

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.

Bean Sibel ([00:12](#)):

Every morning, when I come in, if I get a cup of coffee and I have change, I put it in the Pushke. Just it's it's like brushing your teeth, becomes a habit.

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 Bean, Steve and Lauren - three generations of the Sibel family. They represent what is possible when we teach our children, the importance of giving. The Sibels are one of many who make up the tapestry of generous families that is The Associated. Bean Sibel, husband of the late Carole Sibel, herself, a philanthropic tour de force and beloved by Baltimore's Jewish community, learned about giving from his immigrant parents.

Bean Sibel ([01:26](#)):

I've always been involved in Jewish causes. My mother went from Russia to Palestine in 1913. My father came from Russia to America. And during the first world war before the United States entered he and a hundred other young men from Baltimore, went to Canada and joined the Jewish legion. And he was in Egypt with the Jewish legion under General Allenby and served there for a couple years and then came back. So I was always aware of the Jewish longing for a Homeland and always involved in Jewish causes. I remember as a kid collecting for Jewish National Fund and the little round blue and white box, and so worked for Jewish National Fund, and I got involved with The Associated and co-chair the campaign with Richie Pearlstone and then became campaign chairman myself, and have stayed involved ever since.

Melissa Gerr (Host) ([02:55](#)):

Not only did Bean stay involved, he recognized the importance of passing on the legacy of Tezedakah to his children and grandchildren.

Bean Sibel ([03:04](#)):

It's a, it's a basis of being Jewish is giving back to the community and to the Jewish people and to the State of Israel, as, as part of your heritage is part of your upbringing, part of your commitment.

Melissa Gerr (Host) ([03:23](#)):

Case in point Bean's son, Steve Sibel, a former campaign chair and long-time fundraiser for The Associated, acknowledges the influence his parents had on his involvement.

Steve Sibel ([03:34](#)):

My parents went to Israel pretty much every year. It seemed and they were always involved in various aspects of the organization. And I learned about it through them. And what really struck me even as a,

as a young person, was how The Associated, afforded you the opportunity to impact so many different areas of the community with one gift. And I don't understand for the life of me, why more communities don't do it this way, where you can make one gift and you can, you know, help people who are suffering from domestic abuse. You can support the JCC. You can combat antisemitism, you can help the state of Israel survive. You know what, with that one gift. And that always made an impression on me. The other thing that I took note of was the great friendships that my parents developed over the years from their involvement in the community, which was sorta like an added bonus. It was rewarding enough to be able to give back when, when we were taught, when, when the world's good to you, that you have an obligation to give back. And so you're able to give back, but you also through the travels and through community work, develop these really strong friendships that became, you know, for my parents, I observed, the core of their social life.

Melissa Gerr (Host) ([05:00](#)):

The legacy didn't stop there, when Lauren Sibel Steve's daughter and Bean's granddaughter returned to Baltimore after college, she quickly became involved in IMPACT, The Associated's young adult division. She serves as chair for the C.H.A.T. Program: Conversations Happening Around Town. While Lauren had plenty of role models, she says it was her grandmother, Carole Sibel, Bean's wife, who was the driving force.

Lauren Sibel ([05:25](#)):

I think I remember most vividly my grandma's involvement with, you know, animal charities just cause she would always be wearing animal print and it would always come up you know, at the dinner table and, you know, that extended to The Associated as well. And, you know, I remember going to events where they were in leadership positions. So, you know, not only did I see how important this involvement was, but the importance of actually, you know, stepping up and taking on new roles, that was always something that was modeled for me and definitely inspired me to, you know, kind of grow in The Associated and try and step up my involvement whenever the opportunity has presented itself,

Bean Sibel ([06:10](#)):

You know my wife Carole held almost every office there from chairman of the Women's Division to campaign chairman and chairman of the board. And she worked there constantly. So we've always had a strong presence there. And we talked about The Associated at home and the work and the opportunity to help.

Steve Sibel ([06:38](#)):

I don't think I'm being braggadocious, when I say that my mother was really one of the most prolific philanthropic fundraisers in the history of Baltimore. She was a force of nature. There wasn't an organization in town that she didn't touch in some way. There wasn't an event that she didn't share. And you know, I learned a lot from, from watching her over the years,

Melissa Gerr (Host) ([07:03](#)):

Just as the generations of Sibels have grown, so have the needs of Baltimore's Jewish community. Here's Bean.

Bean Sibel ([07:10](#)):

It has expanded to, to bring into The Associated family, agencies that reflect modern times. I think CHANA, CHAI, Maryland Israel Development Center, which is economic development, is addressing modern needs, and what's happening in the world today. Those kind of agencies didn't exist back then. And if you look at the list of donors now, it's very broad and very significant and very inclusive.

Melissa Gerr (Host) ([07:52](#)):

Each Sibel family member has received much in return for their involvement as well. Here's Lauren.

Lauren Sibel ([07:59](#)):

The Associated has impacted my life in a lot of ways. You know, I think seeing as I'm only 28 and kind of trying to figure out what my long-term role will be, I think that piece about just growing up with all of my family members constantly, you know, involved in it and the emphasis on giving back you know, that always just felt a part of my life. And I think you know, subconsciously it was probably part of the reason that I ended up becoming a social worker. I remember when I got my letter in the mail you know, I called my family and the first person I wanted to tell was my grandma. Just cause I knew, you know, how excited that would make her. And I think my plans are to continue kind of figuring out how my skills can be best utilized for the benefit of all that The Associated serve and just continuing to grow in my leadership roles, and you know, those skills are, can be used anywhere I go and throughout my life.

Steve Sibel ([09:04](#)):

The Associated has been very impactful on my life, and I guess I would kind of trace it through the years through various missions that I've been on. The first time I went to Israel was on a family mission, when I was in 11th grade. I met a lot of people my age on that mission. One of whom John Jacobson is to this day still, you know, one of my best friends. And I went on another one when I was in my late twenties that my wife Joy actually joined us on. We had been dating for about two years. We had a great experience together and we got engaged shortly after we returned home and then kind of to bring it full circle, to be able to lead a family mission with my kids and with my parents was a tremendous experience. And the friendships that I've developed over the years have been, become lifelong friendships,

Bean Sibel ([10:02](#)):

Probably one of the most broadening experiences was when we merged The Associated economic development arm into Maryland Israel Development Center. I got to work with a lot of senior people who had a broad range of experiences.

Melissa Gerr (Host) ([10:25](#)):

Bean Sibel's dedication to teaching Tzedakah doesn't stop with his own family. He had the idea to create a children's book so other young kids could understand the importance of giving back too.

Bean Sibel ([10:36](#)):

I felt that we, we could help families pass on the tradition of giving, which is basically The Associated by starting with young children where we created a story book and a Tzedakah box that are given free to young families so that they could read the story to their children and get them started thinking about helping other people which is Tzedakah.

Melissa Gerr (Host) ([11:19](#)):

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.