

## Spotlighting Federation

By Richard A. Klein

A recent informal canvas of Charlotte's Jewish youth revealed a distressingly low percentage of our children know much about how to give their money.

They certainly know how to spend their money. Some are making commendable efforts at saving what they acquire. But precious few have been taught the merits of actually parting with money for the benefit of those in need, particularly their fellow Jews.

This does not bode well for the future.

The Federation is making some efforts at correcting what could easily develop into a "Tzedakah vacuum" within five to ten years. With the cooperation of Charlotte's synagogues and Hebrew Academy, Federation leaders and teachers are attempting to explain what the Federation does, the importance of contributing and actually accepting a donation from the children.

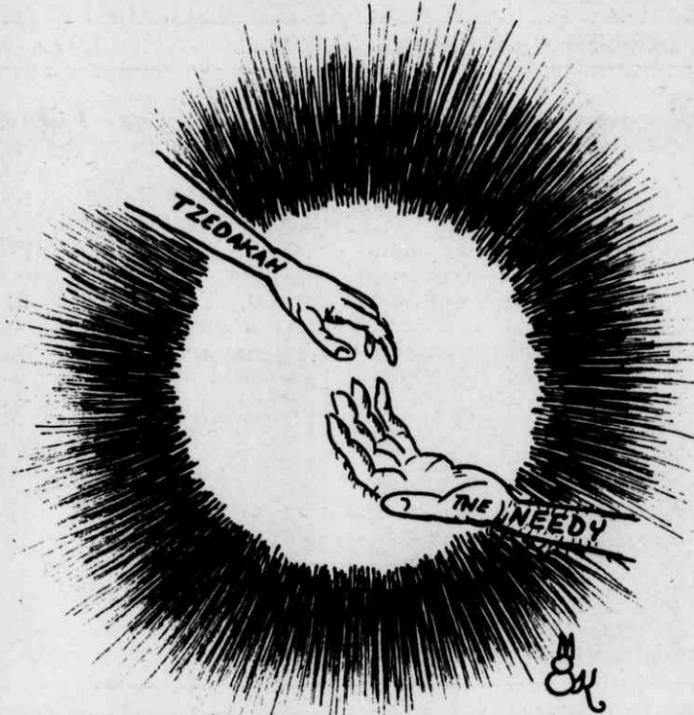
Among the most successful efforts was the development by Bobbie Pollard and Marvin Bienstock of small pushkehs that each child could take home, collect money and bring back for ultimate distribution to Federation charities and Israel. A renewed dedication at getting the pushkehs to the children will be made this fall.

Most important of all is the actual explanation to the children. Few have any idea what a "Federation" is or why it exists. Most don't realize that immediate support is crucial for the existence of the Blumenthal Home in Clemmons, Hillel, our JCC and the State of Israel. They have to hear this and understand that everyone counts in a Federation campaign.

In fact, our Hebrew Academy students were superb in their response to a subscription about giving to charity. They concluded that the act of giving is much the same as voting—and that they were prepared to cast their ballots in favor of local, national and international

Jewish charities. They chose to vote in favor of Israel's survival.

Presented with the facts and the logic of charitable giving, children find it difficult to understand why they shouldn't be generous.



Indeed, they give lovingly from the heart.

One local youth, David Asrael, son of Dr. and Mrs. Gerson Asrael, set the example for everyone by targeting 10% of all cash he received for his Bar Mitzvah and giving it to the Charlotte Jewish Federation! What a wonderful mitzvah!

We parents are quick to see to it that our young people have money when they "need it." The children often receive allowances, or find ways to earn the cash they want for T-shirts, records or tapes and movies. The fact is, we encourage our youth to understand money, what it represents and how to spend it.

But we do a grave misservice to our children and our community when we don't also take time to teach, as David Asrael has obviously learned, the act of charity.

Jacob Neusner has written an excellent new book, "Tzedakah" (Rossel Books, copyright 1982), that clearly spells out our obligations to ourselves and our children:

"What we do for tzedakah

lasts. People cannot touch the treasure of tzedakah. Material wealth is for this world. Tzedakah is for the soul. Material wealth ends with the grave. Tzedakah is for eternity. Material wealth is for amassing. Tzedakah

benefits my world."

Neusner concludes his book by reminding us that what we give to Jewish charities and Israel is nothing short of holy.

"When you work for tzedakah, you are doing the equivalent of prayer or study or keeping the Sabbath or carrying out any other mitzvah. Not only so, but if you do nothing else but tzedakah, you are doing what is all-important."

We can look to our schools and our religious institutions to teach our young people much about the world and how to survive it. But we can't depend on them to give our children a generous capacity for giving heartily to those in need. This we must do ourselves as responsible parents, grandparents, relatives and concerned individuals.

