



November 10, 2021

**VIA EMAIL ONLY: director@unitetheworld.org
RABBI YOSSI SCHULMAN / UNITE THE WORLD**

RE: ARK CHARITY PROJECT

Dear Rabbi Schulman:

It has been a pleasure meeting with you on the A.R.K. (Acts of Random Kindness) Project. Allow this opinion letter to serve as my position with respect to the legal footing of the ARK Charity Project in the public schools located in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

Initially, it should be noted that Unite The World is a currently registered 501(c)(3) charitable organization in good standing. Unite the World has also complied with the PA Solicitation of Funds for Charitable Purposes Act, 10 P.S. Sec. 162.1 et seq.

As I understand it, the mission of Unite The World is to advance peace, kindness, and unity to humankind, with a methodology of developing partnerships, building project models that have shown prior success, and creating healthy leadership to attain these goals. You have advised me that one of the key projects for Unite the World is the ARK Charity Project. It is my opinion that the ARK Charity Project is a secular project that meets the mission identified above. It is a county-wide initiative to advance kindness, empathy, unity, and self-worth through encouraging acts of kindness and daily, communal giving of charity to local humanitarian needs chosen by the donor. The ARK Charity Project program is as follows:

Pre-program process:

- 1. Unite The World requests permission from the School Board and Superintendent to run the ARK Project and to present the program to Principals, along with information about SEL (Social and Emotional Learning) programming, if requested.*
- 2. Upon agreement and signed commitments, Unite The World makes presentation to school staff and shares presentation for school to send to parents.*

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3. The Luzerne Foundation sends a list of categories of humanitarian needs and local vetted 501(c)(3) charities within each category suitable for students to choose as the recipient of their charity.

How the Program would work:

1. During a planned distribution day, students are handed ark-shaped plastic charity boxes either at an assembly room or in classrooms or to designated charity clubs within the school by Unite The World volunteers (or volunteer students from the school body). Students receive a presentation about the ARK Charity project and information from the Luzerne Foundation about categories of local humanitarian needs they support.

2. Students bring their charity boxes home and are then able to donate to the charity of their choosing.

3. Students choose a category of humanitarian need and a local 501(c)(3) within that category to receive donations from their ARK charity boxes.

4. OPTIONAL: The school can follow up with in-class and/or extracurricular programs to supplement the ARK charity project. Some suggestions are:

- Participation in the ARK essay contest for 5th -8th grade on the topic, “How does preforming consistent mind actions impact me?” One essay from winner each grade receives a \$30 gift card from the ARK Charity Project;*
- Students have made extracurricular hands-on creative projects such as a “kindness tree” where students can post notes about the kind acts they have done, or a “Noah’s Ark” which students surround with animal cutouts representing acts of kindness or money raised, each grade represented by a unique animal; and*
- A mural of pictures taken of students doing kind acts, or artistic drawings of kind acts they are performing or would like to perform.*

5. The organization chosen can send information / video footage to the school about the work they do to be shared with students. Students can give feedback, write, or do projects to share why they care specifically about this cause and chose to give.

6. The school sets up a collection day with Unite The World.

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- *On the collection day, students empty their charity boxes into buckets provide by Unite The World in a communal area such as a lunchroom or rec hall in the school. Charity boxes are kept by the students for further use if they so choose.*
- *The buckets containing these donations are sealed and labeled by ARK Project volunteers on site and are then transported in a secure manner to any branch of Fidelity Bank. Coin donations are processed through coin machines at the branch, which records the total on a receipt; this receipt and the donated banknotes are given to a teller, who records the total amount and the charity chosen. The full donation is deposited into an account held by the Luzerne Foundation, which makes out a check to the local humanitarian cause chosen by the school students; 100% of the charity donated goes to the chosen cause. The total donation amount of each school, and the charity chosen, will be recognized on the www.unitetheworld.org website, along with a letter of recognition from the charity chosen and Unite The World.*
- *Representatives of the chosen cause can address the students on collection day about the impact of their charity on its beneficiaries and can follow up with a letter of gratitude noting the total amount given.*
- *Schools can choose several causes throughout the year; a 2-month minimum time is recommended for focusing on each cause.*

Outcomes for students:

- 1. Hands-on engagement with the local community*
- 2. Supplements Social/Emotional Learning curriculums*
- 3. Enhanced feelings of self-worth and their value to society*
- 4. Unity and equality with peers*
- 5. Empathy for local needs*
- 6. An atmosphere of philanthropy and goodwill*
- 7. Highlights the power of teamwork and collective giving*
- 8. Extends classroom education into the family setting and encouraging their involvement*

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9. Opportunities for critical writing, extracurricular projects, and activities

10. Educates fiscal responsibility, responsibilities to environment, and accountability

Based on the above facts and program analysis as conveyed to me, I would conclude that utilization of the ARK Charity Program would be within all federal public-school guidelines and best practices and policy for public schools in Northeastern Pennsylvania. Unite The World running the ARK Charity Program at public schools is permissible.

The opinions set forth herein are given solely for the purposes contemplated in connection with the solicitation of charitable contributions for the ARK Charity Project and may not be relied upon by any person or entity other than the designated recipient. Without our prior written consent, this opinion is not to be utilized or quoted for any other purpose.

Sincerely,

COMITZ LAW FIRM, LLC

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jonathan S. Comitz", is written over a light gray rectangular background.

JONATHAN S. COMITZ

JSC/DM