

Jake Max

Jake Max had a revelation after graduating from Emory University in 2016 with a bachelor's in business. While he was applying to banks and consultancies and other institutions, he took a good look at the world. "And I didn't like what I saw," he said. "So I figured I am lucky enough that my parents provided me with a great education and I had great professors and I really had the opportunity to go out in the world and do anything. But to me it was important to give back."

That giving back started with an 11-month fellowship with Repair the World in New York, a volunteer service organization where he recruited volunteers, planned educational and social programming for young Jewish adults and worked in soup kitchens.

"For me, the most meaningful Yom Kippur experience I've had to this point was waking up and volunteering at 6 a.m. in a soup kitchen in Brooklyn," he said.

When he finished his fellowship, Jake decided it was time to come back and give back to his hometown of Baltimore, where he had grown up in Pikesville and attended Krieger Schechter Day School and Park School. At 23, he is now program director for Charm City Tribe.

How did you land at Charm City Tribe?

I was applying for jobs, and Charm City Tribe came into

my window of view, and it seemed like the perfect opportunity. There are so many people who I truly believe want to do good, want to be involved and want to be part of a community. And I think the resources for that are really lacking or are sometimes outdated. I think we need to reach young people in a different way. And for me this was a really great opportunity to bring people together.

What does Charm City Tribe offer young people?

People have all sorts of different interests, whether it's social action or food or photography, and everyone has a different thing that they're interested in. The question is, how can we bring those interests and Judaism together in one place? I don't think people are averse to Judaism, I think people just want to approach it in a different way.

What's best about working for Charm City Tribe?

The opportunity to bring people together. I meet new people every day who either are new to Baltimore or don't know anyone or who are looking for something new or a different way to get involved. I'm able to put people in a space where they can connect with other folks. If you want to go to a Shabbat dinner, I'll find you a Shabbat dinner. If you want to start a group — I have a guy who's starting a Jewish foodie group. They're



going to different restaurants with some kind of Jewish history or Jewish theme and we're going to have meals. So, I'm really trying to open it up and find out what people want and see if I can give that to them if it's possible.

Are there challenges?

Today, there is just so much other stuff that you can do. You can go online and Google 'fun things to do in Baltimore,' and thousands of things will pop up. How do you compete with this market that is totally oversaturated with opportunities? It used to be if you wanted to see a movie you went to the movie theater. Now you can go on your phone and pull up any movie ever. So how do you find something that's

unique and speaks to people? I think it's easier said than done. I think it's possible. I wouldn't be taking on this work if I didn't think it was.

What do you do with your down time?

I play basketball once a week at Schechter; we have a game that's been going on a long time. I do like actually going to the movies, the actual theater. I'll go to a sports game. I'll go to a museum. I'm really just interested in being with interesting people more than anything. I think it's way less about what you're doing and way more about who you're doing it with. J

singram@midatlanticmedia.com