

President's Message October 2010

Gleaning

While I have read about the act of not harvesting all your crops, and I had heard the term gleaning used in connection with this practice, I had never participated in anything like a group of us did today. The [temple Sisterhood](#) had come up with an idea to go along with our school's theme of Mitzvot, and had arranged a day to harvest food at a local farm.

When we got rained out last week, we were able to reschedule today and go to [Longmeadow Farm](#) in Hope.

When the last of us (me) arrived there, the owner of the farm and the director of [America's Grow-a-Row](#) met us, explained how America's Grow-a-Row works, and why it is so important that we get fresh produce to the hungry. He told us many food banks and shelters get donations of boxed and canned food, but not much produce. America's Grow-a-Row helps to increase the amount of fresh produce that is sent to these organizations all across the country. He stated that last year, they were able to donate hundreds of thousands of pounds of produce. Then the owner of Longmeadow Farm spoke and told us that he was able to donate over 70,000 pounds of apples to America's Grow-a-Row last year. But only because volunteers help him by gleaning the orchards.

Longmeadow Farm is a pick-your-own apple orchard, so any of the apples that fall on the ground are not available to be sold, but many of these apples are in good shape. So we gleaned. We got on our hands and knees, or sat under the apple trees and took all of the apples that had fallen on the ground and either put them in baskets, to be donated to the hungry, or in a pile of damaged apples that were not able to be donated to the hungry. We didn't ask what happened to those apples, but I am sure that some good will come of them as well.



As I was speaking with Mike Weiner while we were gleaning, there seemed to be an added benefit of performing a mitzvah that is mentioned in the Torah (or maybe the book of Ruth) about leaving the gleanings of your harvest for the stranger.

I truly had a great time performing this mitzvah and hope that we can do this again as a temple. If you weren't able to make it this time, I certainly hope you will get another chance to perform this or any other mitzvah.

Howie Hirsch

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