



A major gift plants seeds for the future

For Ed and Betty Rosenthal – or “Papa” and “Mimi,” as Hershorrin Schiff Community Day School students prefer to call them – children are our future. And the Rosenthals want a healthy, sustainable future for them.

This has motivated a visionary significant gift from their Rosenthal Roots Family Foundation to support an expansion of the Papa Ed and Mimi Rosenthal Organic Kibbutz Sustainability Garden and the Marie Cohen Hadida Zachor Holocaust Remember Me Orchard on the Larry and Mary Greenspon Family Campus for Jewish Life when the school moves there for the 2021-2022 school year (and beyond).

All of the Rosenthals’ grandchildren attended Community Day School and Betty has served on the Board of Trustees for three years. On the school’s current campus, the couple was responsible for establishing the Papa Ed and Mimi Rosenthal Organic Kibbutz Sustainability Garden and Outdoor Classroom, the Community Marie Cohen Hadida Remember Me Holocaust Organic Fruit Tree Orchard, and the Go Green Fund, which sponsors a professional horticulturalist to tend to the organic garden and orchard. The gardens are pesticide-free, producing foods (cultivated by the children over the course of the year) that can be eaten off the vine, thanks to Florikan controlled-release fertilizer, produced by Ed’s agri-tech company, Florikan.

Throughout the campus, at Ed’s direction – with funding from the Go Green Fund – the school installed water fountains with reverse osmosis filters to accomplish two critical goals: clean, pure drinking water for students and faculty, and the reduction of plastic water bottle pollution on the campus.

For their vast contributions, the couple was honored with the inaugural Goldie Feldman Legacy Award in 2017.

“The Rosenthals have, for many years, shown leadership and a heartfelt commitment toward our school,” said Community Day head of school Dan Ceaser. “They are generous, innovative, and always at the forefront of showcasing pride in our Jewish history and culture, concern for our fellow man, and a deep passion for being good stewards of the Earth. Their legacy will be felt for generations to come within our school community as well as for all who will enjoy programs on the Greenspon Campus generations into the future.”

The couple hopes that the new facilities will support state-of-the-art vertical farming – as used to grow vegetables in space – to teach the future of agriculture. Sustainability is the key.

“We need more food for more people in this rapidly population-expanding planet,” Ed said. “NASA’s new food production technology solutions developed for space plant biology can now be used on Earth – and taught in the school garden – to improve yields of food and efficiency in reducing environmental impact.”

They look forward to being able to share the importance of sustainability – trying to fix the harm that Ed laments his “self-serving selfish polluting generation” has done to the planet – as well as share the food from the garden with the school, The Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee, and organizations serving

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the hungry. They also hope to impress upon the community the importance of caring for our own bodies.

“We've always been extremely careful about our environment and very concerned about our health. Eating right, with no pesticides and no chemicals around us,” Betty said. “Our whole purpose is to bring health to the children, help them learn what is good for them. The more you involve them in healthy things, the better it is for the whole community.”

For Ed, it is the perfect example of *tzedakah* (repairing the world). “This is almost like an apology from our generation for everything we've done that's bad for the planet,” he said. “We need to take the planet back from this course of destruction, do things right, and do things sustainably.” “

The couple encourages others to get involved, whether it's through donations or gifts of time or expertise.

“We are so grateful because we have the means to support Community Day School and the Jewish Federation campus renewal, and we are proud to do so. What a mitzvah,” they said. “Now all of us can take pride in being able to support our children and grandchildren on the most amazing school campus that has ever existed in Sarasota!”

As Ed remembers wise words: “My Dad said to me when you sit down a table to eat, make sure there is food in every other person's dish before you eat,” he said. “That's what this school project is to me – sharing, paying it forward, helping others, helping our school, helping our community. A miracle of *tikkun olam* to be celebrated.”

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