

Melissa Gerr (Host) ([00:01](#)):

You're listening to Pull Up A Chair, stories from 100 years of creating community in Jewish Baltimore, a podcast created by The Associated: Jewish Federation of Baltimore.

Rae Rossen ([00:13](#)):

I believe that The Associated Jewish Charities gave me a jumpstart into what I call 'nonstop giving.' Because of The Associated, volunteering became part of my life.

Melissa Gerr (Host) ([00:30](#)):

Welcome back to Pull Up a Chair. I'm your host, Melissa Gerr. Each month, we explore a different theme that illustrates how for more than 100 years and counting The Associated: Jewish Federation of Baltimore has been a place to turn to in times of struggle or celebration and for assistance in connection, you'll probably hear some familiar voices as we laugh, reminisce and learn a thing or two about what it means to build and be a part of a strong Jewish community. For this episode, we meet Rae Rossen, Rae's parents, both Eastern European immigrants, met in Baltimore. She grew up the youngest of five siblings.

Rae Rossen ([01:07](#)):

I was raised - I grew up in East Baltimore and I graduated at the age of 16 in 1946 from Patterson park, Senior High School. And then I worked part-time as a child, or as a teenager rather, at one of the local libraries and also for Hutzler's Department store. But what I remember, especially from growing up was that my family was the recipient of The Associated Jewish Charities because of the Depression era at that time. And my father, having a difficult time getting the type of work employment that he needed. I never was embarrassed about receiving The Associated's help. I didn't take it for granted, but I was so appreciative. My parents were telling me how grateful they were to get the food and some clothing that was so necessary. Of course. And I remember getting shoes, shoes were so important, and I was able to dye the shoes to the color that I needed in order to attend school. And I learned not to complain, but to be grateful. And I did have an opportunity of attending what they called 'Fresh Farm Camp,' I believe it was called for youngsters who were under nourished. It was during the summer and youngsters were given food, especially milk.

Melissa Gerr (Host) ([03:18](#)):

She was very active at the Jewish Education Alliance and has fond memories of her time in the girls' club.

Rae Rossen ([03:25](#)):

I learned how to do public speaking conduct meetings. I learned, I learned to volunteer, put on shows. My club was the Shoshana club, Shoshana, meaning Rose. I took the minutes of the meetings. So I, so I acted as secretary mostly, although I did become president at one time. And well I really enjoyed the sports and the extracurricular activities such as playing ping pong and having the friendship of girls that I would not have had easily where I lived.

Melissa Gerr (Host) ([04:17](#)):

Rae eventually came to work for The Associated Jewish Charities and then The Associated, which made a huge impact on her and her family.

Rae Rossen ([04:25](#)):

That was in the 60s at that time. I had two children, but I worked as secretary for The Associated on West Monument Street as a campaign office and as leaders of the office, were Isidore [Inaudible] and Julius Rosenberg, they had been executives at the JEA, so there was a big connection there. And I also worked in the office with Zelda Miller. She was their administrative assistant and of course I bet Harry Greenstein, who was in charge of The Associated. Now, there was a Women's Division of The Associated, which was the lower part of that building. And I remember Florence [Inaudible] as being the one in charge of the Women's Division. And I had the pleasure of meeting Ambassador Abba Eban, who came to visit and stopped in our office, which was wonderful. Also at The Associated I helped in other branches such as the public relations. But there was I remember very clearly Sylvia [inaudible] and Naomi Kellman. They were very active, extremely active, and whenever I could help them, they just ask and I pitched in.

Melissa Gerr (Host) ([06:07](#)):

But it's her volunteer work, which continues to this day, that has meant the most to her.

Rae Rossen ([06:13](#)):

I believe that The Associated Jewish Charities gave me a jumpstart into what I call 'nonstop giving.' Because of The Associated, volunteering became part of my life.

Melissa Gerr (Host) ([06:29](#)):

Rae is currently a resident at the Weinberg Village Apartments and continues her volunteer work there.

Rae Rossen ([06:34](#)):

I was a bingo caller. I helped in the kosher kitchen. I helped with literacy groups and I was a speaker but not necessarily for The Associated, but it was all part of Hadassah's program. I was a speaker on breast cancer. I myself, had undergone breast cancer twice. Once 30 years ago. And once just a few years back

Melissa Gerr (Host) ([07:06](#)):

When her nineties, Ray remains an active volunteer, she attributes her love for helping others to simply paying back the kindness she and her family were afforded when she was young.

Rae Rossen ([07:17](#)):

I always believe in giving back because I would not be where I am if I didn't get the help and I enjoy giving and whatever way I can, I just get a thrill out of it. And I've always been that way. And the only reason I believe is because of The Associated at my beginning.

Melissa Gerr (Host) ([07:48](#)):

Thanks for listening to pull up a chair. I'm your host Melissa Gerr. This podcast was produced for you by The Associated: Jewish Federation of Baltimore. From East Baltimore to Forest Park, from Pikesville to Randallstown and beyond, The Associated has been there for the community every step of the way. Don't miss the next episode with more stories from your friends and neighbors in Baltimore's Jewish community. Thanks for listening. You've been listening to Pull Up a Chair, stories from 100 years of creating community and Jewish Baltimore. It's part of The Associated's Centennial Celebration.