

“When we Give Cheerfully and Accept Gratefully, Everyone is Blessed” –Maya Angelou

By Leah Shuldiner

We are all familiar with Maimonides’s levels of giving:

*The greatest level, above which there is no greater, is to support a fellow Jew by endowing him with a gift or loan, or entering into a partnership with him, or finding employment for him, in order to strengthen his hand so that he will not need to be dependent upon others*

**ENDOWING HIM WITH A GIFT** – that’s what LIFE & LEGACY is all about, helping you to reach the highest level of giving by endowing the Jewish organizations that are most important to you.

It reminds me of another quote from Kahlil Gibran:

*And there are those who give and know not pain in giving, nor do they seek joy, nor give with mindfulness of virtue;*

*They give as in yonder valley the myrtle breathes its fragrance into space.*

*Through the hands of such as these God speaks, and from behind their eyes He smiles upon the earth.*

I love the image of the flowering tree giving its fragrance to the winds, never knowing who will smell it or if it will be appreciated. Legacy giving is like that too. It’s a leap of faith that those who come after you will steward your gifts wisely for the good of the community. It’s giving for the joy of giving, not for the control of knowing how it will be spent. **It is trust in the future, faith in the children, love for what you will never know.** It is mystery and action and building foundation and adventure all rolled up into one.

I truly get giddy when I talk about legacy giving. This isn’t my profession because it’s a job that was available. It’s my profession because I am constantly inspired by the stories of you who give. I am constantly awed by you who as volunteers put so much loving effort into creating the future. I am truly excited to watch communities come alive when you give with joy and we receive with pride and commitment.

I made my first legacy commitment when I was 27 and wrote my first will. It was a simple remainder statement, and I never told anyone, but it filled me with pride to know it was there. It was my secret gift to the world.

**The myrtle give us its scent.**

**The apple gives us its fruit.**

**What will your legacy be?**

To create your Jewish Legacy, contact Leah Shuldiner at [legacy@jfc.org](mailto:legacy@jfc.org)