

Oral History of: Leah Trosch
Interviewed by: Susie Pappas
Date of Interview: March 11, 2019
Location of Interview: Max M. Fisher Federation Building
Subject Matter: Women's Philanthropy Dept. of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit

Susie Pappas: [00:01](#) My name is Susie Pappas, and today is March 11, 2019. I'm interviewing Leah Trosch at the Max M. Fisher Federation Building in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan.

Susie Pappas: [00:14](#) This interview is being recorded as part of the Women in Leadership oral history project. Do you give permission to the Leonard M. Simons Jewish Community Archives to publish, duplicate, or otherwise use this recording for educational purposes or for use as deemed appropriate by the Archives?

Leah Trosch: [00:36](#) Sure.

Susie Pappas: [00:37](#) The Women's Philanthropy Department of the Jewish Federation has had several names throughout its history, including Women's Division, Women's Campaign and Education Department, but for the purposes of this interview, we will refer to it by its current name, Women's Philanthropy, but you may use whatever name you're comfortable with.

Susie Pappas: [01:02](#) Tell me your name and when and where you were born.

Leah Trosch: [01:05](#) My name is Leah Trosch, and I was born in Detroit at Sinai Hospital, December 30th, 1961.

Susie Pappas: [01:12](#) Where did you go to school?

Leah Trosch: [01:14](#) For elementary school, I went to Hillel Day school, and middle school actually, and then Southfield High for high school.

Susie Pappas: [01:20](#) You grew up in Southfield?

Leah Trosch: [01:22](#) I did.

Susie Pappas: [01:23](#) Is that where-

Leah Trosch: [01:23](#) Yep. I lived in Southfield pretty much most of my young adult life.

Susie Pappas: [01:27](#) How was religion observed in your home as a child?

Leah Trosch: [01:31](#) In my home, my home was conservative and, of course, I got a conservative Jewish education at Hillel Day School, but my grandparents were orthodox. They lived in Oak Park and we actually prayed at the Lubavitcher School in Oak Park when I was a kid.

Susie Pappas: [01:47](#) You would have Shabbat dinners at your house?

Leah Trosch: [01:49](#) It was interesting, we would go Saturday for lunch to my grandparent's every Saturday. My Zayde would come home from Shul, and my Bubbe would cook a really nice Shabbat lunch, and we would have lunch there. But my house, where I grew up, was kosher as well as my grandparents' house, and we celebrated all the holidays with my grandparents. A lot of times we would walk all the way from Southfield to Oak Park for services for Rosh Hashanah on Yom Kippur, and it was a really long walk when you were a little kid.

Susie Pappas: [02:19](#) It's interesting. Yet, you would drive there on Saturdays for your Shabbat lunch?

Leah Trosch: [02:23](#) It's that funny? Yeah, I never really thought about that.

Susie Pappas: [02:25](#) That is kind of ...

Leah Trosch: [02:26](#) You know why? Because on Saturdays we went to their apartment. When we went for services on the high holidays we had to come to the Shul, and we didn't want to drive up in our car. Even if we drove, the few times we drove, we parked several blocks away.

Susie Pappas: [02:41](#) I understand.

Leah Trosch: [02:42](#) Yeah.

Susie Pappas: [02:44](#) So, when we went to high school, were you involved in any Jewish activities? Or when you were in college were involved in any Jewish organizations?

Leah Trosch: [02:57](#) So, what's interesting is I had Hillel Day School education, but I really insisted on going to public school for high school because

I really wanted to see what that was like. My parents were not thrilled, but they agreed.

