

ORTHODOX UNION

NJ NCSY LEADERS HELP FLOODING RELIEF OCT 20-24 IN MINNESOTA

OU Staff

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NEW JERSEY JEWISH TEEN LEADERS HEAD TO MINNESOTA OCTOBER 20-24 TO HELP COMMUNITY RAVAGED BY MISSISSIPPI RIVER FLOODING

The Mississippi flooded in Minnesota and the impact was felt in New Jersey. Jewish teen leaders from New Jersey NCSY will be hopping a plane for Pine Island, Minnesota from Wednesday, October 20-Sunday, October 24 to help clean-out homes which were ruined from the three to six feet of water that was a result of an overflow of the Zumbro River, a tributary of the mighty Mississippi River. They are preparing to tear up carpets, pull down sheet rock, pull out floor boards, clear off mold and salvage any household items they are able to come across.

NCSY is the international youth program of the Orthodox Union.

The fifteen volunteers are currently students at Torah Academy of Bergen County in Teaneck; Teaneck High School; Fairlawn High School; and Northern Highlands High School in Allendale. More schools are expected to be added before the mission departs.

This is the second trip for the month of October, following a visit to Buffalo, NY to assist Habitat for Humanity with housing reconstruction. Over the past four years, these Jewish student leaders have also volunteered their time and vacation to do clean-up work in New Orleans, Atlanta, and Galveston, Texas.

After heavy rain on September 22 and 23, an original NCSY disaster relief mission to Nashville, TN (where students were preparing to help rebuild homes destroyed by floods last May) was put on hold in order to assist where the Jewish youth would be most beneficial.

“The message that we strive to instill within our students is that true chessed (acts of kindness) is not only about vast organizational structures, but about engaging the needs of people in crises wherever they are,” declared Rabbi Yaakov Glasser, Regional Director of New Jersey NCSY. “One of the greatest strengths of informal Jewish educators is their creativity to innovate new programs in response to shifting circumstances. When we received the call a few weeks ago regarding the floods in Minnesota, our staff immediately went to work creating a brand new program and schedule to meet the needs of the residents.”

With the ideal of “We will go where we are needed most,” this determined group of Jewish teens from yeshiva and public schools, under the leadership of Rabbi Ethan Katz, Assistant Regional Director of New Jersey NCSY, comes together from across the state to exemplify that acts of kindness can bridge Jews of all backgrounds, while reaching out to help non-Jews as well. They travel the country providing physical support in rebuilding efforts for the general community, and provide spiritual support for the local Jewish community wherever the aftermath of a disaster may lead them. The NCSY youth will be spending Shabbat with the community Chabad House in Rochester, Minnesota.

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