

Joshua Neidorf, 13, Donates His Bar Mitzvah Money To Wounded Soldiers (VIDEO)

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In a generous display of maturity and compassion, one Jewish boy made his first deed as a man in his faith a great act of charity.

Joshua Neidorf, a 13-year-old boy from Los Angeles, Calif., donated a big portion of his bar mitzvah money to [Operation Mend](#), a program that reconstructs the faces of severely burned U.S. veterans.

The young man decided to donate his birthday money after getting to know Army Sgt. Louis Dahlman, who was undergoing a series of jaw reconstruction surgeries at UCLA thanks to Operation Mend. The Niedorfs had signed up to be Dahlman's "buddy family," [reports the Associated Press](#), spending time with him whenever he visited LA for a surgery.

"I just love knowing that it's going somewhere ... to help the people who save our lives and keep us safe everyday," [said Neidorf to KCAL9 in the video above](#). His proud mother added, "It makes me feel like our world is going in a good direction with this next generation."

In all, Neidorf gave \$13,000 to Operation Mend. He also encouraged his bar mitzvah guests to donate to the cause by screening a video of an interview with Dahlman at the party, reports KCAL9. He is the organization's youngest donor to date.

Operation Mend is a privately funded program that works in partnership with the Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center. Philanthropist Ron Katz, a board member at the hospital, founded the program in 2006 after seeing a [CNN segment](#) about Aaron Mankin, a Marine veteran who had gone through dozens of surgeries after an I.E.D. in Iraq completely [burned off his face](#).

Mankin ended up being Operation Mend's first patient, starting the first of 20 reconstructive facial surgeries at UCLA in Sept. 2007. In a [2011 interview with The Huffington Post](#), Katz shared how his experience helping Mankin made him realize the need to establish a more permanent program.

"My wife and I soon realized that there were dozens of Aarons out there," Katz said to HuffPost. "These men and women deserve not only the best that the Defense sector has to offer; they deserve the best that the private sector has to offer as well."

Operation Mend is entirely funded by private contributions; [click here](#) to donate. Any veteran who may be a candidate for the surgeries should [contact](#) the partnership.

All photos courtesy of Operation Mend.

