

Hands up

It wasn't what they said. It was what they did.

Last week we launched our United Jewish Appeal (UJA) Annual Campaign for our professional staff. And through a series of inspiring presentations by my colleagues, we saw the impact and power of a Federation gift.

Of course, if you're reading this, I'm going to assume that you already know how powerful and meaningful a gift to the Annual Campaign can be.*

It matters because it gives you the leverage and the power that can only be achieved by combining dozens – make that hundreds – of gifts to so many meaningful Jewish causes.

It matters because it shows your values at work and allows incredible organizations and programs to be ready at a moment's notice to stand up for what we believe in. No other gift can do this.

It was incredible.

I watched both Jewish and non-Jewish colleagues talk about the importance of charity, giving, *tzedakah*, philanthropy.

Some say that we live in a cynical, selfish age. That the culture today is closed and short-horizoned. I don't believe that's true. I saw it in the eyes of my colleagues. If that makes us counter-cultural, so be it (but I don't think we are).

But what really impressed me was the show of hands.

My colleague Beverly asked for a show of hands from all those who have benefited in some way from the impact of Federation's UJA Annual Campaign.

Dozens and dozens of hands shot up.

We send our kids to a summer day camp at a JCC or Y, supported by Federation.

We receive counseling at Jewish Family Services, supported by Federation.

Our kids enjoy free PJ Library books, supported by Federation.

Our kids receive a One Happy Camper grant to help defray the cost of Jewish overnight camp, supported by Federation.

Our kids visit Israel through Birthright, supported by Federation.

All of these programs, and hundreds more, are available because of your support for our community and our – your – values.

And me? Almost 30 years ago I was a lone soldier in the IDF. Supported during and after my army service with messages, a small stipend, and the knowledge that the American Jewish community stood by me. I was incredibly grateful then, and even more grateful now.

And I'm blessed to work with colleagues who live those values – our values – your values – every day.

**But my mum once told me never to assume anything, so check this out ...*

<https://youtu.be/G19eyXUjrYc>