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## Family foundation moves forward

### Ron and Daron Barness tap local exec to maximize philanthropy

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Special to Jewish News

With a prominent member of the local Jewish community at its helm, the Daron and Ron Barness Family Foundation is about to begin fulfilling its mission.

Evan Bernstein, currently the Arizona director for American Israel Political Affairs Committee (AIPAC), will take over the reigns of the Barnesses' philanthropic foundation on April 18 and set himself to the task of maximizing the couple's support of various Jewish and secular causes both locally and worldwide.

"Ron and I have done a very good job as far a preliminary planning, and we're going to hit the ground running," said Bernstein. "I think this is going to be very successful right from the get-go, and I think the community is going to see that impact."

Ron, a 44-year-old real estate executive, said Bernstein was hired as director in an effort to avoid stretching themselves too thin. He added that he and Daron created the foundation out of their desire to increase their charitable efforts, tempered with their hectic schedule.

"Daron and I ... feel like we're really stretched to the maximum in terms of our time," he said. "There are only 24 hours in a day, and there are so many places you can be and so many things you can do when you're just two people."

Ron's responsibilities include serving as president of Retail Brokers Inc., vice president and board member of the Jewish Federation of Greater Phoenix, board member of the Jewish Community Foundation, a member of the board of directors for the Phoenix Symphony and a part owner of the Arizona Diamondbacks.

Daron is vice president of the federation's women's division.

Additionally, the couple founded the Barness Family Center for Tzedakah and Social Justice at Temple Chai in November.



Ron and Daron Barness created a philanthropic family foundation.

*Photo courtesy of Ed Goodman Photography*

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They are also the parents of daughter Jordana, 15, and son Zachary, 13.

Ron said Bernstein's previous stints with such charitable organizations as the United Way and the Sen. George Mitchell Scholarship Institute illustrate his ability to effectively organize, operate, and to carry out the couple's vision for an efficient philanthropic institution as well as to network with other organizations.

"It's going to be a major priority for him to do the research, to network, to create the contacts, and to develop the relationships with these organizations," said Barnes. "I think by having a full-time professional on board to help us, we will be able to take the hours that we do have in the day and really make them count."

The foundation is starting initially with \$1 million, which Bernstein said he will try to maximize through grants, matching funds and partnering with other agencies. While the partnership specifics are still under consideration, the 30-year-old said he's confident he will succeed.

"For me, professionally, the thing I'm probably the most proud of is that, as a fund-raiser, I've had at least a double-digit increase in every single campaign I've ever run," Bernstein said.

He added that by networking with other charitable groups, the foundation will be able to guide other members of the Jewish community who want to get involved with philanthropy but are short on time and are unable to navigate the sea of countless local organizations.

JCF Executive Director Marcia Weisberg said she's looking forward to joining forces with the Barneses and Bernstein in accomplishing such goals.

"We're here really to work in any way that we can that Ron and Daron choose to use us as a resource or in partnership," she said. "(Given) the dollars that are being given away through a private foundation, (you will) want to use strategic thinking."

If the foundation is successful, Bernstein said, he hopes others will follow in the Barneses' footsteps and recruit an executive to helm their philanthropic organization.

Contact the Daron and Ron Barnes Family Foundation, 480-365-1259.

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