

When a couple shares a belief in giving back, together they can impact countless lives—for generations to come. BY CANDACE PEARSON

Making Room For One More

Growing up in the immigrant neighborhood of Boyle Heights in 1930s Los Angeles, Saul Brandman learned the importance of helping others. Even when times are hard, his mother taught him, “there’s always room for one more at the table.”

Many years later, around their own dinner table, he and his wife, Joyce, would talk late into the evening about the causes they wanted to support. Their exchanges were often spirited. “He had his list of favorites, and I had mine,” she recalls fondly. “I learned a great deal from my husband,” she adds. “Most of all, I learned about giving.”

In 1973, Saul established the Saul Brandman Foundation to put into action the principles his mother instilled in him. With his passing in 2008, Joyce now oversees the charitable mission of the Joyce and Saul Brandman Foundation, and its generous funding since 1998 of the institution closest to the Brandmans’ hearts: Cedars-Sinai. “Saul believed in this Medical Center and made it one of his priorities,” she says.

In 1999, as Joyce underwent treatment for breast cancer, she envisioned what the ideal cancer facility would look like. Joyce had faced down cancer once before: in her late 20s, she was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. “It changes you,” she notes quietly. “For me, that change was for the best.”

She imagined a place where women could receive comprehensive support services and the latest treatments backed by research, in a warm, compassionate setting. Saul embraced that vision and helped make it a reality with the Saul and Joyce Brandman Breast Center—AProject of

Women’s Guild and the Samuel Oschin Comprehensive Cancer Institute.

Joyce, who has been a dedicated volunteer at Cedars-Sinai, often counsels women at the Medical Center who’ve been diagnosed with breast cancer. “I tell each new person I talk to, ‘You don’t have a single doctor. You have an entire team taking care of you.’”

At the helm of that team is Edward H. Phillips, MD, director of the Saul and Joyce Brandman Breast Center. “From the start, Joyce and Saul cared about ensuring that our center was designed in a way that is sensitive to our patients’ needs,” he says. “Their involved philanthropy has been an inspiration.”

Born in Brooklyn in 1925, Saul attended Fairfax High and UCLA. After serving in World War II, he returned to Los Angeles and made his name in the garment industry, then entered finance and real estate.

The impact of the Brandmans’ philanthropy is evidenced throughout Southern California and beyond. The Foundation supports more than 100 causes, primarily focused on Jewish services, healthcare, scientific research, secondary education, and youth and veterans programs.

“Saul and Joyce have been critical partners in ensuring our ability to better serve an aging population,” says Molly Forrest, chief executive officer and president of the Los Angeles Jewish Home, where the Foundation recently provided start-up funding for the Brandman Centers for Senior Care. “Their giving has made a huge difference in helping more seniors live independently.”

At Cedars-Sinai, the Brandman Foundation also is carrying out one of Saul’s

final wishes by contributing significant funding for research into acute nutritional deprivation in critically ill patients. Fueled by that philanthropy, pulmonary specialist Michael I. Lewis, MD, has made important discoveries in the laboratory about the role played by EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid, an omega-3 fatty acid found in fish oil) in counteracting muscle wasting. This condition can have a disastrous impact on patients with pulmonary disorders, cancer, heart disease, and other conditions.

“I could not have gotten this far in my investigations without the Brandman Foundation’s support,” says Dr. Lewis, who is director of the Respiratory Intensive Care Unit and co-director of the Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine Fellowship Program at Cedars-Sinai.

“Saul and Joyce Brandman exemplify the kind of giving that extends to a deep-felt commitment to our mission as a whole,” says Cedars-Sinai President and CEO Thomas M. Priselac. “We are immensely grateful for their longstanding generosity.”

Together, Joyce and Saul visited all Seven Wonders of the World. Now, she says, she doesn’t need to travel—though she made time last year to participate in a medical mission to Guatemala with Cedars-Sinai. She plans to continue her philanthropic involvement with the hospital she and her husband considered their medical home.

She is happy to focus on “the best job in town” as head of the charity he established 37 years ago. “This Foundation makes me the proudest of anything I’ve done in my life,” says Joyce. “I’m especially pleased because it means Saul is with me every day.”

