

The Power of PJ Library

There we were, a small but mighty group – a lay leader, a lead donor, and a few Federation professionals, including myself – gathered on the front steps of a home in Scotch Plains, laden with balloons, posters, books, and swag.

We were there to present the 300,000th local PJ Library book to 6-year-old Nathaniel Melville, and we nervously waited, unsure how he would react to all of us, and to all the attention he was about to receive. But we were brimming with excitement about what was about to unfold.

Our wonderful and generous lead donor, Maxine Murnick, led the charge with the coveted book in her hands. She rang the bell... he opened the door... and the magic began.

Nate opened the door slowly, with trepidation, but once he saw us – and our goodies – a shy smile emerged as Maxine explained why we were there.



The family knew we were coming, but **we** were not prepared for the warm welcome we received from the Melville clan. Two of Nathaniel's older siblings were home (two were away, one of them in Israel!), as well as his mom and dad, Lisa and Phillip. Maxine presented Nate with the book, *The Forever Garden*, and our vice president of Jewish Learning and Life, Jody Hurwitz Caplan, gave him giant PJ balloons and a bag of Federation swag including a coveted NextDor fidget spinner. Nate was delirious with his loot and he and his brothers played with an [Easy Jewish Family Fun](#) frisbee while we all chatted.

It was truly inspiring hearing about how much [PJ Library](#), and Federation, have touched their lives. We marveled at the incredible collection of PJ Library books on a bookcase in their living room. In addition to receiving PJ Library books, the Melville children have attended Camp Yachad at the JCC of Central New



Jersey, the family has attended many of our [programs for families with young children](#), and Lisa became a Family Connector, helping other Jewish parents navigate their Judaism in our community.

Before we said our goodbyes, Nate sat in Maxine's lap and together they read the first few pages of his new book. It was a moving reminder of the power of PJ Library, the power of engaging young families in the Jewish community, the power of the work we do.

As we left, we all agreed how fortunate we were to be a part of that incredible experience.

Nate and his family are the reason why we do what we do.

For more information or to sign up for PJ Library, [click here](#). To find out more about a recent survey revealing the impact PJ Library has on Jewish community, [click here](#).

Aug 10, 2017

