

GIVING GLOBALLY

HELPING BRING PJ LIBRARY TO FAMILIES
AROUND THE WORLD

By **Rachel Kozupsky**

DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS, PJ LIBRARY

The gift of a PJ Library book is more than a bedtime story. It's an opportunity for families to create their own Jewish identity and traditions and embrace a new community, regardless of whether they are in Moscow, Tasmania, or in any of the 32 countries that participate in PJ Library.

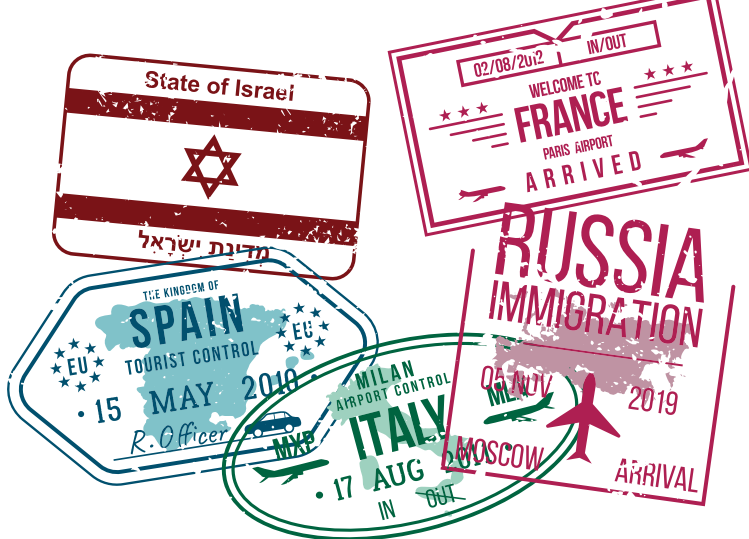
I am constantly impressed that PJ Library reaches 680,000 kids each month. But I am even more amazed that for the first time as of March 2021, we are reaching 30 in Tokyo. And we continue to reach 77 in Guatemala. Many of the smaller PJ Library communities, although vibrant and full of committed families, have less access to Jewish communal life than where I live in Brooklyn, New York. For many of the global programs, PJ Library is at the core of the Jewish community, with the books enhancing and often creating a sense of belonging.

In order to expand our global footprint, we need additional support. Some communities are not in a position to independently fund their PJ Library program to its fullest potential. By donating to the PJ Library International Fund, you can help us reach additional families, create new engagement programming, and even launch in new cities, towns, and countries across the globe. The PJ Library International Fund is more than an opportunity to support PJ Library efforts across the globe; it's a unique chance to build global Jewry and bring us together.

To the generous supporters of PJ Library, especially those who have donated in Miriam Remz's memory, thank you. PJ Library would not be where it is today without you.

To support the PJ Library International Fund, go to pjlibrary.org/donate and make sure to designate your gift to international communities when asked to do so.

To learn more about supporting the PJ Library International Fund, contact Will Schneider, director of fundraising and community advancement for PJ Library, at will@hgf.org or 413-276-0716.



a letter to my **GRANDMOTHER**

By **Tamar Remz**

CHIEF PARTNERSHIPS OFFICER,
HAROLD GRINSPOON FOUNDATION



Last winter, my grandmother Miriam Remz z"l died at the age of 94. She was a passionate fan and longtime supporter of PJ Library. But more than that, my relationship with her exemplifies *l'dor vador* — one generation passing along its values and traditions to

the next — and *l'dor vador* is at the heart of all we do at PJ Library.

Grandma Miriam laid the foundation for my love of travel and my commitment to Judaism; my work with the Harold Grinspoon Foundation has drawn on both. One of the most gratifying initiatives I've worked on as part of the Foundation's leadership team is bringing PJ Library to countries around the world. After visiting Jewish communities in far-flung locales, I would return, eager to share what I learned with Grandma Miriam. Inevitably she had been there too and would know more than I did about the community and its history.

It's not a stretch to say that Grandma Miriam provided a kernel of inspiration for each of the 30-plus different PJ Library programs that I have helped launch around the globe, and I honor her memory through each new community we reach. As part of my job, I've become well acquainted with many stories about amazing Jews who lived rich, full lives and gave back in equal measure. For me, the most important story of such a person cannot be fully expressed in words. There is no way to capture the impact our loved ones have on our lives, but in this letter, I begin to try.

Dear Grandma,

I write to you today just as you wrote to me dozens of times over the years in your immaculate cursive that I strained to read. In this letter, I reflect on the woman I have become, informed by who you were and who you taught me to be. In so many ways, **just like you, I am ...**

... a world traveler.

My work with the Foundation brings me all over the world. At any given time, I might be in Israel, Detroit, or Russia. People always ask how I can handle so much travel. It's in part because I love my job and also because my loved ones live all around the world. Maybe I also have more energy than I can contain. But I think you, Grandma Miriam, had a lot to do with my love for travel. You took me to Spain and Morocco when I was eight, then to the UK, Spain again, France, and Italy, all before I was 20. You were a citizen of the world, traveling to more than 150 countries in your lifetime. I have become a citizen of the world — the Jewish world in particular.

... ambitious and hard working.

After escaping Europe in the nick of time, you arrived in the US at the age of 11. You started in sixth grade the spring you arrived, but by that fall, you had been bumped to ninth grade, and you started college at 15. I have always held that in my mind. Influenced by your drive, even without knowing it, I refused to accept that anything — my gender, missed schooling, or any other factor — would keep me from accomplishing great things. You were a leading female professional at a time when that wasn't the norm. I, too, became a leader in the professional world, and I work to hold my own, just as you did.

... fiercely independent.

Late last spring, with COVID-19 in full swing, you reflected, "Tamar, we are strong, independent minds. We are well positioned to handle this pandemic." You insisted on being independent — sometimes to a fault, as we saw in the last months of your life when you struggled to accept help we knew you needed. But just like you, it is very important to me to set my own course. Even though I have followed my family's path closely, it has always been on my terms.

... filled with chutzpah.

Anyone who knows me can provide examples. And those who knew you, Grandma, experienced your chutzpah (self-confidence). Whether it was moving hotel rooms until you were pleased, traveling to places of questionable safety even though you were encouraged to reconsider, or insisting on having the final word in a debate, you never settled. Neither do I. Perhaps that's why it was so important to find work that felt important and inspiring to me.

... dedicated to the Jewish people.

We both find meaning in being part of something larger than ourselves. How lucky we are that Judaism, our ethnic and religious background, roots us in history. In recent years, we spoke often about how we both value being part of a chain that spans thousands of years. It is this sense of connectivity that gives me confidence in saying that I, our family, and our community will carry your legacy forward. And it is your love of Judaism and the Jewish people that inspired the ways we have chosen to honor you.

In these and other ways, Grandma, I am just like you. In the tradition of *I'dor vador*, I promise to carry your lessons forward with me — in my work life, my personal life, and my spiritual life.

Love,

Tamar

