

1 in 5 Israelis expected to volunteer on Good Deeds Day

• By LIDAR GRAVÉ-LAZI

Some 1.5 million Israelis are expected to do some good as part of the 11th annual Good Deeds Day, a project encouraging people to volunteer and give back to the community.

The event, set for March 28, was initiated by Ruach Tova ("Good Spirit"), a nonprofit organization that is part of the Ted Arison Family Foundation, the philanthropic arm of the Arison Group.

This year, the day's organizers aim to expand its activities in Israel and the organization hopes to see one in five Israelis take part.

"The goal is to create a critical mass of good deeds, leading to positive change in the world," explained businesswoman and philanthropist Shari Arison, who founded Good Deeds Day.

The fundamental idea of the initiative is that every person has the ability to do a good deed for others, whether large or small, that can help another person and set an example for what our world could look like every day of the year.

"We have built an immense infrastructure of good deeds. Each individual can do a good deed, but togetherness creates power. Together we can shift the pendulum to the positive side, tapping into a tremendous source of hope," Arison said.

The day has also become a global endeavor in some 75 countries, including Brazil, Taiwan, Italy, the United States, Germany, Argentina, Russia and Panama, all of



A VOLUNTEER collaborates in Holon on Good Deeds Day last year. (Sivan Farag)

which will mark the day on April 2.

"This project, created 11 years ago, has crossed borders to become a unifying international force, thanks to its simplicity and the ability of each and every person to connect and participate," Arison said.

As part of the day, the foundation is calling on people, groups and communities to "do a good deed."

Nonprofits, municipalities, and public-benefit organizations are invited to come up with ideas for volunteers that match their groups' needs and realize those ideas with the help of the organization.

Similarly, people, groups, and businesses interested in participat-

ing can visit the Good Deeds Day website (www.good-deeds-day.org) and choose from an array of activities.

Various indoor and outdoor events will offer opportunities to do a good deed in passing.

Eleven years ago, 7,000 Israelis took part in the day's events. Last year, 1.3 million participated in 14,000 projects across the country in 99% of the country's municipalities, according to Rafi Elul, chairman of the Ruach Tova Foundation.

"This year, 1.5 million Israelis are expected to participate," he said. "Good Deeds Day is just a symbol and a catalyst for volunteering throughout the year. People and groups who join us often continue to volunteer."