

Emanu-El Next: Investing for our Jewish Future

We believe that Judaism guides us on our journey to be better people, create community, and repair the world. Our historic home has long been cherished as a magnificent building that symbolizes Jewish arrival and integration into our city. But the building no longer adequately serves the need of the Emanu-El community and hinders our ability to effectively support and engage our congregation. The demands of the 21st century Jewish community—and Emanu-El's 1,800 congregant families—are quite different than those of the 300 families in the 1920s who created our current building. That's why we have embarked on an ambitious effort to revitalize and reimagine our home to meet the expanding needs of our current members and those of generations to come.

Donor Spotlight: David Friedman



Congregation Emanu-El is delighted to count David Friedman among the supporters of Emanu-El Next. A longtime member of our congregation, he and his wife, Paulette Meyer, set aside a portion of their contribution for testamentary giving. "I love the idea of a legacy gift for the future – the future beyond me: the next generation. That's why the 'Next' in this campaign is a profound gesture to what it's all about."

David is no stranger to capital campaigns with architectural engineering components, having chaired several within and beyond the Jewish community. "My background made me think with a slightly more critical eye about the project," David reflects. "I've seen a lot of what works and what doesn't. And this time, I saw all of the pieces in place."

A structural and earthquake engineer, former CEO of Forell/Elsesser Engineers, and a board member of SPUR – David has worked on many large projects throughout his career, including the San Francisco Jewish Community Center, a handful of Jewish Home of San Francisco projects and campaigns, and the collaboration between the Jewish Home and the Palo Alto JCC in what is now the Taube Koret Campus for Jewish Life.

Born to a family with a long philanthropic history, David's mother, "Phyllis Friedman, was a philanthropist with a capital P," he remarks with respect and regard. His father, Howard Friedman, was born and raised an Orthodox Jew in Yonkers, New York. He joined the United States Naval Construction Battalion, also known as the Seabees, and came into Port in San Francisco in 1943 while stationed in the South Pacific. He and other Jewish service members went to shabbat at Emanu-El.

"My great grandmother, Fannie Haas, used to go to temple on Friday nights. She would invite servicemen she saw there to her home on Washington Avenue, ostensibly for shabbat dinner, but really to meet her granddaughters!" David laughs, "My father went, and that's how my parents met."

A third-generation member of Emanu-El, David Friedman has been extraordinarily impressed with Emanu-El Next. "All of the questions I might ask about the project were thought through," he recalls. "By the time a visit was made to our home it was just a matter of reflecting on our own motivations to give."

Emanu-El Next was conceived by looking at the administrative spaces of the courtyard building – to find out how to, in an already packed space, get more use out of it. And David was brought in from the start. “When you want to renovate, you have to assess the existing structure,” David says, “My firm was contracted to do the initial assessment, and during the analysis, we found some seismic vulnerabilities.”

“I presented what the seismic issues were to the Emanu-El Building Committee, and ultimately the question became: how do we deal with it?” After careful planning, the leaders of Emanu-El encapsulated the seismic retrofit into an expansive vision for the whole temple.

“More than just a captivating, advanced architectural design – there was a method to what was trying to be achieved by returning to Lake Street for the grand entry,” David says. “The design eliminates the seismic hazards, keeps the historic façade on the sidewalks, and does security in a way that makes sense. It brings everything up to code, and up to date in terms of how people will use it, giving the entire assemblage of buildings a life into the next 100 years.”

Considering his family ties to our temple, David feels honored to have grown closer with the leadership, clergy and congregants over the years of his involvement with Emanu-El Next. He believes his work throughout his career has been incredibly rewarding thanks to the people he’s met along the way.

“Emanu-El Next truly became important to me because it was important to a whole group of some of my favorite people – and some of my true friends – rolling up their sleeves for the future of our community.”



Emanu-El Next is less than \$2 million away from its \$97 million goal! With a generous 1:1 match from The Koret Foundation, now is the time to contribute and help finish our effort to revitalize our home. You can visit our website, next.emanuelsf.org to learn more and make a gift. Or, if you would like to make a commitment to Emanu-El Next, please contact Julie Weinberg, Director of Development, at jweinberg@emanuelsf.org or 415-750-7557.