

Portrait of a Modern Master

When Andy Lipkis was just a kid growing up in Los Angeles, his camp counselor told him that by the time he was an adult, the hills of surrounding Los Angeles would be brown, the trees having been killed by the smog in the air.

By the time he was 18, Andy had 20 camps willing to help replant those hills.

He found out the State of California had 20,000 smog-resistant tree seedlings available for planting.

BUT, they were available for purchase – for purchase for \$600.00 that Andy didn't have. SO, Andy contacted the state and asked if he could have them for free. He was told that he had a week to raise the money or the trees would be turned under because it was illegal for the state to give them to him for free.

BUT, Andy contacted some lawmakers and a newspaper reporter. SO, the state decided Andy could have the trees.

BUT, the 8,000 trees that were left needed to be kept cool. SO, Andy contacted the food service at the college he was attending and a local ice cream store and got temporary cool housing for his baby trees.

BUT, the trees needed to be planted in individual containers before they could be planted outdoors. SO, Andy contacted a local dairy that donated the containers and got volunteers to help plant 8,000 baby trees into 8,000 milk containers.

Moving the trees to the hillsides and getting them planted was the easy part!

Andy Lipkis, and his helpers, got the name 'the tree people.' You can read all about them and the organization that grew – and grew – and grew from one kid at camp learning about trees at www.treepeople.org.

Adapted from TO FIX THE WORLD – STICK YOUR NECK OUT, Rabbi Steven Bayar

