



Carol Blank

Simply put...It's the right thing to do.

Anonymous

For many years I have felt the need to “pay back” for the support and aid that the Jewish Family Service and philanthropic community in the area who helped me and my children through a very serious life-changing time. As a young mother of three children I felt lost and different as I went through a very traumatic separation and ultimate divorce. I sought not only legal counsel but through JFS group counseling for me and three children I was able to continue on the track to recovery. My three children were invited to participate in summer camp—something I could not have afforded on my own. I was invited to participate, at no cost, in group counseling where I met other women going through serious life changes, many of whom became dear friends.

The help I received came from very special people who anonymously gave of their funds, their time, legal and other forms of assistance because it is incumbent on Jews to do so and to assist the less fortunate. All of my experiences receiving aid were well before today’s legacy program was initiated. At that time I was on the “receiving” end and I vowed that someday I hoped to “give back.” Our legacy program is how I am able to achieve that goal.

Aaron Cohen

I don’t want to make a big splash when I die, but I don’t want to just fade away either.

As I get older, my sphere of influence shrinks. My direct influence over the lives of my children diminishes as a direct result of my childrearing success. While I am still employed, I am more often offering guidance rather than leading the charge. I am done being the president or on the executive board of community organizations, although I still serve on focused short term committees. This is all as it should be.

After I'm gone my impact on the institutions and causes I care about deeply will continue for a short time because of my thoughtful, but simple planning. Because I have bequeathed a small percentage of a life insurance policy, the small splash of my passing will sprinkle some much-needed droplets to sustain TBEMC. My family is proud of my decision, will not miss the few dollars this represents, and will be spared from making this determination.

Very few decisions have been this simple, painless and ultimately effective. And I didn't have to wait until I was old to set this all in motion.

Laura Cohen

By their actions my parents demonstrated the importance of making community. They joined two synagogues, served as teachers, welcomed out of town guests to the synagogue to their home, comforted mourners, celebrated at countless b'nei mitzvah of the children my Dad taught. My siblings and I did not have the option of quitting Hebrew School, or Hebrew High School, or even youth group! They sent us to Jewish summer camps.

Having served on our TBEMC board for many years and as co-president with Aaron for three years we know intimately how hard it is to run a synagogue like ours almost entirely with volunteers. Every dollar that comes in has at least two worthwhile dispositions. Everything is a tradeoff. We defer building improvements although they are necessary; the professional staff salaries need to be paid before we can improve handicap accessibility.

The future of funding for Jewish membership non-profits is sure to be challenging as the organizations struggle to retain members. Some people understand how to make community. For many others, joining a synagogue competes with many other expenses. The dues-based model is not something we can assume will continue. Organizations are seeking alternative funding models and TBEMC is no exception.

When the CJL program was announced, I got excited. I serve on the Jewish Community Foundation of the Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest and I had learned how other communities had launched the initiative to formalize commitments to legacy giving through the Create a Jewish Legacy program to great success.

I'm turning my lifelong commitment to creating community through synagogue life into a plan that will benefit our TBEMC community at some time in the (hopefully very distant) future. I'm proud to do this and grateful for the opportunity to do so for myself and as a tribute to my parents and their values. I am further proud to ask others to join me in doing something that will enable them to project their values to their families, all while greatly benefitting the community and securing our future.

The legacy gifts will enable our Temple to build financial stability, serve as a needed community stanchion and fulfill dreams that future leaders will put into reality.

Judy Daniel and Gary Daniel

As might be said, "We are Jewish to the bone." This is true too for us every which way:

emotionally, historically, philosophically, culturally, socially, and traditionally as was instilled in us by family and our ancestors. From the time we were born, we learned how important the influence of a Jewish congregation was on us, our family, our friends, and the Jewish people.

We believe this is important, not only spiritually, but also to some degree physically a place, a "home" and a structure where the congregation will meet. We are grateful for TBEMC and what its presence represents. We wish Mazal Tov and continued success for the future, and that the Legacy will add something positively.

Linda Ershow-Levenberg

We selected Beth El in 1987 when our first child was one year old and we wanted to join an egalitarian congregation not far from Elizabeth. The atmosphere was so friendly. Our four kids spent most Shabbat mornings at Beth El, first on laps, then crawling on the carpet and then roaming the aisles visiting their favorite members.

The temple's strong USY group was key for our family as each kid was in high school. The kids were so proud of their chapter.

I have liked the thoughtful analytical approach taken by the rabbis and congregants as changes in ritual were explored and when the merger was made. All in all, I like hangin' at the shul because I have so many friends there. I'm a legacy donor so others can find a happy home at TBEMC as well.

