

It was Heather Cohen's then teenage daughter Jessica who first piqued her mother's interest in Temple Israel.

"Jessica loved Frosty, the Temple youth group, and I thought, "this is something good; they always had Havdalah and something Jewish in their programs. I should become an associate member." At the time, Heather was working at Agudath Israel, but shortly after, saw a job posting for an Executive Director at Temple Israel. She started working at Temple in May 1989.

"They were the golden years," she recalls of her early Temple days. "I got to know the people and it was wonderful. I realized I loved the principles of Temple. Gary also always liked the fact that women were included. Temple member Harvey Finkelstein, my first Temple treasurer, once told me, 'At Temple everybody's equal.' I always remember that and loved that every member was equal and accepted. I love those down to earth, egalitarian, values, which were shared by my dear friend Harriet Schneider who volunteered in the library for many years. Another Temple stalwart was Elaine Singer; I still think of her and wonder 'how would Elaine handle this?'"

Heather and Gary Cohen are among the Temple members who have signed a Letter of Intent for Temple's Life and Legacy program. The couple decided to support Life and Legacy because "Temple's an organization I want to continue after I'm gone." "I like the people; they are just good people. Temple is vital in this community; it's a stabilizing force. It's important for the future of the community."

With the Life and Legacy program, "*you* decide what you're doing but it's after you're gone, and you can change it in future. It's a nice way to show we care, and these are things we value. I want these things to continue."

"As I heard a speaker once say, everybody thinks it's the Rockefellers supporting this," she says, "but it's not. Everything you do, at some point you can make a difference. Life and Legacy makes it very comfortable and easy. Everybody can participate. This is our community, and you want to give something to it."

A program of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation, Life and Legacy assists communities across North America, through partnerships with Jewish Federations and Foundations, to promote after-lifetime giving to build endowments that will provide financial stability to Jewish day schools, synagogues, social service organizations, and other Jewish entities.