

April 11, 2008

## Greetings From Tess

A *bat mitzvah* marks an important milestone in any 12-year-old girl's life. It is a time of introspection and self-identification.

Tess Gann of Mount Washington, however, is making her *bat mitzvah* more about others than herself.

A Park School seventh-grade student, Tess designed more than 200 handmade greeting cards to be sold to benefit the Govans Ecumenical Development Corp.

"Anyone can do it," said Tess, "and the small things really matter."

Tess learned about GEDCO through her temple, Baltimore Hebrew Congregation. BHC runs a food drive for GEDCO's CARES (Civic And Religious Emergency Services) program during the High Holidays.

Tess found out from the community service coordinator at her brother's school, Friends, that she could make cards to bring in funds to supply emergency financial assistance to low-income families and help fill CARES' food pantry. So she went ahead full force.

"Every night, while I would watch TV, I would make 20 cards, maybe more," said Tess.

She's been using the cards as thank-you notes for pre-*bat mitzvah* gifts. (Her special day is not until May 31.) Her family made a donation and purchased a selection of Tess' cards for the occasion.

The rest will be sold for \$2 to \$5 through GEDCO and at a selection of retail establishments. (For specific locations, call GEDCO at 410-433-2442.)

"We're always proud of Tess," said her mother, Lora, although she said watching Tess carry out this project has been especially moving.

The cards, according to GEDCO development director Rosemary Thompson, "are beautiful." Not drawn but paper-collaged, they are three dimensional and fantastically colorful.

Said Mitchell Posner, GEDCO's executive director: "It was very sweet for Tess to make this a *bat mitzvah* project. It is a wonderful act of *chesed* that she did." He said he did recall any other *bat mitzvah* girl carrying out such a project for the organization.

"She made a real difference in celebrating her *bat mitzvah* and sharing with others," said Mr. Posner. "Tess is a great example of how one person can save the world." □

For information on GEDCO, go to [Gedco.org](http://Gedco.org).

— Maayan Jaffe

**Tess Gann: "Anyone can do it, and the small things really matter."**

