

# Offering Support Where It's Needed Most

## THE ETRA FAMILY'S GIVING STORY

When Paula Etra's beloved husband Donald died in early 2017, she and her children knew they wanted to do something meaningful to honor his memory, and they knew it would be something they did together as a family. "He loved to read and to swim and to do family activities," Paula says, "so we were looking for places we could do all that in a space where we helped Jewish children." While researching different organizations to support, the Etra family came across PJ Library when they began receiving the books, and they quickly realized firsthand how valuable the program was. "PJ Library is a tool for Jewish families," Paula explains — not just for parents who are new to Jewish practice, but also for fostering a sense of connection between different streams of Judaism. "The more knowledgeable people are about different traditions, the more they can have conversations with each other."

In order to carry on Donald's legacy, Paula and her children created the Donald Etra Futures Fund to support PJ Library in Jewish communities with the most need through an annual shared group gift. Paula explains, "We were looking to reach those who needed to be better connected." The Etra family's gift fully covers PJ Library for every family in multiple small Jewish communities.

But where is the need greatest?

The Etra family asked PJ Library to provide a list of small Jewish communities across the United States that might not have local funding to make sure families can receive PJ Library books. Anna Etra, Donald and Paula's daughter, says, "Our dad believed if you had a book, you were never alone. We are grateful to help bring together the next generation of



Jewish families and communities through sharing our dad's love of reading." This donation made in honor of Donald Etra's legacy gives these communities the chance to connect with dozens of new families each year — an opportunity they may not have had without the Etras' gift.

The beneficiaries, who are located in Monterey Bay, CA; Gainesville, FL; Athens, GA; and other cities throughout the country, are grateful to receive the gift of PJ Library for their community. The Athens, GA, Jewish community reports, "Donald Etra Futures Fund support is wonderful acknowledgment of the importance of supporting small Jewish communities, which are often the most vulnerable to assimilation yet also the most receptive to recognition and support. Athens, GA, thanks you for your generosity, which has helped to strengthen the Jewish bonds of young families."

By funding PJ Library in communities outside their own, the Etras are not only passing on Donald's values within their family but also throughout the greater Jewish community. "We created the foundation based on the things that my husband loved," says Paula. "PJ Library opens people's eyes to different ways of being Jewish. Spirituality may come from within, but more than anything else, Judaism brings community, and everyone is looking for community."

**PJ Library books are always a gift to families.** The program is a lifeline in dozens of small Jewish communities across the country, reaching directly into the homes of families who might otherwise have very little exposure to Jewish life. If you are inspired by the Etra family and want to support PJ Library, your family can fund a Jewish community starting at \$3,000.

Gifts can be directed to the community of your choice, or, like the Etra family, you can work with PJ Library staff to direct your donation to a community in need. Special recognition for your support is available in many communities. **For details, please contact Will Schneider, director of fundraising and community advancement for PJ Library, at [will@hgf.org](mailto:will@hgf.org) or 413-276-0716.**

