



Ranit Braun discusses being part of the Temple since childhood, and planning for the future.

Ranit Braun's Temple Israel journey began when her mother, religious school principal Sheli Braun, "schlepped" 10-year-old Ranit to work with her. She then "graduated" to helping in the office, to TA'ing, to teaching to where we are today.

Ranit is among the Temple members who have signed a Letter of Intent for Temple's Life and Legacy program. She has decided to support Life and Legacy because "I want my child to be able to have a thriving community in the future, so that he can one day bring his partner and children too."

Ranit cannot pinpoint exactly the year that she and then her husband and son became members, but Temple Israel has been a constant draw on her "slightly complicated Jewish journey."

"For anybody, it's complicated in general to find your community," she says, "but with the complications of a convert – albeit when I was an infant – and someone whose skin color doesn't quite match the 'norm', on top of that the 'wild spirit,' and finding somewhere for me to feel welcomed, included and accepted, was often a challenge."

At Temple, she says, she “never felt ‘othered’ or judged, and while it took me some time to formalize my commitment to Temple through membership, I feel like Temple and myself were always B’Sheret. I often found comfort and guidance from members as I was growing up and who stuck with me all those years. Temple offers people the opportunity to really engage in shul life and to help shape our shul’s future. I think Temple and I chose each other.”

She loves the bond that congregants have with each other. “I love reading the comments during services, I love seeing people smile when they see each other and that is genuine and real. You can really feel the history and joy when people gather, and I really like that.”

While she has been involved in Temple in some capacity for two decades, she says that this past year has been the most memorable as she has helped Temple move programming online. Despite the challenges, “it has been the most incredible journey to bring Temple directly into people’s homes. I love working with other Temple members and getting to know people better, I feel like I have been given such a cool opportunity to help Temple move online. We have such a great group of people working to make this happen!”

Braun works full time at Jewish Family Services, but she also finds time to teach grade 2, to be JYG and FROSTY adviser, and to volunteer for Jbaby. Ranit Braun is one of five siblings. “We mostly grew up in Ottawa; my father, Eli Braun, was the Rabbi at Beth Shalom and my mother was the Principal at Temple School. My siblings and myself are all adopted from different parts of the world, and we are all Jews of color. I take a great amount of pride in my family and I have an enormous amount of gratitude for the bonds that we share. My parents and sister and her husband and four kids all live in Israel, while myself and my older sister and two brothers are still here in Canada.”

She is married to Jason Demorest, and the couple have a son named Gideon. But everyone knows him as ‘Gibby’. You may have seen him pop into some Zoom meetings.

Initially it can all seem overwhelming to consider Life and Legacy, she says. “It may seem daunting at first to commit to something like this, wills, estates, lawyers...But when you give it some thought and get past the ‘scary’ paperwork, it all makes logical sense.

“On Tu B’shevat we speak about Honi and the lesson of leaving behind for future generations,” she explains. “This is why we plant; this is why we plan. By making this commitment you are not just leaving money, but you are giving life to your

community. You are giving life to our Jewish values and our future. And we can think from time to time that ‘well, I give my membership fees, what more do you want from me?’ But I think that what the question should be is: ‘What more do I want for my children and my friends’ and families’ children?’ The answer is everything... but I give what I can, and what’s within my power. The Legacy program offers that opportunity.”