

Re: Development Publication



April 2024 | Nisan 5784
Issue 2



Introducing Congregation Beth Shalom Members Nancy & Gary Tuckfelt

By Robert Gleiberman

“The Synagogue, especially the Sanctuary, is our physical spiritual home. It is vitally important for the well-being of our community – it is where we all come together.”

Nancy Tuckfelt



Nancy & Gary Tuckfelt

Congregation Beth Shalom is fortunate to have members Nancy and Gary Tuckfelt. They are an amazing couple who has deep roots in the Pittsburgh area and cares deeply for our institution and its mission - **to advance Jewish values through lifelong learning and spiritual growth**. Nancy and Gary are major supporters of Beth Shalom, not only financially but as volunteers.



NEW BETH EL SYNAGOGUE CENTER in 1951. This is under construction. Missing groundbreaking ceremony. Samuel Minsky, one of the original members, and his grandson, Jeffrey Minsky, are shown turning the first shovel of dirt. Rabbi A. I. Schaffer is spiritual leader of Congregation Beth El. A school will be built later.

Nancy’s grandfather, Samuel Minsky, participating at the groundbreaking ceremony at Beth El Congregation.

Nancy grew up as a member of Congregation B’nai Israel, which was located on Negley Avenue and was designated as a historic site. Since its closing in 1996 B’nai Israel has been redeveloped into condominiums with further construction to include performance and event space.

Nancy’s mother participated at B’nai Israel for social events and other activities as well as attended High Holiday services. Her dad was highly active and engaged in synagogue life. Nancy would attend services with her dad and paternal grandparents and after services she would then have lunch at her grandparents’ house. Nancy’s grandfather, Samuel Minsky was a founding member of Beth El Congregation.

Gary grew up and attended Hebrew School and became a Bar Mitzvah in White Oak at Temple B’nai Israel. His mother participated in Sisterhood and volunteered at the Temple. His father sang in the choir.

When Nancy is not volunteering you can usually find her at Shabbat services sitting near the back of the Sanctuary perfectly put together, semi-hidden, under one of her amazing hats.

Nancy and Gary love the arts, film/movies, and theatre. In turn they support the Broadway Series, CLO (Civic Light Opera), Symphony, City Theatre, and Front Porch Theatricals. They also support the Holocaust Center and Classrooms Without Borders.

The important causes that call to Nancy where she actively volunteers her time to the Jewish and Greater Pittsburgh Community are;

- Helping serve lunch at the JCC's Age Well Program, a local senior program
- Reading to toddlers in one of our community daycare centers
- Helping with the Pittsburgh Marathon
- Assisting Film Pittsburgh
- Ushering at the Pittsburgh Public Theatre

Nancy said, "I am drawn to these causes because I was a nurse for 40 years in a children's Pediatric Hospital. I want to do the right thing for my community."

Gary gets involved where he sees a need that speaks to him. He currently serves on the Board of the Jewish Burial Society. Along with Nancy they donated the Community Day School's Holocaust Sculpture, they have traveled to Holocaust sites in Greece and Italy and have gone on a civil rights tour. Gary and Nancy have also traveled to Israel 4 times, 2 of which were volunteer missions. They are both passionate about Israel and its future.



Community Day School's Holocaust Sculpture, donated by Gary & Nancy Tuckfelt



Nancy Tuckfelt on one of her trips to Israel in front of the Kotel

Nancy is a lifelong learner. "It is fun for me" she said. "I attend Lunch & Learns and Discussion Services with Rabbi Adelson and with Gary I attend Osher classes at Carnegie Mellon. I love observing and keeping my brain active and engaged."

Nancy and Gary said "we are fortunate enough to be able to give back in a meaningful way by making a major gift that will hopefully have a significant impact on the overall financial position of our beloved community. We feel it is important to do it now instead of after we are gone. We want to see and take nauchas in all the good it does."

Nancy and Gary are true role models for our entire community and especially Congregation Beth Shalom. Their hope is that by sharing some of their story it could help others to lead and participate in a similar way.



Gary & Nancy Tuckfelt at a Beth Shalom event



By Paul Teplitz

You see below a group of people nearing the end of Beth Shalom's congregational trip to Israel, standing in front of the iconic love sculpture at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem on November 7, 2018. We left Pittsburgh the day after the tragic shooting at Tree of Life. We did not know how to feel at the airport the next day. Profound sadness left no room for the excitement of a new adventure. Everywhere we went, people told us they were carrying Pittsburgh in their hearts. There was a beautiful memorial service at Karmiel, our sister city in Israel, for the eleven Kedoshim (martyrs). Israel was there for Pittsburgh. It was evident from the care and concern we were shown in Israel through multiple memorial services that no matter where in the world we are, Jews are part of one extended family-that we are part of one big community. We were tourists in a land that embraced us as family, which only strengthened our bond with Israelis and with each other. We slogged through ancient underground tunnels together, ate together, grieved together, learned together, prayed at the Western Wall, and laughed together. We were a holy Kehillah, a spiritual community.

This is what is so special about Beth Shalom. There were close friends on that trip, but they were also willing to open their circle and welcome others.

We took the Terrible Towel as a symbol of taking Pittsburgh to Israel. We came home a tighter community. This trip, my first to Israel, was a transformative experience, and one for which I am grateful.



Paul Teplitz is the President at Congregation Beth Shalom and can be reached at pteplitz@me.com.

Rabbi Andy Shugerman
Development Director

Paul Teplitz
President

Rabbi Seth Adelson
Senior Rabbi

Robert Gleiberman
Executive Director