etc.)

Must be mid-week, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday.

Can be morning, afternoon, or evening.

Format:

Lecture/presentation of new material (there is more than 30 years of experience at hand) with particular stress on give and take on essential topics.

Materials:

Selected relevant traditional Jewish texts, with the original and Siegel's translation together.

Selected essays from Siegel's articles and books.

An abundance and variety of brochures of the Tikkun Olam work being done by Mitzvah heroes.

DVD segments of Mitzvah heroes.

Not the least important: Guest visits by local Mitzvah heroes, and perhaps one from out of the local area.

The students:

Much like Melton or Wexner courses, it is necessary that the students commit to the entire 15-hour course.

Age range: from age 14 to 120.

Ability to read Hebrew/Aramaic or to manage Halachic and Midrashic text is *not* a pre-requisite.

Costs:

Teacher's honorarium - \$7,500 American

Round trip transportation from Washington, DC

If flying: parking at airport (\$20/day), train, parking at train. (\$6/day)

If a guest Mitzvah hero is brought in, transportation costs and honorarium, not to exceed \$750A.

Shipping (unless travel is by car, then no cost) of hand-out materials: maximum \$100-150, depending on the number of students.