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World

The New Normal
Young adults embrace grassroots action to make the world better.

Editor's note: The writer is involved with the United Jewish Communities' Jewish Community Heroes (jewishcommunityheroes.org). Launched Aug. 3, the site recognizes people of all ages who exemplify the best of tikkun olam across the country. Nominations are being accepted now, with one winner in October receiving \$25,000 to support his or her efforts. The same people who developed President Obama's technology-driven platform are guiding the technical infrastructure of the Jewish Community Heroes Web site. This piece showcases the campaign's spirit.

Adam Finkel
Special to the Jewish News

At 11 p.m. — I presume on the dot — it will be lights out for Bernard Madoff. He probably didn't read debates about a Jewish reckoning spurred by his horrific Ponzi scheme.

In the town of Aktoke, Kazakhstan, it will be 8 a.m. And somewhere nearby, Perry Teicher has spent the past two years. In the Peace Corps, he has made relationships far and wide that have built bridges across lands and cultures.

It will be 10 p.m. in Puerto Bolivar, where Ian Robinson has begun his Peace Corps assignment. Another solid day at an Ecuadorian high school, increasing cultural awareness and furthering sustainable development.

Back in Eastern Standard Time, you'll find Harford Heights Intermediate School in Baltimore, where Heidi Dworin is doing Teach for America, leading change to expand educational opportunities. In D.C. is Craig Isakow, at the Department of Energy, making renewable energy ideas a more feasible reality.

Adam Duke, in a similar spirit, is working with NextEnergy in Detroit to create new alternative energy jobs in our state. Not far away is Ashley Aidenbaum, making Michigan communities welcoming to young people, after having assisted similar projects for our state government.

Michigan natives Perry, Ian, Heidi, Craig, Adam and Ashley represent the positive change that betters our community. They show that the strength of the collective is in the many. Young people understand how easy grassroots action can scale. That's a major reason why Jewish contributions to American life look increasingly promising.

Consider Mark Hanis. As the grandson of four Holocaust sur-



Jonny Imerman started Imerman Angels in Chicago to connect cancer fighters, survivors and caregivers.



Monica Woll worked with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee's efforts in Rwanda this past year.

vivors, he's on the frontlines of Darfur advocacy. He founded the Genocide Intervention Network, creating a movement to help ordinary Americans take a stand in prevent-