



October 25, 2021

Whenever I sit down to write a letter to the membership or the community at large I get excited. Excited to share not only what is going on in our community but something that might be of significance that could hit home, that affects us all and further connects us in ways we may never know or realize. This is the time that counts.

As many of you are now aware, I am the new Executive Director for the Valley JCC. With over 25 years' experience in city government, I now turn to the nonprofit world, a time when we are amid the worst pandemic many of us have ever seen in our lifetime. This is a time to bring community together and build upon our relationships and not separate us. In troubling or difficult times, we need to pull together. This is the time that counts.

I have been fortunate to be able to spend my entire professional career making a difference and building relationships. As family makes a house a home, you and I make a neighborhood, a city, a county, a state, A COMMUNITY. A community is formed when ALL PEOPLE, come together to make a difference, to improve upon one's quality of life. It's not the big things that make a difference, it's the little things that build a foundation. A strong foundation, the base, is fundamentally needed to build something that has strength to withstand a storm. This is the time that counts.

My foundation of caring, giving, honesty, integrity and truly making a difference was shaped by my best friend in life, my father. To get an idea, a vision of who I am, I want to get a little personal with all of you and share something that I wrote several years ago called "The Time That Counts".

**I was recently hiking with a friend in Sycamore Canyon and the topic of our children came up. "Will our kids remember these times and experiences?" my friend asked. My answer was a definite yes. You see, my wife calls me "Disneyland Daddy" because I am always taking my girls out to do fun and exciting things. We spend our weekends at the beach and at the movies or in the mountains skiing and hiking. I coach their soccer teams and attend their sporting events. (And yes of course we go to Disneyland). The quality time with my daughters is my priority because I**

remember growing up with a dad who made our weekend time the single most important thing in his life.

As if by coincidence, the 1974 song “Cats in the Cradle”, by Harry Chapin was on the radio last week. Even now it pulls at my heart strings and brings tears to my eyes whenever I hear it. If you don’t know the song, it follows a story of a hard-working father and a growing son who can’t schedule time to be with one another. The dad doesn’t allow himself to spend quality time with his child, and the son’s only connection is voiced in the recurring verse, “I’m gonna’ be like you dad, you know I’m gonna’ be like you”. As time passes, roles reverse, and the father understands the importance of simple joys like “hanging” with friends and milestones such as getting one’s driver’s license. He wants to spend more time with his son yet slowly realizes it is too late. In the last verse, the son is an adult with a job and children of his own. Regretfully, the dad realizes his boy has become just like him.

My own dad was the opposite of that story and was the greatest man I have ever known. He was my best friend. He coached me in three sports year-round (baseball, basketball, and football) from kindergarten until I entered high school. He was always there for me for guidance and support. Yet throughout all of the sports and such, the times I remember most were our Saturday breakfasts together. No matter how busy we were or what was going on in our lives, we would meet to catch up on the week that had just passed and talk about the week ahead. From the time that I can remember until the day my dad passed (October 31, 1995) we never missed our Saturday mornings.

My dad was a great provider and taught me to be the man I have grown to be (I was 28 when he passed). He instilled a strong work ethic that I am proud of yet emphasized the importance of family and connections outside of work. It was as a coach, he encouraged me to work hard for the things I wished to obtain. Often his first question when he returned home from work was “did you practice today?” If the answer was no, we’d go outside and toss the ball around. It was a great life lesson about perseverance through sport and activity. More importantly, it was quality time with my dad.

We all seem to live such fast-paced lives these days and time passes too quickly. The question is: are you giving yourself, your family, and your friends quality time? Do you feel you are leading a life where your relationships are top priority? I would challenge you to see the value in time spent “off hours”. Our greatest memories aren’t made while punching a clock, but rather over a great Saturday morning breakfast or while talking on the trail. My father knew this rule and it applies today more than ever.

**I encourage you to stop, take a deep breath and take pleasure in all that life and your community has to offer. Enjoy your family and friends, try new things, and explore the great outdoors. Recreation is for quality of life and quality time. Take advantage of it. Of course, when at work, always give it your all. In fact, with everything you do in life – give it your all. It's more rewarding that way.**

As all of us at Valley JCC look to the future, we hope that you are part of it. We need wonderful people such as you to help make a difference. Let's create community together and build upon something amazing that we can all be proud of, help spread the word. We are working hard to assemble a strong core of community partners, expand upon programs and events and cultivate a financial base that enables us to strengthen our standing in the community. If there is a partnership out there that you think would be of benefit, reach out. If there is a program or event you would like to see, reach out. If you have an idea, reach out. If you want to talk, reach out. If you want to donate, reach out. We are in it together.

The Time That Counts,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'JR' or 'Jeff Rubin', followed by a period.

Jeff Rubin  
Executive Director