

Reflecting on a legacy of giving

The Jewish Community Foundation is turning 50

BY JACQUELINE BULL

The Jewish Community Foundation (JCF) is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. Members of the Foundation are taking time to reflect on the last 50 years and look out into the next 50, capping off the celebration with a gala. During its lifetime, JCF has grown to be the second largest community foundation in San Diego and has distributed more than a staggering 1 billion dollars.

There are many ways to describe what JCF does or how it works. JCF describes what they do as “partnering with generations of donors to achieve philanthropic goals.” Another way to look at it would be to say they provide an infrastructure for helping people get that absolute most out of their charitable dollars. They know and vet all of the best nonprofit organizations around the world and how to make the biggest impact for their donors.

Marjory Kaplan, former long-time President and CEO of JCF, and Elaine Galinson, current 50th Anniversary Committee Chair and Foundation Board Member took some time to talk with the San Diego Jewish Journal and reflect on memories, high-points, and some successes of their time with the Foundation.



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“It fills me with pride to know that I’m involved with an organization that is doing something that has such an impact that is done in a reliable, honest and good way. It makes me feel like I’m abiding by my Jewish instruction Tikkun Olam, heal the world in whatever small way I can.”

-Elaine Galinson

Successes

“Basically in this year we will be looking back and reflecting on the successes over the last 50 years, but we are also going to be looking forward and making plans for the future. We will be recognizing and acknowledging all the people who were involved in the last 50 years and share the excitement we have for the programs that are coming up in the future under the leadership of Beth Sirull,” Elaine Galinson said.

See the May 2017 issue of the San Diego Jewish Journal, for an interview with the new CEO and President of JCF, Beth Sirull.

Presently, they are helping victims of the recent natural disasters. “Right now we are helping out in Texas with the victims of Hurricane Harvey,” Elaine began. Elaine explained that when she called the Foundation about giving to the Hurricane Harvey victims from her own fund, a staff member informed her that she would be getting an email in a minute. “When there is a national emergency or an emergency in Israel or an emergency within our own community, these emails go out to all the holders of funds suggesting that these are the ways that you might want to be involved,” she said.

Being a part of a trusted organization, the

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Carl Esenoff*
1967-1972
1974-1979



Jerome Katzin*
1988-1990



Jack Schuster
2000-2002



Emily Einhorn
2010-2012



Victor Schulman*
1973



Rodney Stone
1990-1993



Andrew Viterbi
2002-2004



Jeff Silberman
2012-2014



Herbert Solomon
1980-1982



Shearn Platt*
1993-1996



Edgar Berner
2004-2006



Jane Scher
2014-2016



Stanley Foster*
1983-1985



Lawrence Sherman
1996-1998



Sheila Potiker*
2006-2008



Sydney Selati
2016-2017



Nessim Tiano
1986-1988



Pauline Foster*
1998-2000



Murray Galinson*
2008-2010



Leo Spiegel
Current

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Foundation can take care of everything so that each individual donor is not spending time researching and vetting organizations. And giving as a part of the community, the impact can go further.

Elaine, like many other members of the board, uses the Foundation to advise their personal philanthropy as well. "I have a broad range of philanthropic interests. The Foundation donor advised funds allows me to give to that broad range. The staffing help from the community foundation is invaluable. It saves me a lot of time. It is the best possible way for any philanthropist to give donations," she said.

Memories

Marjory Kaplan was the President and CEO of JCF for over twenty years. She shared some nice memories and highlights at her time with JCF and is very excited and hope-

ful for their future. Marjory is tremendously sweet and kind on the phone. She diverts attention back to the current staff every so often and adds that she is so confident in them and their ability to move forward. She explains that she has allowed the new team to create their own legacy, though she still keeps up with JCF through friends in the community and reminders of her time there continue to pop up.

The senior transportation program (run by the Jewish Family Service) that was put into place under her watch is one example of such reminders, "We were instrumental in providing the initial funding for the On-the-Go program that is still going so strong. I see the buses around the community [laughs]. I just got a note from my synagogue that if anyone needs a ride to high holy services, On-the-Go is available."

