

Tikkun Olam in the Midst of Crisis



Making Mensch Masks to Help Save Lives & Fight Racial Disparity

Beth Ahabah is joining forces with St. James's to launch "Mensch Masks" — an ambitious project to make 1,000 face masks, packaged with educational information, to be distributed to Richmond's most vulnerable populations through a partnership with The Market at 25th in Church Hill.

WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

COVID-19 is impacting everyone, but a disturbing trend in the U.S. is that people of color, particularly African Americans, disproportionately experience more serious symptoms and greater number of deaths. This disparity is the consequence of a continuing global inequity between races and cultures in our country. People of color more often:

- live in crowded housing
- work in essential occupations, in close contact with others
- have inconsistent access to health care
- experience higher stress and lower immunity due to inequalities, discrimination and threats of violence
- exhibit greater frequencies of chronic health conditions

HOW CAN WE HELP CHANGE THE PARADIGM?

While instituting fair housing policies, improving employment opportunities and taking other steps to mitigate economic inequality will help in the future, there are ways to reduce risk of infection in vulnerable populations right now. Underserved communities have less access to face masks and lack critical information such as mask-handling instructions. Increasing access and education can go a long way in helping folks protect themselves and others against unnecessary exposure to coronavirus.

HOW DO I SIGN-UP?

To help with this important project. <https://signup.com/go/oTFzBnd>

Cutting Masks: We'll provide a yard (or more) of fabric and a rectangle pattern with measurements to follow. **85 total yards need to be cut.** *(Sure to provide "shear" joy!)*

Sewing Masks: We'll provide a simple pattern, instructions and pre-cut fabric and elastic. **1000 masks need to be sewn.** *(Guaranteed to keep you in stitches!)*

Packaging Masks: We'll provide finished masks, educational cards, and zip lock bags for you to assemble. **1000 packages need to be assembled (minimum of 50 masks/volunteer).** *(You may just feel like bagging the whole thing!)*

Driving Masks: We'll provide addresses to pick-up and deliver (doorstep to doorstep) materials between congregants' homes, at various stages of the project. *(We promise, this task won't drive you crazy!)*