- Susie Pappas: [03:09](#) Well, where would you have gone to high school if you had gone to a Jewish high school?
- Leah Trosch: [03:12](#) I guess at the time they didn't, but my parents wanted me to go to Kingswood, of course.
- Susie Pappas: [03:16](#) Oh, okay. [crosstalk 00:03:17]
- Leah Trosch: [03:17](#) They wanted me to go to private school. But, I think I wanted to see what the wider world was like. So, I was not involved in BBYO, I did not go to Camp Tamarack, I really didn't do much extra-circularly that was Jewish. I started going to Hebrew school, the Hebrew high school, after school, that they had at the time. That didn't last very long because all the classes we're taught in English. To me, if you're doing Jewish studies, you should have them in Hebrew. So, I'm a Hebrew high school drop-out.
- Leah Trosch: [03:50](#) And actually, in college, I was not involved in the Hillel House in college either, but once I had a kitchen and I was out of state, my house is where all the zaatar's were, so I did do Jewish things but not in an organized setting.
- Susie Pappas: [04:08](#) So, would so say that Philanthropy was important to your family when you were growing up? And if it was, how did you know that it was?
- Leah Trosch: [04:18](#) Okay, so, my parents were involved philanthropically. They were not the kind of hands on volunteer types, my mother was not like that, but they always were involved in the state of Israel bonds and Magen David Adom, and all those fundraisers that were happening. I remember my mom getting all dressed up and they would always go to the big dinner and my parents were always donors at those events.
- Susie Pappas: [04:42](#) Right. So, what interested you in becoming involved in Women's Department?
- Leah Trosch: [04:51](#) I actually didn't make a conscious decision to get involved at the very beginning. What happened was, my neighbor invited me to a house shower where they were collecting items to donate to new immigrants to Detroit for resettlement, I think there were still Russian immigrants coming at the time, I don't remember ...

Susie Pappas: [05:06](#) What year would you say that was?

Leah Trosch: [05:06](#) You know what? That's a really good question. It was probably, I don't know, 1992 maybe '93, sometime in the early nineties. It was actually the person who lived across the street from me.

Leah Trosch: [05:20](#) She invited me to her house one evening and I remember I bought a colander, a pasta strainer or whatever, I brought that and it was actually a Women's Department event, but I did not know it when I was invited. And once I went, I don't know, it somehow snowballed into other things.

Susie Pappas: [05:39](#) So, until that time, had you been contributing to Federations?

Leah Trosch: [05:45](#) No.

Susie Pappas: [05:45](#) No, not at all?

Leah Trosch: [05:46](#) No, but I had been living out of state also for ten years. So, at that point, I had moved back to Detroit maybe a year or two prior.

Susie Pappas: [05:54](#) So, up until the early nineties you were not even living here in this city?

Leah Trosch: [05:59](#) Correct, correct.

Susie Pappas: [05:59](#) Okay. So, when you first became aware of Women's Department do you remember who the leaders were at the time? Who were the ...

Leah Trosch: [06:11](#) You know, it's really hard to- I don't remember because when you first get invited to something and you don't even know that it's Women's Department or it's Women's Philanthropy, you know the person who invited you and the house, but you don't really know who the leadership is. I think the first president I can remember ... Wow, I don't even know. It was probably Nancy Grosfeld. Do you know what year that was?

Susie Pappas: [06:34](#) Well, I mean I could figure it out but I don't know.

Leah Trosch: [06:37](#) Yeah, that's probably the first person that I remember as a president.

Susie Pappas: [06:41](#) So, the first thing you did, you were probably back in the city a year or so and you went to this Women's Department shower.

So, there must have been something about it that perked your interest?

- Leah Trosch: [06:55](#) I think it was getting involved again in the Jewish community because I had been out of town for so long, and my friends network had dissipated, and it was a way to reconnect and become part of the community again.
- Susie Pappas: [07:08](#) So, after that shower, were there other things that you started doing? Do you remember any activities that you were involved in, in those early years?
- Leah Trosch: [07:18](#) I think the first thing I remember is going to the Choices luncheon.
- Susie Pappas: [07:22](#) Okay.
- Leah Trosch: [07:24](#) At that time, those were the big event, 600-700 women or whatever at Adat Shalom. And those were the first campaign events that I remember going to. And all my friends and neighbors from the neighborhood all went, so we all went together.
- Susie Pappas: [07:37](#) So, this was the program that they would bring in a speaker and they would have table hostesses, which was a way of raising money, and there would be a minimum.
- Leah Trosch: [07:48](#) Correct.
- Susie Pappas: [07:48](#) So you're saying that your neighbors and your friends would make tables and you remember that?
- Leah Trosch: [07:54](#) Correct.
- Susie Pappas: [07:58](#) So let's skip a little bit and let me ask you something. What did you initially do, beyond going to Choices, something that you became involved in? A committee or a chairmanship that brought you into Women's Department?
- Leah Trosch: [08:19](#) You know, I don't really remember what the first committee/chairmanship was, I just remember that it's your fault I did it [crosstalk 00:08:27] in a good way!
- Susie Pappas: [08:28](#) No, I have to tell you, I was thinking about this earlier, I came into leadership when Nancy Jacobson was the campaign chair.
- Leah Trosch: [08:43](#) Okay.