During her time at the Foundation, one

of the programs that garnered a lot of buzz and one that she is especially proud of is the Endowment Leadership Institute (ELI). "This was something we started 14-15 years ago to help our Jewish day schools and synagogues and all these organizations to develop endowments. It is so important for sustaining your financial health. We partnered with practically the whole Jewish community and it just took off," Marjory said.

ELI works with organizations to help them build an infrastructure for receiving endowments.

The program then allows people to create a posthumous legacy to support the local organizations that are important to them. The program has since been replicated in other parts of the country and is a big point of pride for Marjory and the JCF.

Like many good leaders, she remarks on the quality and care of the people she spent

For 50 years, the Foundation has built our community through generous philanthropy and innovative programs. Please join us as we celebrate this anniversary and share our vision for the future.

many years working with and when talking about the Foundation, she often reiterates how proud she is of the team, their creativity and conscious collaboration.

“We built such a wonderful workplace culture,” she said. She sums that up as “the powerful combination of discipline and kindness.”

“We were great at discipline, follow-up, customer service, thinking things through, and measuring our work, with an overlay of being extremely kind and aware of who we were serving and how we could welcome everyone. Customer service, whether it was one of our colleagues in the community, a temporary employee at the front desk, the maintenance crew or a major donor, we were very aware of how important it was to be extremely kind. And that still lives today,” she said.

Her assertions of the quality of the people are echoed by their winning of the first ever Excellence in Governance Award from the University of San Diego’s Nonprofit Leadership Institute.

“The quality and commitment of the board and committee,” she said and pauses, “It was astounding. It is considered to be one of the strongest boards in the city. One of the things that contributed to the award was that they were impressed by the level and number of quality volunteers we had on committees and our board. It was an honor to bring in the creativity and energy of so many talented people in the community. Things were very dynamic and they knew that their voice was very important,” Marjory said.

Looking back, so many names of initiatives and programs come up. One high point in particular the former President stops at is the creation of the Jewish Teen Foundation, “I think [the creation of] the Teen Foundation is a really good memory

We only had three people on staff at the time [chuckles]. These young people are so

cool and so naturally generous we had to get a good group together. That was very memorable, because we just did it. The teens could not have been nicer. A lot of them have grown into wonderful young philanthropists,” Marjory said.

The program starts with adults from the community nominating teens to the Foundation. They learn about the community needs and start thinking through the lens of philanthropy. They receive proposals from different nonprofits, make site visits and decide how the money is to be granted. “It is a way of exposing these teenagers to philanthropy and how you need to look into, examine and think carefully where your money is going. It has been very successful,” Elaine Galinson said.

The program was started by Marjory with the help of volunteer leaders in the community who were very successful in their careers (they later became de facto grandfathers to the program). Marjory recalls a poignant moment in particular when they came in to talk to the kids, “They would come in and say ‘You can make all the money that you want and you can provide for your family and that is all important and get a good education, but never ever forget how important the community is and what your role is,’” she said.

Looking into the future of the JCF with the new president, Marjory is nothing but hopeful. “Oh I think they are on it. Beth Sirull and her new leadership are focusing on the younger generation and the new wave of philanthropy. I think they are really right on the mark,” she said.

Honoring the past 50 years and peeking into the next 50 for the Jewish Community Foundation culminates in a daytime gala. The 50th Anniversary Celebration Brunch is on Sunday, November 12 at 11 a.m. For more information visit jcfsandiego.org/50-years.

“One of my favorite stories is when the recession hit in 2008 and everybody was pretty nervous. We called every donor just to see how they were doing and what was going on. They were so grateful, ‘Tell me what is going on the community. Tell me who is suffering the most.’ A lot of people met with us and rearranged their giving. They wanted to know about their favorite organizations and what was going on. Many others wanted to get their ducks in order and prepare their estate plan—that is what happens when rough times hit. Our donors ended up granting away so much that our assets dipped tremendously. So many people in the community said ‘Good for you rather than holding your funds, you are encouraging granting.’ It was such a great time, a tough time, and it really tests you, and I feel like that we really weathered it with so much good fortune and a great community to work with.”

-Marjory Kaplan