



## The Mensch Initiative

### What is this project?

A mensch is a person of integrity and honour. From 26<sup>th</sup> February to 4<sup>th</sup> March we are asking you to pass on the mensch philosophy, through engaging with the refugee crisis. There is always more that can be done to support others and this week falls over Purim. So in the tenacious spirit of Queen Esther, the heroine of the Purim story, we are asking you to do more for those that need us most.

The festival of Purim commemorates the salvation of the Jewish people in ancient Persia from Haman's plot "to destroy, kill and annihilate all the Jews, young and old, infants and women, in a single day", as recorded in the book of Esther. During Purim there are several observances that can be done to meet all the mitzvot (commandments) of the day, but there are two that we would like to highlight in particular as part of this campaign. They are as follows:

- Matanot LaEvyonim - מתנות לאביונים - giving gifts to at least two people that are less fortunate than yourself.
- Mishloach Manot - משלוח מנות - sending gifts of two kinds of food to at least one person.

### What can you do?

- Be in touch with any society on your campus that already works with refugees. [Star- Student Action for Refugees](#) is active on many campuses that have J-Socs, so check them out!
- Hold a donation drive for items that local refugee drop-ins centres need.
- Make the event you are holding for Purim a fundraiser!
- Host a lunch and learn to educate your peers on the wider issues surrounding this topic.
- Use the letter outline below to write to your MP about attending a family reunification Private Member's Bill on 16<sup>th</sup> March. Please personalise the letter to how you see fit and [e-mail](#) your MP.
- Make Mishloach Manot, sell them and donate what you make to a refugee charity!
- Finally, be a mensch.

For any questions be in touch with [graced@ujs.org.uk](mailto:graced@ujs.org.uk)



Subject line: PMB on Refugee Family Reunification

Dear [\[Find your MP here\]](#),

I am writing on behalf of [\[city\]](#) Jewish Society, as the elected [\[Committee role-if applicable\]](#) I represent [\[number\]](#) university students. We believe that the United Kingdom could and should do more surrounding the support of Refugees, especially when it comes to family reunification.

We are taking part in The Union of Jewish Students' "The Mensch Initiative" campaign. The Yiddish word mensch, is defined as a person with integrity and honour. The Mensch Initiative highlights how we can encourage positive social change within our community in line with our Jewish values and culture. [\[Highlight what you are doing for Purim or anything else your J-Soc or members are involved in, especially if you are doing refugee work!\]](#).

It is currently the festival of Purim where we retell the story of Queen Esther and how she protected the Jewish people from a terrible fate through her bravery and courage. One lesson we learn from the story is to do good deeds, a 'mitzvah', to give gifts to those close to us but also those that need us most. We do this to ensure that everyone has enough to live dignified lives and to increase cooperation and friendship amongst us as a community and our neighbours.

Please be a mensch and attend the Refugees (Family Reunion) (No. 2) Bill reading in Parliament on the 16.03.2018. The refugee situation is desperate and we count on your support as our local MP to support this important Bill.

Kind regards,

[\[Sign your name here\]](#)