In truth, how many other acts can we think of that should have a higher priority? May it be our legacy that we taught our children to perform the holy act of tzedakah—and that they followed our good example.

## Center of Jewish Community Seen Shifting Toward Orthodox

By Ben Gallob

(Copyright 1983, Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Inc.)

An expert on Jewish sociology, declaring he was more concerned about attrition of the Jewish community than its assimilation because the Jewish community "is hostile toward having children," predicted that the center of gravity will shift toward the Orthodox because they will be "the survivors."

The forecast was made by Milton Himmelfarb, editor of the American Jewish Year Book and director of information and research of the American Jewish committee. He was one of ten experts invited by Hadassah magazine to a dialogue at Hadassah House in New York City to suggest how "the rapid course" of assimilation in America might be reversed.

In discussing his concern about attrition as a greater danger to the Jewish community than assimilation, Himmelfarb said "we must have bodies to Judaize. Just to maintain the population at its present level, we need three children per family."

"The problem has been analyzed," said Charlotte Jacobson, chairman of the magazine. "What we hope to hear today is what solution can be suggested for the American Jewish community, which in many ways is different from other diaspora communities."

Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg of Englewood, N.J. declared that "since aliya and self-ghettoization are obviously rejected by the majority of American Jews, who are both products and beneficiaries of our great open society, other middle options must be sought." He commented that "communal Judaism; doing good deeds; fighting anti-Semitism and promoting human rights have not been effective. Nor is there a pool of immigrant stock" to "continue enriching the Jewish community. What else should be tried?"

Blu Greenberg, president of the Jewish Book Council, said the problem was "to maintain the balance between the social advances of our modern society and to maintain Jewish identity." She pointed out the disproportionate number of Jewish singles and divorces and said that the Jewish establishment, particularly rabbis, should devote more time to match-making, marital counseling and seeking ways to reinforce and stabilize the Jewish family.

Rachel Cowan, program director of Congregation Anshe Chzed in New York, who converted to Judaism as her husband, Paul, discovered his roots and became a "born-again Jew," said that mixed marriage "can be viewed as an opportunity and can deepen the Jewish community." She urged more communal attention to the families of such marriages, including parents of the spouses and the grandchildren "to overcome alienation."

Anne Rolphe, author of "Generation Without Memory," warned that American Judaism "must inspire youth with Jewish idealism." She added that "unless a way is found to incorporate the Jewish woman into the tradition, neither the modern woman nor her daughter will remain within the fold."

Rabbi Walter Wurzbarger, president of the Synagogue Council of America, said that "gefilte fish Judaism won't suffice. We must cultivate a deep personal religious vocation." He urged a free Jewish educational system to take priority over health and social services — even over aid to Israel.

Rabbi Richard Israel, director of the Greater Boston Hillel Foundation, proposed "many Jewish environments, if we are to keep our children within the community. These include day schools, colleges with a large Jewish community, Jewish camps and discouragement of interdating." He said there is a high correlation between a tolerance of interdating and intermarriage, just as there is between keeping Jewish identity and keeping kosher in the home. He added "we should all spend time in Israel."

Rabbi Daniel Syme, education director of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, described how the UAHC is providing a more intensive and substantive Jewish education not only for children but "as a life-long enterprise." He listed more nursery schools and parent groups; adult education, including camping and Israeli trips; assignment of field workers to campuses; development of study programs for television and computers; and outreach to mixed married couples.



## Across The Editors' Desks...

We at the Home look forward to your newspaper each month and find it to be entertaining and informative. We especially enjoyed your pages 12 and 13 of the June/July issue introducing the services and organizations available in the Charlotte Jewish community.

I am writing to ask whether the Blumenthal Jewish Home could be included in this in the future. Though the Home is not located in Charlotte, we see ourselves as part of your community.

We currently have approximately 30 residents (almost 25% of our population), who are former residents of Charlotte. A large contingent of our governing board are Charlottians. In

addition, the Federation grants us a generous annual subsidy, and many of the listed organizations support the Home with their regular visits.

I hope this can be corrected. We do enjoy a very close feeling as one community. "Together we are..."

Sincerely,  
Al Mendlovitz  
Executive Director

Editors' Note:

We are pleased that the residents and staff at the Blumenthal Home enjoy our paper. Yes, we will be happy to include information on the home.

There are many things that the Jewish Community Center

has done for our children, but this time I can not let Day Camp pass with just a "thanks".

The atmosphere that Cary Bernstein as director and Adam Bernstein as co-director have created at the Day Camp is terrific. As a parent of two campers I wish to give them and their staff an extra accolade. It is a true experience to see children learning and enjoying. The rapport the staff has with campers is very moving.

The camp committee should also be thanked for all of their continued support. I hope each member of the JCC and the Board of the JCC have the opportunity to see this year's Day Camp in action.

— Terri Cathcart

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