Susie Pappas: [08:44](#) And I feel like I inherited you and Cheryl, Cheryl Margolis.

Leah Trosch: [08:51](#) Right.

Susie Pappas: [08:52](#) So, it must have been before that, probably Nancy Grosfeld and Nancy Jacobson. Do you remember ... Okay, when I first met you I think you were doing either give-a-mitzvah, which was a program we used to have, or that tzedakah fair.

Leah Trosch: [09:18](#) I mean, I remember doing those, I just don't know if that was the first thing I did. But, I so distinctly remember when you called me and asked me to co-chair one of those, I don't know which one. And you said, "Oh, Cheryl said she would do it with you." And I thought, "Oh God, if Cheryl says she'll do it, I'll do it too." And I think the story is, this is sort of like an urban myth, that you said the same thing to Cheryl. "Oh, Leah said she would do it." And she said, "Okay!" So, I remember that.

Susie Pappas: [09:43](#) We don't know if that's actually what happened but that's a great urban myth.

Leah Trosch: [09:47](#) Like I said, urban myth.

Susie Pappas: [09:47](#) And it worked well because you two were very, very good. But Leah, do you remember doing a Community Connections?

Leah Trosch: [09:57](#) Oh, I absolutely did do Community Connections! Yes!

Susie Pappas: [09:59](#) Okay, so we're going back now because the first Community Connections, which was called something else started in the early ...

Leah Trosch: [10:05](#) Spring Forum.

Susie Pappas: [10:06](#) Yeah, it was called Spring Forum. I'm glad that you remember.

Leah Trosch: [10:09](#) Yes, of course I remember.

Susie Pappas: [10:09](#) That was in the early 2000's.

Leah Trosch: [10:13](#) Okay.

Susie Pappas: [10:14](#) And I remember- this is your interview but I'm talking- that maybe you and Cheryl participated in that first one.

Leah Trosch: [10:23](#) Yeah.

Susie Pappas: [10:24](#) Did you chair it after that?

Leah Trosch: [10:26](#) I did chair it, yeah. Of course, I did. What's interesting about that is I remember I was on the board at Adat Shalom and Sharon Hart asked me if I would do Spring Forum, she actually gave me a folder with information or something, and I did not have someone to pick my kids up- I still had children in nursery school at Adat Shalom and it was in the middle of the day, it was around lunch time ...

Susie Pappas: [10:51](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative), yes it was.

Leah Trosch: [10:52](#) ... and that was pick-up time and I didn't have someone to pick them up for the six-week commitment. And so, I had to tell her no. Then a few years later somebody asked me again and I don't know if just because my kids we're older and they didn't have to be picked up at that time, or maybe I had a more flexible carpool or whatever, at that point I was able to say yes.

Susie Pappas: [11:15](#) So, interesting, as a point of note, that first one that we did we targeted- I think I was the vice president for that program- and we targeted young mothers that all went to Hillel. In those days that's how...we would pick a group, a demographic group, and it was the Hillel group for that very first one.

Leah Trosch: [11:41](#) Okay, that's interesting.

Susie Pappas: [11:42](#) Okay. So, then we go ahead, and people noticed you. And after that did you and Cheryl chair something together?

Leah Trosch: [11:57](#) Yeah, I think we ended up chairing that program, that Communities. I believe that was the program that the house shower was that my neighbor had, and I think we co-chaired that together.

Susie Pappas: [12:12](#) So, funny that you should bring this up, because one of the questions that I wanted to ask you was, when you first became involved in Women's Department there was a much clearer definition between education programs and fundraising programs, do you remember that?

Leah Trosch: [12:31](#) Absolutely.

Susie Pappas: [12:32](#) And what do you remember as far as what called to you?

Leah Trosch: [12:39](#) Well, I think both were happening for me at the same time because I was interested in co-chairing, I enjoyed the

experience of co-chairing an education program, and I was going to Choices, which was a campaign event simultaneously, so even though they were separate areas I was contributing to both.

