Our Family Philanthropy:

Joan and I recall growing up in homes that honored the Jewish obligation of tzedakah by frequently placing coins in a small box (pushke). At college, we benefitted from state and scholarship/fellowship support for our education, a key enabler of our ability to participate in the Giving Pledge.

Thus, education - K-12, university, libraries, and the use 24/7 of mobile technology - was an early and remains a key component of our philanthropy. Projects include the High Tech High Charter School System, scholarships and fellowships at schools with which we have been associated, including Cornell, MIT, the Technion, and the new Cornell Tech Campus in New York City. We also strongly support basic science, recently in the form of endowed chairs and innovation grants at the Salk Institute, enabling new and often high risk ideas to be pursued. Cultural activities, including music, theater, and art museums, remain a focus, including a major gift to the San Diego Symphony to allow it to move to a very high level of performance. Societal needs as recognized by tzedakah are part of our inheritance and we are supporting, among others, a new UCSD hospital tower, an ever-expanding San Diego Food Bank, Second Chance for those completing prison terms, and the Jewish Family Service that also provides significant support for needy immigrants.

In selecting projects for philanthropy among our focus areas, we are particularly influenced by program innovation and planning, the quality of leadership, and finally our ability to make a difference with both resources and guidance.

Passing on the joy of philanthropy to children and grandchildren is essential to us. Beyond the ability to set an example by personal leadership, we have successfully encouraged grandchildren to attend sessions sponsored by The Giving Pledge and by our financial advisor Merrill Lynch. After careful consideration, we also chose to establish a donor-advised fund for each grandchild to enable them to follow their own interests and individually make a difference.

We continually receive great satisfaction from our philanthropy and stimulation from the many with whom we come in contact.

Irwin Mark Jacobs    Joan Klein Jacobs