

## *Vayakhel*

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Shabbat Shalom,

I want to thank you all for coming to support me on this very special day in the Jewish community. Today in the Torah I am reading parshat Vayakhel. To me this parshat is about bringing gifts to the Lord to build a mishkan. A mishkan means a portable or moving sanctuary or temple. Moses told the Israelite community what to bring to make it as beautiful as they could. For example, the Lord asked for gold, silver and copper, and blue, purple and crimson yarns. They were told to bring many other materials as well. Bringing material was not the only way to help. Others used their skills to make the pieces of the mishkan. All the Israelites worked together to build this very special mishkan. The Israelites were not forced to help, it was voluntary.

This relates to me because in a sense my family works together to build a mishkan, too. We each give something to offer. We work together as a family: my dad goes to work, my mom makes the house spotless (before we make it a mess), and my little brothers and I go to school to get educated. We all come together to help each other build our “mishkan”, to make it greater each day. We all do this for each other to make our lives more holy and special like a mishkan.

Another way I come together with people beside my family is playing soccer. This amazing sport has helped me collaborate with new people I have met on and off the soccer field. On the field my team and I work together to win the game by scoring goals. Each of us has our own individual skills which help our team win. Soccer has brought me where I am today because I have learned how to work well

with a team and be able to communicate with the people around me. I also like to incorporate soccer into most of the things I do.

For example, for my mitzvah project I am raising funds for an organization called Soccer for Peace. I chose this project because it combines my love of soccer and teaching kids about peace. Soccer for Peace aims to unite children in troubled nations, like Israel and, the Palestinian Territory in their shared love of the game. United in their love, Soccer for Peace believes sports can serve as both a metaphor and vehicle for peace in our time. Everytime my team scored a goal, a can was passed on the sidelines to put money in. (My soccer team has helped me raise the money and so have friends and family). I want to thank my team for getting the money to donate.

I want to thank my family for supporting and motivating me throughout my years of playing soccer to this day. I wouldn't be here with out you guys, I love you very much. Even when I do misbehave and fight with my brothers, Benjamin and Adam. I also want to thank my friends for putting a smile on my face everyday. And I want to thank Mrs. Judy Fox for helping me with my D'var torah. Secondly, I want to thank Rhonda Holtman for peparing me for this day and Rabbi Small for being the best rabbi. Also, even though he couldn't be here today, Cantor Cohn for helping bring back my Hebrew reading to its full potential. Last but not least I want to thank everyone here today to see me become a Bat Mitzvah, thank you all for coming.