- Susie Pappas: [13:03](#) Well, hopefully everybody that was involved in education was also a contributor to Federation, of course.
- Leah Trosch: [13:10](#) I mean, hopefully. But it's not always the case.
- Susie Pappas: [13:12](#) But what I remember in those days, is that we were very careful that there were certain people that, even if they did give to Federation, did not want to do fundraising, but they did want to be involved in education programs.
- Leah Trosch: [13:29](#) Right. So I think the more I got involved in the education half of it the more you learn, the more you understand that the campaign component is to vital, and it seemed like a very natural transition for me. When somebody, and I don't even remember who, asked me to co-chair a campaign division or do whatever campaign work there was ... I think at that point I felt I had made so many asks, asking people to sit on a committee, asking people to co-chair, asking people to be the site manager at It's-a-Mitzvah, which was a role, asking people to go on a mission, or whatever.
- Leah Trosch: [14:03](#) There were so many asks that the addition of asking for money was, to me, not a big leap at all. It was sort of asking the same thing, contributing is contributing whether it's writing a check or volunteering your time.
- Susie Pappas: [14:17](#) So, did you, as you were doing this, see yourself as someday being a campaign chair and a president?
- Leah Trosch: [14:25](#) Never. I was totally shocked when I was asked. Seriously, I know you don't believe me.
- Susie Pappas: [14:31](#) I do believe you.
- Leah Trosch: [14:33](#) I was like, "Really?" I had no idea.
- Susie Pappas: [14:36](#) So, I guess we should talk about the mission.
- Leah Trosch: [14:47](#) Oh, that was wonderful, the mission.
- Susie Pappas: [14:49](#) Let's talk about that.

Leah Trosch: [14:50](#) Okay, so, you asked me to do something and I don't remember what it was, and I said, "You know, it's wonderful, I love planning luncheons and parties and designing invitations and doing all that, but I want to do something that's really important, something where my heart is. And that is Israel-related."

Susie Pappas: [15:11](#) Okay, funny that you should say that because what happened ... Sandy Schwartz was the president and I was the campaign chair, Sandy Schwartz wanted very much to do an education mission and really had a group of women that also wanted to go to Israel as an education mission.

Leah Trosch: [15:30](#) I remember that, I remember that.

Susie Pappas: [15:31](#) And Marion Freedman was the exec and I was the campaign chair, and I remember we had conversions that we didn't believe that general Federation was going to support an education. I felt, as campaign chair ... and I have to say that I was basically always on the campaign side, so campaign was my thing ... that I wanted to do a campaign trip.

Susie Pappas: [15:58](#) In the past we had something called Hadracha for women but that had dissipated and I wanted to bring this in. So, fast forward to this trip, which is going to be an education trip, and I did ask you and Lori Garon.

Leah Trosch: [16:14](#) So, do you remember this? There was an attempt at a real education mission, which as just for learning, prior to our mission.

Susie Pappas: [16:22](#) That's the one I'm talking about.

Leah Trosch: [16:24](#) I remember at the board meeting that Hadas Bernard got up there with an apple and talked about the rosy glow of the apple and how this is the same rosy glow you have when you're in Israel.

Susie Pappas: [16:36](#) I don't remember that but I [crosstalk 00:16:37]

Leah Trosch: [16:37](#) I totally remember that, and it just didn't come together.

Susie Pappas: [16:40](#) This is the trip that I was talking about?

Leah Trosch: [16:43](#) Right, right.

Susie Pappas: [16:44](#) Okay.

Leah Trosch: [16:45](#) And then subsequent to that you, I don't know what happened behind the scenes, but you asked me to co-chair with Lori Garon and I was totally on board. I mean, that for me is like hitting the sweet spot.

Susie Pappas: [16:56](#) So, and in fact, you gave this trip its name.

Leah Trosch: [17:01](#) Oh, I really forgot.

Susie Pappas: [17:03](#) Okay, so tell us about that.

Leah Trosch: [17:04](#) So, I don't even know how it came about, was it because we talked about going to see the Mona Lisa of the Galilee when we were planning?

Susie Pappas: [17:13](#) I think you maybe brought a picture of this and you said, "We have to see this mosaic." And then, fast-forward...

Leah Trosch: [17:23](#) The mosaic is in our region, right? The Mona Lisa of the Galilee. Maybe I brought it in because we were looking for images. So a lot of times when I was chairing programs I brought a lot of the visuals in because I'm a visual person, I'm an architect, that's my background. So, I was always bringing in images and working on the invitations, the graphics, it's just something I like to do.

Leah Trosch: [17:45](#) So, I probably brought in the picture of the Mona Lisa of the Galilee looking for some kind of emblem or some kind of image to relate to the mission. And I don't know how it came up ... somebody said, or I said, I don't know, that it's a mosaic and about all the pieces fitting together to create a whole, hence the name, "The Mosaic Mission."

