

The greatest use of a life is to spend it on something that will outlast it. – William James

Last month I wrote the statement, **Legacy gifts are the most important gifts an organization can receive.** Many of you have asked why, and I thought I'd take the opportunity to talk about legacy gifts, what they are and how they differ from annual campaign.

Annual giving is most often unrestricted, current year gifts. That means that organizations can use the money right away on what is most needed: schools can pay teachers and buy books, synagogues can run programs, soup kitchens can cook meals. **Annual campaign is like groceries, you buy them, and you use them right away,** and they keep you going right now.

Legacy gifts are most commonly given to endowments. I like to think of an organization's endowment like vitamins. Vitamins don't fill your belly. They go deep into your bones and organs to keep you healthy for the long term. **Endowments are plans for the future,** and with more competition, not-for-profits need strong endowments to stay alive. It's been estimated that by the year 2025, if 20% of an organization's budget isn't coming from endowment, the organization will be in real trouble. Annual giving will not be able to sustain it alone.

Annual giving today comes from all of us. Every time we write a donation check or drop a dollar in a giving bucket, we give to some annual campaign. We are providing groceries for our priorities. The legacy gifts and endowment income of today comes from our ancestors, people who 50 years ago thought about the future and about how to sustain their favorite causes. Are we prepared for tomorrow? Are we creating a bottle of vitamins for our favorite organizations? Talk to your favorite places about legacy giving today. **The Jewish community of tomorrow thanks you.**