

## Leave a legacy

“Leave a legacy”. We hear this often, and more importantly we contemplate it throughout our lives. As a young person we wonder if our legacy will be remembered because of our abilities in school or athletics. As we grow older, we ponder if we will leave a legacy in our chosen profession or with our family. As we near our twilight years we wonder if we have left much of a legacy at all.

155 years ago, a boy was born of two Jewish immigrants from Germany. This boy’s name was Julius Rosenwald and his legacy changed an entire country. Julius joined the Sears and Roebuck company in 1895 and thrice saved the company with his ideas to automate the order process, diversify the catalog line and when the company had a cash flow problem, he suggested they go public - at that moment he became an instant millionaire.

This would be enough of a legacy for most people, but Julius was not done. He had amassed great wealth, so he turned to his Rabbi, Emil Hirsch, for guidance on what to do. Rabbi Hirsch frequently spoke about Tzedakah and Jewish ethical guidelines. Tikkun Olam (repair the world) appealed to Julius. With these teachings in his heart and mind he visited the Tuskegee Institute as a guest of Booker T. Washington.



This meeting not only changed his life – it changed the lives of 100’s of thousands of African Americans from 1912 well into today. Julius was so inspired that he built over 5,000 schools which followed the model at the Tuskegee Institute educating elementary school children of color. The kids that attended these schools refer to themselves as the “Rosenwald Children”, and these children went on to become Scientists, Teachers, Nurses and Entrepreneurs.

*“I can testify that it is nearly always easier to make a million dollars honestly – than dispose of it wisely.”*

Julius Rosenwald’s legacy is that he provided nearly a billion dollars in today’s value to raise up a nation through education. Tikkun Olam; Julius, indeed, repaired the world.

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