

## **(Project) heART and Soul: How One Teen’s Passion for Giving Inspires a Community**

Fifteen-year-old **Sophie Rosenman** has been immersed in the spirit of giving for as long as she can remember.

Inspired early on by her parents’ deep engagement at Sid Jacobson JCC—her father, Lloyd, serves as a Vice President on the Board of Directors, and her mother, Brooke, co-chairs the JCC’s annual *Eat.Bid.Laugh!* fundraiser—Sophie quickly grew to view philanthropy as a privilege rather than an obligation.

“I’ve helped give back since I was three, but it was during [the] COVID-19 [pandemic] that I realized I could do something on my own that made a difference,” Sophie said. “We all have different needs, and by working together, we can make the world thrive through small acts of kindness.”

With the world in lockdown in 2020, Sophie channeled her passion into two small businesses—*Style My Mask* and *Silver Lining Treats*—blending creativity with a cause.

From designing mask chains and custom Starbucks cups to handcrafting dog tags, Sophie raised \$4,000 for Sid Jacobson JCC’s Nikki Schwartz Memorial Community Needs Bank, directly supporting local families struggling with food insecurity.

Today, she continues her service-driven artistry with **Project heART**, a monthly initiative that brings together teen volunteers and neurodivergent peers for collaborative art projects at SJJCC’s Teen Inclusion Night.

As part of this effort, the group has assembled habit trackers as a tool to promote successful daily living for seniors and participated in service projects at our Community Needs Bank, making greeting cards and origami bouquets for food pantry recipients.

“Project heART’s main message is to show everyone—including our neurodivergent population—that we can all give back,” Sophie explained. “Art helps level the playing field. We might need to adapt certain projects to different abilities, but there’s always a way for each participant to contribute and feel proud.”

And with more projects on the horizon, Sophie is eager to expand Project heART’s reach.

Sophie’s generosity stems from a family tradition of pitching in. Her parents, **Lloyd** and **Brooke Rosenman**, beam at the way their daughter’s passion mirrors their own commitment to giving.

“Of all the things your child can learn from you, we could not be prouder that philanthropy and hard work resonate with Sophie,” said Lloyd and Brooke. “Anne Frank said, ‘No one has ever become poor from giving.’ It’s been incredibly special to watch Sophie continue to make a mark on our community, creating new and meaningful ways to enhance the lives of others.”

Both then added: “Sophie has always been an old soul, a thinker, a problem solver. Her generosity, coupled with a commitment to doing so much, makes us all feel good. If we all helped just one person, to that person, we made a difference.”

**Paige Nogid**, Director of Teen Services at Sid Jacobson JCC, has also taken notice of Sophie’s impact, stating: “Her enthusiasm and passion have made Sophie an invaluable part of our teen community. She’s a leader among her peers and a vital part of our Teen Executive Board, constantly bringing new ideas to the table and single-handedly

organizing fundraisers. Sophie always shows up with a smile and a positive attitude, and her commitment to making the world a better place should serve as an inspiration to everyone.”

Sophie also plays the piano and is launching *BEAT (Books Everyone Accesses Together)*, a new library-style system designed to make sheet music more accessible to students without financial barriers.

*BEAT* will allow schools across Long Island to participate—whether by taking on leadership roles, donating materials, or simply gaining access to music they might not otherwise afford.

Through this initiative, Sophie hopes to inspire more young musicians to enjoy the *BEAT!*

“Community service shouldn’t feel like a chore,” Sophie emphasized. “It should be something you genuinely enjoy, especially when you know it helps others.”

Looking to the future, Sophie envisions bringing *Project heART* to other communities and JCCs. Wherever her path takes her, Sophie will continue to prove that no one is ever too young—or too busy—to make a difference.

In Sophie’s own words, she said: “You have to start somewhere—dive into different areas and find what resonates with you. If you stay open, you’ll discover just how rewarding small acts of kindness can be.”

It is that outlook, shared wholeheartedly by her family and nurtured by her entire JCC community, that will undoubtedly help Sophie’s legacy of giving grow far beyond her years.