SIX-PART UNIT ON SOCIAL LEARNING AND THE INTERNET
Part 3: PHILANTHROPY AND FUNDRAISING
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ACTIVITY
1) Set Induction
Prepare three envelopes, labeled “Scenario 1,” “Scenario 2,” and “Scenario 3.” Read each of the following scenarios out loud:

   a. Scenario 1: Your friend tells you that his aunt was just diagnosed with a brain tumor. Your friend has decided to participate in the upcoming Walk for Brain Tumor Research and asks you to sponsor him.
   b. Scenario 2: Your family has been volunteering at a soup kitchen every week for the past month. The director approaches your family and says that the soup kitchen desperately needs more plates to feed more people. She asks your family to donate money to help with that purchase.
   c. Scenario 3: You are watching the TV news about an earthquake that destroyed so many homes, left so many people hurt and sick, and turned many children into orphans when their parents were killed. The American Red Cross is asking for disaster relief donations.

Give each student one dollar bill. Explain that you will pass around all three envelopes, and students should put their money in the envelope of the cause they wish to support. As they do so, students should share with the class why they are making that choice. (If the class is large, break into sub-groups for this part of the activity.) When the envelopes have gone all the way around, count which scenario has the most money in its envelope. Discuss how students believe money helps people. Brainstorm ways that money is collected for donations.

2) Text Study

MAIMONIDES, MISHNEH TORAH, LAWS OF GIFTS TO THE POOR 10:7
The highest degree of tzedakah—above which there is no higher—is one who strengthens the hand of his or her poor fellow Jew and gives the poor person a gift or [interest-free] loan or enters into a business partnership with the poor person, or finds the person a job, in order to strengthen the poor person so that he or she will not be dependent on others.

BabagaNewz.com
Divide students into small groups, assigning each group one rung of Rambam's ladder hierarchy of tzedakah. Each group should create a short skit depicting that rung and perform it for the class.

ESTHER 9:22
He [Mordechai] wrote them to observe the days as days of feasting and joy and giving presents of food to one another and gifts to the poor.

This verse from Megillat Esther is referring to matanot l’evyonim (gifts to the poor).

Why is it important to give gifts to the poor during a celebration?

MAIMONIDES, MISHNEH TORAH, LAWS OF GIFTS FOR THE POOR 9:12
One who settles in a community for thirty days becomes obligated to contribute to the charity fund; one who settles there for three months becomes obligated to contribute to the soup kitchen; one who settles there for six months becomes obligated to contribute clothing for the poor; one who settles there for nine months becomes obligated to contribute to the burial fund to pay for the funeral and burial needs of the indigent.

Put Agree-Disagree signs on the sides of the room, while students stand in the middle. As you read off the following statements, students should walk to the side of the room (Agree or Disagree) that corresponds to how they feel about the statement. Ask one or two students to explain why they chose that answer.

- A person/family who moves to a new city should donate money to the local police department fund within the first month.
- A person/family who is visiting a city on vacation for a week should find a charity to donate to in that community.
- Only people who have a relative/loved one buried in a particular cemetery should donate funds to that cemetery.
- A person/family who lives in our community for at least 5 years should be donating to at least one local charity.

Bring the group back together and read the above text.

How does your agreement or disagreement with the statements we read relate to this?
DEVARIM 15:11
For there will never cease to be needy ones from the midst of the land, which is why I command you, saying, “open your hand to your fellows, to your poor, and to your needy in your land.”

Do you believe we can ever end poverty and hunger?
Is money the only (or best) way to solve these problems?

3) Conclusion/Take Home Web Resource
A. Log on to http://Kiva.org. Explain to the class that Kiva’s mission is to connect people, through lending, for the sake of alleviating poverty. Kiva empowers individuals to lend to an entrepreneur across the globe. By combining microfinance with the internet, Kiva is creating a global community of people connected through lending. Each time a micro-loan is repaid, the person who donated it can re-gift it to another recipient.
   • NOTE: http://www.kiva.org/do-more/classroom offers educators curriculum, presentation materials, videos, and more.
   • OPTIONAL: Consider asking parents ahead of time to load a specific amount of money onto a Kiva card for their child to participate in this activity. Or, ask the school to let your class use some of its tzedakah money to load a Kiva card for investment at this time, letting the class decide who receives the loan.

B. Log on to http://www.firstgiving.com/. FirstGiving helps people raise money for the nonprofits they care about. For the purposes of a sample, you can go to http://www.firstgiving.com/jewishphilanthropysample or create your own. Point out the different elements of the page: a thermometer; a way to promote the page using Facebook, Twitter, and e-mail; a personal message as to why this cause is important to you; etc. Explain to the class that this website can be used to raise money for any cause they are interested in (if it is a legal 501(c)(3) registered with GuideStar) and donors pay by credit card. Consider having the class pick a charity. Create a FirstGiving page and give the link to the students and parents so they can ask family and friends for donations. Set a fundraising goal as a class and see how much money the class can raise in a week (or month) for that cause using this site.

NEXT: Part 4: ADVOCACY