Susie Pappas: [18:04](#) And, do you remember the qualifications or what went into somebody participating? Because this was important.

Leah Trosch: [18:14](#) So, there was more of a commitment, not just about the campaign, it was a three year/18,000 dollar gift, and there was also a few other asks involved. They were supposed to speak to four or five friends of theirs when we returned from the trip to share their experience, not necessarily to solicit but to share their experience, tell them about what they learned, about Federation, about Israel. And I think there were some follow-up programs also that we did.

Susie Pappas: [18:49](#) And weren't there some pre-programs as well?

Leah Trosch: [18:51](#) Yeah, there we're also pre-programs, yes. I remember the packing program, very popular.

Susie Pappas: [18:56](#) This mission was very important because ... what followed?

Leah Trosch: [19:04](#) Well, first of all I would say 98% ... actually we looked at it. When I was campaign chair we actually looked back at our Mosaic Mission participants to see if they continued giving at that level and I would say over 90% continued giving at the level for many, many years. Even after the requirement was over.

Susie Pappas: [19:24](#) And they became leaders in programs.

Leah Trosch: [19:25](#) They absolutely became leaders. We plugged them in, they were co-chairs of committees and they co-chaired the division, the pomegranate division, which was the \$18,000 and up division so a lot of them co-chaired that. And we did, for a couple years, we did reunion kind of things, ya know? It was great.

Susie Pappas: [19:43](#) Yeah, so I think it was a real turning point in Women's Department.

Leah Trosch: [19:46](#) Yes. Yep.

Susie Pappas: [19:48](#) Okay, so I have some more questions for you.

Leah Trosch: [19:52](#) Okay.

Susie Pappas: [19:52](#) What did your husband and your family think about your involvement in all this Federation stuff?

Leah Trosch: [19:59](#) So, my husband is really great and he's very supportive. First of all, I think at the beginning I think he had no idea what was going on. He didn't even pay attention. And then the more involved I got he was absolutely always very supportive of whatever I do and at one point we co-chaired the Maimonides mission, which was the mission for the doctors.

Susie Pappas: [20:19](#) I remember that.

Leah Trosch: [20:19](#) And, you know, my husband is not really an involved kind of person but they asked him to do it, it was couples, so they asked me to do it with him. I really wanted him to do it because I wanted him to share in the experience that I was having and feeling the same kind of commitment to Federation. And

because we both gave a gift at that time ... I just felt it was really important for him to do that.

- Leah Trosch: [20:45](#) And my kids are always very supportive. My youngest one, I think I wrote that in the questionnaire, he loved it whenever I would go to meetings, "Oh, you going to J-Fed?" He had this cute little name. I thought it was so cute.
- Susie Pappas: [20:58](#) So, do you think it's important, in a couple, for both people to participate in Federation.
- Leah Trosch: [21:05](#) Yeah, absolutely.
- Susie Pappas: [21:06](#) And why do you think that a woman's gift is important as opposed to just doing a family gift?
- Leah Trosch: [21:12](#) There are so many reasons, in my opinion, that it's almost gotten to the point that to ask the question, "Why a woman's gift" seems to me ridiculous. Why wouldn't there be a woman's gift?
- Susie Pappas: [21:24](#) Tell us some of the reasons, cause there will be people, and there have been people, that say to you, "But, we give as a family."
- Leah Trosch: [21:28](#) Okay so, for me personally, I don't think I would have gotten as involved and I certainly would have not been asked to take on the level of responsibly and the level of commitment that I have in the organization if I were not giving a gift, if I was just hanging onto my husbands gift. Why would anybody ask me to sit on a board, or co-chair a mission, or do any of those things? So, if you have hopes of getting involved and really getting your hands on things, I think you absolutely have to make your own gift. There's no question about it.
- Leah Trosch: [22:00](#) And I think it's really important for women to have representation throughout the organization. If we want women to sit on the Federation board, or on the Foundation board, or to sit on all those committees that do the work of Federation, you have to make your own gift. Otherwise, you're not going to be in a position to represent the community or represent yourself or your family. So, I think it's really important for a woman to give her own gift.
- Susie Pappas: [22:25](#) But do you think it's important for your family to know you give your own gift?

Leah Trosch: [22:32](#) It's so hard for me to imagine otherwise, so that's so hard for me to answer that question. Because, I don't think my kids would ever think, "Well, why is mom giving her own gift?" I think it's so natural ... I can't imagine it any other way, let's put it that way.

