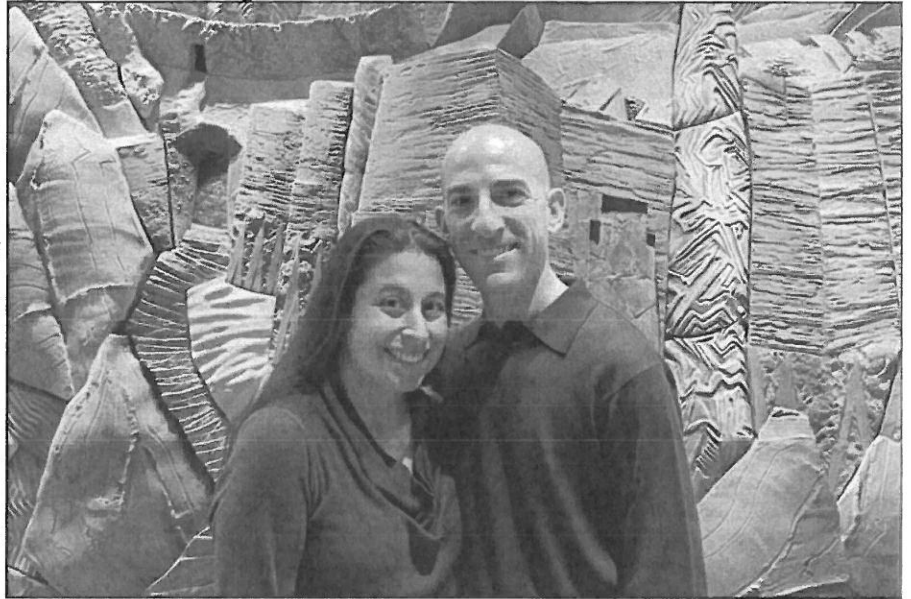


Donor Spotlight: Amy and Jason Torf

By LIA LEHRER

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Amy and Jason Torf have been active members and volunteers at Temple Jeremiah for a long time, but they have always thought it was important to make financial contributions, even small ones, in addition to their volunteer time. We sat down with Amy and Jason to learn more about why they choose to donate to Jeremiah.



How long have you been at Jeremiah?

Amy: I've been here almost my whole life.

Jason: As a couple, we've been here since we got married 16 1/2 years ago.

What was it like growing up here?

A: The building is totally different - we didn't have a chapel, we had purple couches in the lounge. But there's a lot that's the same, too. It's nice to have a place that stays the same but also changes with the times. I grew up with Anne Lidsky as the director of the school. Cantor Amy wasn't here yet when I started. There have been a handful of rabbis, and I think the ones we have now are keepers.

When did you begin volunteering?

A: Before the Membership Committee became what it is now, Julie Ford and I tried a few different committees, like the Family Connections committee, to help bring families together. Then I was volunteering and helping Julie with membership and other family-centered committees.

J: I was on the search committee for Rabbi Greenberg. They wanted me to interview for the board, but I said that I had a better candidate for them — Amy!

A: I think I was the youngest-ever person on the board — I was 28 at the time. I had also volunteered here as a kid. Volunteering was a simple choice when I came back as an adult — I was always part of that sort of thing. When you belong to a synagogue, you volunteer — that's just what you do!

What were your most significant volunteer positions?

A: I don't know how I got wrangled into being the chair of the fundraiser committee — I had zero experience fundraising or asking people

for money, but I do love event planning, so that may have been the reasoning behind it. The goal was to take the fundraiser and add a community-building aspect. In addition to the fundraiser for four years, my two absolute favorite ways to help the temple are with youth and membership. Youth is because as a mom and an educator,

that's just such a large part of my life, it makes sense to work with youth as part of my volunteer life. Membership was a surprise to me. I never really thought of myself as very outgoing, but as the membership chair, your job is to walk around the oneg and schmooze with everyone. When you feel strongly about something — like I do about Temple Jeremiah — it's easy to talk about it.

J: Probably the search committee. Having young kids at the time, it was particularly important to me to bring in a junior rabbi who works well with children. The process was very interesting — I saw diverse views from various committee members about what makes an ideal candidate to them. Rabbi Cohen was very fair and very open to listening to the views of every member of the search committee.

When did you become donors?

A: It started with little things like giving tzedakah. I think we've always done the little things, like \$18 or \$36 donations for various causes.

J: For the Partnership of Promise campaign, we knew we wouldn't be in the category of large donors, but to think that a small donation wouldn't be meaningful would be the wrong point of view. We made a donation that was meaningful for us at that time — if enough people do that, it becomes significant to the temple.

Do you earmark your donations at Jeremiah?

J: We trust the clergy and staff to do whatever is most appropriate with the funds. One year there might be something more important than the next — Israel, Feed the Homeless, another year it might be youth activities. We choose not to designate what our funds should be used for.

