

For the Sugarman's, It's All About Giving

It was only natural for Todd and Pam Sugarman to be among the first donors to make a legacy commitment designated to Congregation Shir Shalom through LIFE & LEGACY® at Buffalo.

Describing CSS as "his home," Todd and Pam have worked hard to create a warm and welcoming community.

Raised in an Orthodox family, Todd became a Bar Mitzvah at Ahavas Achim Lubavitz. As an adult, Todd met Pam through a mutual friend, married and started a family. Pam was raised Baptist and at the beginning of their marriage, she continued as a churchgoer with her parents, as well as synagogue with Todd until she realized she could not do both. She wanted to raise her children in the Jewish faith and was inspired by Todd to attend services at Temple Beth Am where she felt comfortable and welcomed into the Jewish community. As they raised their three daughters (Samantha, Rachel and Courtney), Pam felt strongly about raising them with a Jewish upbringing while learning about Judaism for herself.

Soon, they regularly attended family services at Temple Beth Am. Over time, Todd joined and became president of the Temple's Men's Group, then joined the synagogue's Board of Trustees and served as President. During his time as president, membership was declining, with the same thing happening at Temple Sinai, the area's Reconstructionist synagogue.

Todd reached out to Jill Hamilton, president of Temple Sinai as the time. The two congregations eventually

merged, becoming Congregation Shir Shalom (CSS). They had much in common and both put their members first.

Todd doesn't lead alone. Other presidents - Jill Hamilton and Bruce Corris have led CSS, and Larry Posses and Joe Glickman are his "go to" people. The Executive Board has remained the same for 10 years, consisting of what Todd calls "all workers and givers." And he never stops! CSS Executive Director Joanne Marquisee receives a call from Todd each day, asking what he can do to help. When Todd and Pam travel to Florida for the winter, Todd speaks to Joanne just to check in.

Successful in business for 40 years, Todd started giving back to "his home," first with an Outdoor Worship area and then a Pickleball Court. His most recent endeavor is renovating the synagogue, updating the Social Hall with new windows, renovating the foyer, the offices, the open area and many other rooms. "It hasn't been done in 50 years," he said, "and now it is time to give back to all the dedicated volunteers who have worked so hard to make our home warm and welcoming."

Todd was inspired by the words of Foundation for Jewish Philanthropies Executive Director Irv Levy when he spoke at a LIFE & LEGACY® at Buffalo informational session. "What are you going to do with your money when you're



gone?" Irv questioned. For Todd, it was a wake-up call. In addition to his present giving, what about the future? He wants his synagogue and members to be a part of the future Buffalo Jewish community with an after-lifetime commitment to build a permanent endowment that will sustain a vibrant CSS for years to come. Pam feels the same. So do others who have made commitments through LIFE & LEGACY® to benefit CSS.

Todd's Jewish value is giving and giving back. He has taught this to his children and teaches it to his grandchildren. "When you are young you don't think about giving. When you get to a certain point in life, you say this is your place and you want to give back," says Todd. "And Congregation Shir Shalom is the only place I give to. It's my home."