Alice Goldfarb

I was raised to feel responsible for helping support my greater community, & particularly my Jewish community, with both time & money as commensurate with my ability. That means

helping the sick, the poor, those with special needs, and providers of education for a younger generation to have good Jewish values.

I had actually arranged for continuing support to Synagogue, Hadassah, & UJA before I knew to link it to the Legacy program.

I couldn't enjoy my own good fortune if I weren't helping others to live better lives. As Pirke Avot teaches us, "You are not obligated to complete the work, but neither are you free to desist from it."

Debbie Abrams Kaplan

Leaving a financial legacy is partly paying it forward, and partly repaying those who came before. When we arrived at TBEMC, the synagogue already had a building, a community, a staff and a 92 year history. Those who came before us – people we didn't know – built this community. They did it through hard work, volunteering and fundraising, giving of themselves financially and through personal dedication. Our family has greatly benefitted. We didn't need to found a synagogue when we moved to New Jersey. We didn't need to drive far to find Jewish education for our kids and a place for our family to call our spiritual and community home. Yes, we pay dues and make some donations, but that isn't going to sustain the synagogue moving forward. That mostly helps keep the boat steady for now.

When Mark and I leave the planet, we won't need our money. Our kids will get some of it. But a portion will go to organizations like TBEMC that help the community and make it a better place. We also included our California synagogue as a legacy recipient, as they also have had a profound impact on our family. We hope they adopt the Create a Jewish Legacy program there too. This TBEMC legacy commitment is just the first that we're making in our estate plan. As we get older we hope to be in a position where we can leave a financial legacy to other organizations too.

One lesson we try to teach our kids is that it's our responsibility to help others. We're doing that while we're alive by volunteering and making donations. But we can have a huge impact after we're gone, with funds we'll no longer need to support ourselves. We hope TBEMC won't get our money for a long time, but when we go, we know we'll leave something good behind.

Mark Kaplan

From the moment I walked into TBEMC I knew it was a special place.

Our family had just moved to New Jersey from California a few weeks prior, didn't know anyone, and was looking for community. Even before we moved, we talked to both the membership chair and the education director. We received a personalized letter from the office administrator. And when we came to our first Shabbat service, we were immediately greeted and given an Aliyah. We stayed for Kiddush lunch and were welcomed by all. We left services knowing we wanted to join this community.

Since then, and over the years, TBEMC has been a focal point for our family. Our children have made friends through the religious school, and our children Dori and Zack made us so proud when they became a Bat and Bar Mitzvah. My wife Debbie and I have also made many friends. I have bonded closely with others who share my passion for running. On Sunday mornings (after we drop off the kids at religious school) we run anywhere from 5-12 miles; it is truly a highlight of the week for me.

Volunteering is the lifeblood of our community. I have served on the board and executive board, and on countless committees; my wife Debbie edits the Bulletin and also volunteers. But it also takes money. And although we pay dues and make generous donations to maintain our ongoing operations, legacy giving has the ability to make far more substantial and transformative changes in our community – not just through finances, but by inspiring future generations.

That is why I joined TBEMC's Legacy Society as a father in my 40s – by making TBEMC a beneficiary of my estate – and why I commit to make an even more substantial legacy gift when my kids are grown and I'm in an even better position.

David Levenberg

In Judaism, how we act is as important as what we believe. As Jews, we are taught that it is important to do what we can to repair the world, help the needy, attend to the sick, and to be generous with our resources. This just feels right to me, and makes me so proud to see the good works that are achieved by all those who subscribe to these teachings. Creating a Jewish Legacy ensures that these actions will continue from generation to generation.

I have participated in the Legacy programs with Jewish Family Service of Central New Jersey, the YM-YWHA, and with my synagogue Temple Beth El Mekor Chayim. I have chosen to support JFS and the Y, because they provide hands-on service to those who most need it, and they provide the opportunity for people like me to help in that effort; I have chosen to support my synagogue because it is only through Jewish study that the next generations will learn how to act in this same way.

Bob Meth

I went to Sunday school at Temple Beth El when I was 5 at the South Avenue location and was active on Walnut Avenue until I graduated high school. Richard Corman, who was 2 years older than I, got me involved in the Chazzanim group which led junior congregation services and then encouraged my involvement in USY. Following in Richard's footsteps, I became chapter president and then regional president. I was the youth representative on the Adult Education Committee at TBE when one of our invited speakers was Rabbi Meir Kahane of the Jewish Defense League.

