

## Ellen ז"ל and Jim Adelman

Growing up in Chicago in families with strong Jewish traditions enabled us to witness our parents' support of Jewish and non-Jewish charities. When we moved to Greensboro in 1973 we followed the pattern set by our parents. We became involved in philanthropic endeavors. Besides making financial contributions we served in leadership roles in many civic and Jewish organizations. We have been proud of our commitment in making even small differences to improve our local, national and international communities.

Although we derived great pleasure in participating in *tikkun olam*, we are currently involved in an endeavor much closer to home which indeed is creating a "Jewish Legacy."

Years ago we placed a considerable sum of money in a foundation donor advised fund in order to stimulate philanthropy by our two adult children and their families. This family fund failed to achieve our objective of stimulating our children and five grandchildren toward *tikkun olam*.

Five years ago, we restructured the program. We are extremely proud of what has resulted.

Now we require each family member to contribute thus having a stake in how funds are spent.

Naturally, we contribute the bulk of the money. Our children and grandchildren contribute \$1 per year of their age. The grandchildren tell how they obtained the money for their contribution.



Regularly we have Adelman Family Fund allocation meetings with each family separately. Members complete an informational form about their recommended organizations. At these meetings, each member makes a presentation on an agency or agencies to which they would like to make a contribution. Even our grandchildren (now ages 11-17) have learned to research agencies, evaluate their missions, accomplishments, budgets and calculate the agencies' percentage of expenses for programs, administration and fundraising costs. Some of their presentations are quite sophisticated with PowerPoint presentations while at other times they may invite a representative from an agency to speak with us.

We encourage recommendations of agencies which are personal, local and in which our dollars can make a difference. Many of the charities are indeed quite personal (a friend with Cystic Fibrosis, a relative with breast cancer, awareness of JFS thru Mitzvah Day, BBYO, suicide prevention, drug treatment and prevention, etc). We encourage visiting the agencies and follow-up.

After the presentations we have discussions concerning the relative worthiness of the agencies for an allocation. The discussions we have are fabulous! Ellie (age 13) recommended \$250 for The Humane Society (she is a pet lover). We discussed at length the relative importance of helping people versus pets. However, she pointed out that pets help our psychological stability by providing unquestioned love and support. We voted to give \$100.

Evaluation of agencies have included topics which we would not otherwise have discussed such as teen suicide, human trafficking, hunger and homelessness in America. Children, parents and grandparents (us) all have equal say and equal vote in determining the allocations. Our many years of work with the Greensboro Jewish Federation helped us learn to evaluate agencies and helped us to appreciate the importance of the thoroughness of the process. Our work with the Jewish Foundation of Greensboro helped us understand the potential of family philanthropy.

Thus we regularly share designated time with each family realizing how fortunate we are to be in a position to help others. We have been amazed at the enthusiasm our grandchildren have for the program. They love learning about, recommending and making their presentations for “their” charitable organization. They take tremendous pride in their agency selection. They love the feeling they have from helping others. We love the feeling we have from their enthusiasm. Nothing we have done has provided us with as much satisfaction. We hope that this information stimulates other grandparents to share the excitement of *tikkun olam* with their families and indeed “Create Jewish Legacies.”