Susie Pappas: [22:49](#) Well, that's it. Very good, okay. So, who are the people that were involved in Women's Department, who are some of the leaders you remember? Who were your mentors and why?

Leah Trosch: [23:11](#) So many women for so many different reasons. So many women contribute different aspects to Federation and to Woman's Philanthropy so, I mean, it's great that there are so many different kinds of women involved. I think you were campaign chair when I was VP, is that correct?

Susie Pappas: [23:27](#) I think so.

Leah Trosch: [23:28](#) Or when you were President? Maybe when you were campaign chair. So, as a couple of campaign chair and president under you and Sandy was really the point where I felt like I was really coming along and really a part of Woman's Philanthropy. So, you guys were an incredible role model to me of how a president and a campaign chair work together.

Leah Trosch: [23:51](#) And it was a really interesting time because we had changed staff and you guys were kind of ... Right? It was right when Marion started. Oh, that's when you became president.

Susie Pappas: [24:01](#) No, no, Marion, Sandy, and I all came in [crosstalk 00:24:05]

Leah Trosch: [24:05](#) At the same time. Right, so a lot of things were changing in a really good way, it was a really exciting time, and you guys ... it was really flawless, it was really great. And, you know we have great relationship and you've always been such a role model to me, you and Norm.

Susie Pappas: [24:22](#) Thank you.

Leah Trosch: [24:23](#) And you know, I just love it. Seriously. I don't even have to ask a question if I wanna know something, you tell me. And I love that. I love that you just say things so clearly and I so appreciate that because I learn so much from that.

Susie Pappas: [24:40](#) Good!

Leah Trosch: [24:41](#) And I really value your honesty. You taught me a lot about being a donor. I mean, you were the person who said to me, "If you're a leader, you make a leadership gift." And I will never forget that. I mean that was, again, so clear and so straightforward. It's the kind of thing you could have on a sweatshirt or something because you really remember it, it's iconic.

Leah Trosch: [25:02](#) Other women ... Doreen. Doreen is one of those incredible ... so warm and loving. Everyone brings something different and she's been on several missions with me actually because she came with us on a Mosaic, another Mosaic, I don't even know. She is the glue that brings people together in such a warm way so she's an incredible role model. She's so welcoming, I always felt so welcome around her.

Leah Trosch: [25:29](#) Marcie has been an incredible role model for me, too. When she speaks I always am so moved by her and she just handles a meeting flawlessly it's really a lot to live up to, but I learn a lot from it.

Susie Pappas: [25:44](#) So, would you describe how you saw being campaign chair when you came in, how did you feel that you wanted to be a campaign chair? Did you feel that there were changes you wanted to make or things you wanted to continue? What was your vision as being campaign chair?

Leah Trosch: [26:07](#) So, I actually loved being campaign chair, I really did. I mean, being president is wonderful too, in a very different way. But I really love campaign chair because it's all about goals and achieving those goals and I just love that.

Susie Pappas: [26:19](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Leah Trosch: [26:21](#) I had a couple goals when I came in. Number one I really wanted to simplify the campaign year, because we ended up having so many different programs for all the different levels and we have such limited financial resources, it was really hard to find the money to put on events. And then we put in all this effort and you get maybe 50 gifts or something, I don't know, something that I could sit down in one afternoon and make the phone calls and get them.

Susie Pappas: [26:46](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Leah Trosch: [26:46](#) So, that was really important, was to simplify the campaign structure. There was a real effort to get younger, newer donors, that was really important. And I just felt the communication was

a really important piece. We weren't really utilizing the different media to do things and I try ... some of my things were kind of silly but I don't mind that I did them because I think it was a worth while experience. I would send videos, or when we were trying to get people to come for telethons I would send a personal note, or a little poem, or a little story, or something like that.

Leah Trosch: [27:22](#) That's actually something I learned from Marcie, who used to write these very personal newsletters, there was always a story about something that was happening in her life. Now of course, when she writes it it's hysterically funny and I'm not funny, but I thought, "Okay, that personal connection is really important in campaign." Because it's all about making that connection with another person and getting them where they live.