When did you find out about Temple Jeremiah's Leave a Jewish Legacy program?

A: I knew about it from the board—

J: And I heard about it in Ken Lorch's speech at the High Holy Days. It's a program by a large Jewish organization where if the temple could get commitments from a minimum number of congregants to make a bequest to the temple as part of their estate plan, Temple Jeremiah would receive a special donation. To us, it was a non-issue.

A: We actually already had a bequest in our will.

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Shake Up Shavuot

Saturday, May 23, 2015
at Temple Jeremiah

SAVE THE DATE: Saturday evening, May 23, when our very own cantorial soloist, Adam Kahan, and his fabulously upbeat band “Kavanah” will show us how to SHAKE UP SHAVUOT! Plan to join us for dinner and a music spectacular as we celebrate this very special festival that commemorates the giving of Torah. *Details to follow...*

DONOR SPOTLIGHT: AMY AND JASON TORF, *continued from page 7*

J: But it wasn't structured right, so we talked to Ken to find out what we needed to do to make sure the temple would receive the special donation.

Why was that important to you?

J: We feel strongly about the temple — what it does and what it provides — and we want to see it live on and provide those things for a long time. We hope our kids will utilize the temple for a long time, too. We already wanted to leave our own legacy through a donation in our estate planning documents, and as long as we're already doing that, we might as well help the temple get an extra donation.

A: We wouldn't commit our time to helping an organization so much if we didn't believe in helping it monetarily, and we wouldn't help something monetarily if it wasn't something we really used and felt a part of.

J: And to support the Leave a Jewish Legacy program didn't require an immediate cash donation — it's simply a bequest in our estate plan.

What do you see as the ideal future at Jeremiah in terms of donations?

J: Ideally people would give what they can each year to support the programs here, and leave something that's meaningful to them as part of their estate plan. Ideally they'd also instill that same belief in their children, which we've tried to do with our kids. I think our kids feel very connected to the temple and will hopefully become meaningful members of the temple community as they grow up, and become

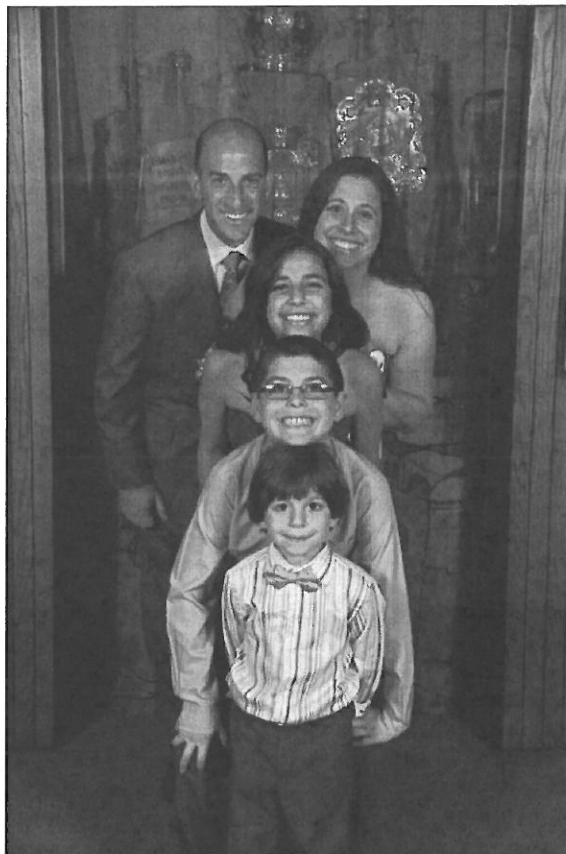
donors too.

A: When you give to the temple, whether you're giving of your time or money, you feel more connected to the temple. This gets passed on to your children and to other congregants. This is already an amazing place — how much more of an amazing place would this be if everybody gave something, whether it's your time or money or both? It doesn't have to be a lot, just a little bit. I think people would feel so much more connected.

J: You don't need to make a substantial donation for it to be meaningful. Even small amounts from a large number of people can go a long way.

What would you say to someone thinking of participating in the Leave a Jewish Legacy program?

A: It's really, really easy! We don't have to give any money now — we simply had to leave something to the temple in our estate plan. We hope the temple won't get it for many, many years, but it's helping the temple now because the special donation from the Jewish organization supporting this program is made to the temple as soon as the temple receives the minimum number of commitments from congregants. And then many, many years from now, our bequest will help the temple. We're raising our kids to be as connected to Jeremiah as we are, and when they see our estate and they see that money is going to Temple Jeremiah, they'll say, wow, that was great for our parents to do that, Temple Jeremiah is our spiritual home and we're glad they decided to support it. ■



Jason, Amy, Alli, Zachary, and Tyler Torf at Alli's Bat Mitzvah