

Serving the community

ZOE KRON

SOCIAL activist and law student Dean Levitan is this year's recipient of B'nai B'rith Victoria's Jenny Goldberg Community Service grant.

The grant, awarded in memory of Jenny Goldberg who passed away in 2003, recognises Levitan for his service to the community and his dedicated leadership in community initiatives.

As campaign director of Stand Up, Levitan is a passionate advocate for human rights and social justice. He was also selected to be the World Youth Parliament Ambassador to the United Nations.

Levitan, who is in his final year of law at Monash University, has garnered youth involvement in

countless community projects and inspired young people to volunteer in various services.

The grant of \$2000 will facilitate Levitan's self-development training and help enhance his skills in the areas of human rights, social justice and community service.

Levitan told *The AJN* that he is honoured to be the recipient of the grant.

"From all reports, Jenny was an outstanding server of our community. In receiving this award, it is my privilege and my duty to embody her great character and continue her excellent work," he said.

"This grant will enable me to learn from the best campaigners and social activists in Australia so that I can bring these lessons back to our community."



From left: past president Unit Mitzvah Frieda Shapiro, Dean Levitan and relatives of the late Jenny Goldberg, Caitlin Falman and Nathan Falman.

A day to do good deeds

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EVERY Tuesday night in Port Melbourne, volunteers from Kehilat Nitzan Synagogue together with members of the Father Bob Maguire Foundation serve warm home-cooked meals to disadvantaged people in the area.

This week's Weekly Food Van service was particularly remarkable as Mitzvah Day Australia used it as a platform for its 2015 launch.

With less than three months until the annual event, chairperson Judy Feiglin said this weekly initiative encapsulates the spirit of occasion.

The Weekly Food Van, said Feiglin, highlights the themes of Mitzvah Day - doing good deeds, forming bonds with the general communities, helping the needy and doing so with a smile.

"Mitzvahs should be happening all the time and this is an example of that," Feiglin told *The AJN*.

"Every week Kehilat Nitzan serves warm food to disadvantaged people in the Port Melbourne area and even when its freezing cold, they come out and provide home cooked meals all prepared by members of the shul."

Now in its fifth year, Mitzvah Day Australia is an offshoot of the international initiative that sees Jews unite to perform good deeds and help others.

Staple projects include giving



Serving food to the disadvantaged at the launch of Mitzvah Day on Tuesday night. Photo: Peter Haskin

blood, entertaining residents of aged care facilities, cleaning parks and working with the wider community to make a positive difference in the world.

Organisations in Victoria, New South Wales, Western Australia, South Australia and Queensland have already registered for this year's event, but Feiglin has urged more students, families and members from all sectors of the community to get involved.

Member for Caulfield David Southwick, who is part the committee, expressed his excitement for the upcoming all-day event.

"Mitzvah Day is a truly special occasion on my calendar, a time where the whole community comes together to do good deeds and to support one

another. Whether it's helping cooking for those in need, being part of a working bee or donating blood, every deed is an important contribution," he said.

"Over the past three years I have been happy to not just put my name behind the Mitzvah Day program, but also join the committee and participate on the day."

Mitzvah Day is on Sunday November 15, 2015 across Australia. To find out more or to get involved, visit www.mitzvahday.org.au.

Watch the highlights of Mitzvah Day 2014. Available on the iPad app and e-paper edition.

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