Leah Trosch: [27:45](#) And so I really tried to do that. I found that I would send, let's say, it would be an E-mail to 150 people that were on our board or whatever asking them to come and make phone calls, and people really answered me. Even if they couldn't make it, I think they felt like, "Oh, Leah's waiting to hear what I have to say." Even if they couldn't make it they would send me their response with why they couldn't and I just felt that personal connection really got people in the room, really made them work, and they were always showing up for telethons. Not just for Woman's Philanthropy but also for General. You'd come to Super Sunday or some other push and there would be all these women and everyone was like, "Wow, look at all these women that showed up." So that was something I really worked on.

Susie Pappas: [28:28](#) So, when you were in leadership you were able to really use social media. Do you feel that social media became much more important when you were campaign chair?

Leah Trosch: [28:41](#) That's when it was really ... Some of the things failed. It was so interesting, we were at Epic the other night and the same thing that happens at a woman's campaign event was happening. That after they make the ask it's very difficult to fill out the pledge cards, collect the envelopes, the room starts to get noisy, and my husband said, "Ugh, everybody has a cell phone. Why aren't they doing it on the cell phone?"

Leah Trosch: [29:04](#) And we tried that at a Woman's Philanthropy campaign event when I was campaign chair and it turned out it was expensive and for some reason it didn't really work any better.

Susie Pappas: [29:15](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Leah Trosch: [29:16](#) Which was interesting. But I felt it was important to try it, we learn something, even if it wasn't to do it again. We learned maybe it wasn't worth the investment. So, we tried a lot of things that, like I said, some didn't but were worth trying.

Susie Pappas: [29:32](#) So, do you want to talk about what you felt the difference between campaign chair and being president? What were your duties as president?

Leah Trosch: [29:42](#) So, I think being president is kind of more big picture than being campaign chair because it's not about, "I gotta get these dollars raised by this date and this event by this date." It's a little bit more about how everybody feels about Woman's Philanthropy, it's about how woman are represented in the community. It's just a different role, it's more about growing your leadership. It's very different than being campaign chair. I really enjoyed it, but it is a different kind of experience.

Susie Pappas: [30:14](#) And a lot of people that were both campaign chair and president, if you were to poll the women, I think the majority would say they enjoyed their time as campaign chair more than being president.

Leah Trosch: [30:28](#) Yeah.

Susie Pappas: [30:28](#) And I think it's because of what you said, the goals and the [crosstalk 00:30:32]

Leah Trosch: [30:32](#) You have a sense of accomplishment when you finished your event and you've raised X amount of dollars, and you've closed X number of cards, you're like, "Oh, did my job and did it well." Where being president is more of a feeling, it's a little more different.

Susie Pappas: [30:42](#) So, let me zero in on something, when you look back at your time as campaign chair and president, what would you say are your proudest accomplishments?

Leah Trosch: [30:55](#) I was really proud of getting a lot of younger woman. This is so interesting because these are so many of the things that were so important to you.

Susie Pappas: [31:00](#) That's true.

Leah Trosch: [31:01](#) I noticed that, yeah. Getting younger, newer women involved. I think that's, of course, really important and we have a lot of

younger women right now that are leading and moving up in leadership roles and that's really exciting.

Leah Trosch: [31:13](#) Another thing that was really important to me was making Woman's Philanthropy accessible to working women. More and more of our woman are working and the fact that board meetings were in the morning ... I mean, it was just terrible. You're putting up all these barriers for working women and it really bothered me. So, we moved all our board meetings to lunchtime and we provide a little lunch so you can come in, grab your lunch, have your meeting, go back to work.

Leah Trosch: [31:43](#) We had this past year ... was it this year or two years ago? We had our first vice presidents that are working women and that was a huge achievement in my opinion because they are also on the executive committee, I mean, these are important leaders and it may be that we will have an associate campaign chair or a president that is a working woman and that's a really ... it's kind of an overwhelming goal but maybe that should be there also. There should not be anything that a working woman can't do.

Leah Trosch: [32:13](#) We also got a lot of women on the Federation board because we had so many very competent, high-profile women coming up in Women's Philanthropy we were able, I don't know, five or six new women on the Federation board in just the last year or two. So that's been a huge accomplishment, too.

Leah Trosch: [32:30](#) There's some little things, we modified the bi-laws, we changed our newsletter, some of those little things

Susie Pappas: [32:38](#) Those are all good!

Leah Trosch: [32:40](#) They're all good, it's all good.

Susie Pappas: [32:41](#) So, what skills do you think are important to make a good leader?

Leah Trosch: [32:47](#) I think you have to be really passionate about what you're doing, that's number one. Because if you're passionate about it and you can communicate that, then everyone else can be passionate about it. So that's, I think, the number one.

