

Tzedakah, often translated as charity, is a mainstay of Jewish life. The sages teach that the world was built upon kindness. Tzedakah goes one step beyond. Literally translated as "justice" or "righteousness," tzedakah tells us that sharing what we have with others is not something special. It's the honest and just thing to do. Tzedakah is not limited to gifts of money. Sharing time, knowledge, or a kind smile is inclusive.

Candy and Joe Neustein, ZT"l, understood the meaning of tzedakah and it was an inherent part of their lives, and continues to be a part of Candy's life. Whether it was at their synagogue, the day school where their five children attended, sisterhood, brotherhood, Hadassah, Maimonides Society or the El Paso Jewish Federation, Candy and Joe gave of their time, expertise and money to improve life for Jews locally and globally.. They were missed in our community when they left, as was Joe's passing, but the memory of their involvement and passion for the Jewish community remains.

I was fortunate to know Candy and Joe and some of the specific programs and entities that benefited from their involvement. Operation Exodus in 1990 in which just under a million Russian Jews were rescued and brought to Israel, was an important cause to them and they significantly supported it. Candy served on the board and worked on several committees planning Federation events. Joe served as well, and people remember his forward thinking while serving on the long range planning committee.

I remember Candy mentoring and inspiring me in my leadership role at the El Paso Hebrew Academy, even though her children had graduated long before. We became close friends after working together on volunteer work and it always touched me that Candy and Joe were modern orthodox, yet accepted other Jews without judgement of their level of spirituality. She truly cares about the Jewish community.

I am thrilled to thank Candy on behalf of the Jewish Federation of Greater El Paso for her and Joe's commitment and dedication during her years here. We wish her Mazel Tov on the Aishes Chayil Award. Candy Neustein is truly a woman of valor.

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