



Our Story

Several years ago, when **Karen and Ed Bell** were looking for a home of their own, they took the opportunity offered by Neighborhood Project loans to help establish their family in Oak Park.

“Of course, that program doesn’t exist any longer, but at the time, we were so grateful to Hebrew Free Loan for their help purchasing our house,” Karen said. “We repaid the loan and still live there happily. They were great to us.”

Now grandparents, the Bells are retired and Karen says they have had several health care issues in a short span of time. “Among other things, I needed two root canals done, and I was in a lot of pain,” Karen said. “On top of all the other issues, the estimate to fix my mouth was more than we could handle, and a girlfriend reminded me about Hebrew Free Loan.”

The Bells’ loan, which was funded as part of HFL’s **Project HEAL** (Health Emergency Assistance Loans), enabled Karen to get back on her feet quickly. Project HEAL assists with medical, dental and related health care expenses, and was established with a grant from The Jewish Fund.

“Everyone at HFL was so kind to us, cordial and compassionate,” Karen said. “It was a positive experience for a not-so-good reason, since I was in pain, but they seemed to genuinely care about helping me.”

“I do tell people about Hebrew Free Loan, and how they were there for us. I paid off our loan sooner than it was due so the money would be available for the next borrower, and I have even co-signed on an HFL loan for a friend. I’m so glad this agency exists.”

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