

the program has grown to serve families across the US and Israel and around the world – including Venezuela, Ukraine, and Australia, to name a few. Tens of thousands have been inspired to join Harold with philanthropic support to help PJ Library flourish and reach even more children. Many of the children who receive books have only one parent who grew up Jewish. Many live in towns where there are no other Jews. Still others have thriving communities nearby. A significant number report that PJ Library is one of few resources to educate their children about Jewish values.


According to Eric Robbins, CEO of the Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta, “PJ Library is one of the most innovative and thoughtful ideas that the Jewish world has seen. Think of it: A gift from the Jewish community is arriving every month in my mailbox – with my child’s name on it – a book that is adding to a growing Jewish library in our home. And no one is asking me for money for it. It’s revolutionary. Also, it’s nonjudgmental. You say you’re Jewish? Fine, that’s good enough for us.”

Like the act of reading Torah, in which Jewish people around the world are bound together through a shared weekly text, PJ Library similarly distributes common Jewish stories each month to Jewish children in countries across the globe. In this way, the program expresses Harold’s abiding hope: “That we can hold different perspectives and viewpoints, and we can engage with our Judaism differently, but yet remember that we are one people.”

**FOUNDING PJ LIBRARY** is just one of many philanthropic investments Harold has made on behalf of the Jewish people. He has also created JCamp 180, which supports the Jewish camp experience; Life & Legacy, which supports the future of Jewish communities across North America; Voices & Visions, which employs the power of art to inspire creativity and conversation, and more. Together, these programs share the goal of strengthening Jewish families and supporting Jewish institutions.

In addition to his professional endeavors, throughout his life Harold has loved skiing, hiking all over the world, biking, and all forms of travel. About eight years ago, he took up sculpting and has produced more than 150 large-scale pieces.

Harold’s lifetime of Jewish contributions underscores a common theme – to Harold, it’s all about applying creative ideas to build a better world.

“He’s an inveterate fixer,” says his son Steven Grinspoon. “And now, he wants to celebrate. And he wants us all to celebrate with him – his zest for life and positivity.” 

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## A CONVERSATION WITH HAROLD

**PJ Library alum Jake Kotin looks back.**

**In 2014, when Jake Kotin** was 3 years old, he received the five millionth PJ Library book – which Harold Grinspoon and Winnie Sandler Grinspoon delivered to his Natick, Massachusetts home in person! Recently, Jake, now 13, got to chat with Harold and catch up.

**HG:** Do you remember the day I came to visit you?

**JK:** I heard a knock at the door. I went to answer it and you were there and Winnie was there. You read a book to me – it was about a Purim bear. I was ecstatic because I was like, “New people and a new book!”

**HG:** Do you remember the early books you received?

**JK:** I remember the gist of almost all of them. It always had some tie to Judaism, whether it be a Jewish holiday, Jewish morals, or a Jewish character. It connected me back to who I am. Every time a new book would arrive, I would run to the door and I would be super excited.

Now that I’m older, one of my favorite things about PJ Our Way is the aspect of choice. I appreciate how you can select books that align with your interests.

**HG:** That’s amazing. You’re amazing!

**JK:** I just had my bar mitzvah, and it was the coolest experience. I’m so glad I put in the work to make it uniquely my own.

I look back and so many kids are benefiting from your generosity, your kindness. And I’m just so thankful that I got to be part of this and a recipient of all these books.

Know a PJ Library alum who would like to share their story with **PROOF**?  
Let us know: [proof@hgf.org](mailto:proof@hgf.org).