The Soviet Jewry movement began in 1971 when I was Hagalil's Regional USY President. As a child of Holocaust refugees, I felt a passion to make sure our generation would not be silent about Soviet Jewry as Americans had been during WWII regarding European Jewry. That passion grew through my involvement with the UJA Young Leadership Cabinet and the National Conference on Soviet Jewry and I made my first two visits to refuseniks in the USSR in 1987 and 1989. From 2000-2006, I was President and Chairman of NCSJ (now known as NCSEJ) and was a member of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

In 2007, International USY honored me as their Alumnus of the Year and the Jewish Journal of Los Angeles honored me in their annual "Mensch" issue. Oh yes, and at the same time, I was a full time family physician with the Southern California Permanente Medical Group from 1980-2012. After all, in USY I had learned that "To save one life is to save an entire world."

Today I am a member of Sinai Temple in Los Angeles where my friend and rabbi is David Wolpe. I am active in AIPAC, NCSEJ, Birthright Israel and am a docent at the L.A. Museum of the Holocaust.

My parents, of blessed memory, were active members of TBE from 1956-2013, and though they weren't observant Jews, temple involvement and commitment to the Jewish community were values instilled in me through their example. I have been so richly rewarded by my involvement in Jewish communal life and it all began at TBEMC. That is why I have made a commitment to TBEMC in my personal estate plans and remain an associate member to this day.

Roz Reiss

Raised by immigrant grandparents and first generation parents, I was taught to honor Jewish traditions. An early memory is sitting with my grandparents as they slurped coffee through a sugar cube and read aloud from the newspaper. They were quick to kvell over positive happenings in Israel or by Jews worldwide and showed disgust when a Jew was portrayed as unethical. They contributed what they could to Jewish institutions and my parents followed

their example. Now it is my turn. Although it has been more than 8 years since I moved from Cranford to Atlanta, I am honored to participate in The Create a Jewish Legacy Program. TBEMC was a powerful part of my 24 years in Cranford, during which continuing friendships were formed, Shabbatot, Chagim and simchas were celebrated and life's tragedies were supported. Each time I return to Cranford to once again pray with my TBEMC community, I am grateful that I moved to Cranford and TBEMC when I returned to the USA for a sabbatical (and then stayed). I hope you will join me to ensure the financial stability of TBEMC, for future generations, by participating in The Create a Jewish Legacy Program.

Shelly and Dave Schwartz

We have been members for approximately 45 years and we have always participated in TBEMC's fundraising campaigns. It is important to us to keep the Temple's appearance up to date and inviting to others. The Temple has always been a second home to us and we would like other members to feel the same way. This way we are passing on Jewish life, traditions and study to our next generation. We are proud of all the things we have contributed to and now we are leaving something for the future of TBEMC.

David Springer

TBEMC has always held a special place in my heart. As members for over 30 years, we came here to meet other Jewish people and to have our children educated. We never asked for more than that, but got so much more anyway. We got a circle of community we neither expected, nor paid for. We got people who shared our happiness at simchas and our sadness at shivas. We got a lifetime of education, prayer, friendship and commitment to Judaism. Making a future gift was a no brainer for me – as a Past President, as a member, as a Jew. I personally have been very fortunate to be able to contribute both time and money to many causes including TBEMC, and have instilled those values in our children, who do the same. To know that in some small way my future gift will help secure the shul's survival is just one way I can say "thank you TBEMC for making me a better person and a better Jew." My kids would have expected me to do this, and will be delighted that I did. You should too!!

Sandy Springer

Dave and I have had a wonderful life together. As children of immigrants who began married life eating a lot of pot pies over rice, we have been fortunate to come far. We are lucky to have

two successful children, wonderful daughters-in-law, and six healthy grandchildren. TBEMC has been a major part of our lifetime. Having a strong commitment to “pay it forward”, leaving a legacy gift to OUR SHUL is a no brainer. We raised our children by leading by example and they are well aware that our plan is to leave them less money and to provide, upon our death, for those in need and to non-profit organizations that can always use financial assistance. I hope that others share a similar sentiment and appreciation for the bounties of their lives and the positive impact of our wonderful synagogue over many years. The Create a Jewish Legacy Program, with your support, at whatever level works for you, helps to ensure that Judaism and TBEMC will continue for future generations.

Patty and Art Werschulz

Art and I were legacy participants before we had a Legacy Circle. As our children grew into adulthood, Art and I wanted to review our wills. As President of TBEMC at the time, I valued those members of Mekor Chayim and Temple Beth-El who had previously remembered the synagogues in their wills and whose passing benefited TBEMC. One bequest was from someone who had belonged to the Conservative synagogue in Roselle, long gone. The court awarded the bequest to TBEMC as the successor and preserver of Judaism in our community. It was then we realized that a bequest was about continuity and tradition of the Jewish community. Our family is well-taken care of when we die, but we needed to remember that the families in our Jewish community also need something from us.