Leah Trosch: [33:01](#) The number two thing is to be a really good listener. It's really important to listen to what people want, what people like, what people don't like. People wanna be heard and if they feel like you're listening to them and then you actually do something and they can see, "Oh my God, she really listened to what I was

saying, she really understands what's difficult for me, what I'm really interested in, where I really wanna go with this." Then they really feel valued in the organization.

- Susie Pappas: [33:29](#) So, we didn't get to this but I'm gonna ask you this now, what staff members did you work with and what was your relationship with them?
- Leah Trosch: [33:39](#) So, I worked with so many. Now, when I think about it, there's probably people that went in and out that I can't even remember their names, because there were so many people.
- Susie Pappas: [33:49](#) One's that you really worked closely with.
- Leah Trosch: [33:50](#) Ones that I really worked close with. When I first came into a leadership role at Woman's Philanthropy, Jennifer Levine was the director. Is that not true?
- Leah Trosch: [34:00](#) No! Jennifer Noparstak, that's right. It goes that far back, right. So, I worked with both Jennifers. It was first Jennifer Noparstak and then Jennifer Levine.
- Susie Pappas: [34:09](#) Okay.
- Leah Trosch: [34:10](#) I think when I was associate campaign chair Jennifer Levine was in charge. Then, of course, Amy started when I became campaign chair, I think that's right.
- Susie Pappas: [34:23](#) Oh, that was an interesting time.
- Leah Trosch: [34:25](#) That was a lot ... I mean, it was all new for her then all of a sudden it was all there in front of me ...
- Susie Pappas: [34:32](#) You really had to teach her the way?
- Leah Trosch: [34:37](#) Okay, I would never say it that ways because Amy is such a good professional and she knows so much about running a non-profit and working with lay-leaders, that she taught me all that stuff and I taught her all the, "Well, this is the way Woman's Philanthropy has done it." Or, "This is the way, blah blah blah."
- Leah Trosch: [34:55](#) So, it was a real partnership and she's been great. She was wonderful to work with.
- Susie Pappas: [34:59](#) Well, that's good. That's great. And did you work with Jessica Goodwin?

Leah Trosch: [35:06](#) Yes, Jessica is wonderful. She's terrific. And a lot of people were involved. Marianne Bloomberg has been working for a long time with me, and Jessica, for a while Megan was involved. I mean, there were so many people that make it happen.

Susie Pappas: [35:21](#) There's a lot of cogs in, yeah.

Leah Trosch: [35:22](#) A lot of support.

Susie Pappas: [35:26](#) So, how were you affected by this transition in staff and also in lay-leadership? How did you view all the different changes?

Leah Trosch: [35:34](#) Well, I mean, change happens all the time, right?

Susie Pappas: [35:38](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Leah Trosch: [35:38](#) So it's both a little scary and a little exciting because there's a lot of opportunity that comes with change. That's one thing, another thing about being a leader I think, is you can't get to stuck in your own ways because if you do then you're just going to be fighting those winds of change, and then nothing is going to get accomplished. So, I think it's really important to be flexible.

Leah Trosch: [35:59](#) And when you have really accomplished staff, even if they don't know every detail about Woman's Philanthropy, it doesn't really matter because they really know how to do things and if you work together things just keep moving along.

Susie Pappas: [36:13](#) Well, I think we've covered a lot of things, a lot of issues, and things that happened while you were president and campaign chair, but is there anything else that you want to say about Woman's Philanthropy or your time here? And of course you're still involved, although you are now a grandma, so you'll be busy with that too.

Leah Trosch: [36:35](#) So, it's funny because now, as immediate past president, I chair the nominating committee.

Susie Pappas: [36:41](#) Oh, that's right!

Leah Trosch: [36:41](#) And I didn't realize it was two years, I thought it was just this year, but I just found out it's one more year after that. So, even though I thought I was finished, I still another year. But no, I've loved my time being involved and I don't see it at an end, I just see my role differently.

Susie Pappas: [36:59](#) Okay.

Leah Trosch: [36:59](#) Right? So, you know, when you're a part of Federation there are a thousand different places where you can be of value and I'm happy to be in any of them, so.

Susie Pappas: [37:09](#) Well, we have been very fortunate to have you. Thank you!

Leah Trosch: [37:12](#) Thank you, it's been my pleasure. Thanks Susie!