Tikkun olam is Hebrew for “repair the world.” It describes a Jewish tradition of service and volunteerism that influences Jews the world over. Rooted in the Hebrew Bible’s account of the Creation, tikkun olam represents the responsibility and opportunity bequeathed to man from the time of the Creation to improve, fix, prepare, and create goodness in “all of time” or the world. Tikkun olam inspires adherents to perform any activity that improves the world, thus bringing the world closer to its intended, highest, harmonious state.

For 17 years, the principle of tikkun olam has been the driving force behind the Hebrew High Summer Care-A-Van, a summer volunteer program for Jewish students in Arizona. The “Care-A-Van” is exactly what the name denotes—a van (or, in this case, a 51-passenger bus) for performing service all across the western United States. A project of the Phoenix Bureau of Jewish Education, the Care-A-Van crosses multiple states and weeks, teaching students about various topics, all while providing copious opportunities to serve.

For the past two years, the Care-A-Van has rolled into the parking lot at Globus Relief, bringing groups of enthusiastic students to provide valuable service in whatever way needed. Last year they sifted through thousands of pairs of glasses. This July, they sorted and folded medical linens for distribution to worldwide medical projects. All in a day’s work for them. From soup kitchens to building houses to cleaning up after natural disasters, the Care-A-Van is dedicated to repairing the world, tikkun olam style - leaving it, Globus Relief and the Care-A-Van’s participants, better than when they drove in.