



**Peter Bernstein** grew up at Park Avenue Synagogue and has “lived and breathed the organization as a second home since 1985.” His family joined the congregation following a move from the West Side to the East Side of Manhattan when he was four years old, at which point he began attending Thursday morning minyan with his dad. He attended Congregational School and had his Bar Mitzvah at the synagogue. He and his now-wife, Jennifer, held their aufruf at the synagogue, and in December, his eldest son, Ben, celebrated his Bar Mitzvah at PAS.

Peter’s childhood memories at PAS are many: eating apples and breadsticks in Congregational School, doing tefillah in the Appleman Chapel with members of the community, going to Mexico with fellow students in eighth grade, reading Torah, and learning from Misha Avramoff z”l, the storied Jewish educator who worked at PAS’ Rabbi Judah Nadich Hebrew High School. The lessons he learned at the synagogue shaped his involvement with the community beyond its walls, especially in the volunteer work he did with Project Ezra, a nonprofit dedicated to low-income Jewish elders on the Lower East Side.

Over the decades, Peter’s relationship to the synagogue has “evolved naturally as someone who cares about the institution and wants to help it be the best it can be.” In 2022, he joined the Advisory Council, a position he held for three years. Since July of last year, he has been a member of the Board of Trustees. Between 2019 and 2021, he was co-chair of the Men’s Club with 2024 Simhat Torah honoree Larry Zakarin.

When relaying how his involvement with the club began, Peter laughs before saying, “People joke that I have a hard time saying no. It’s one of my personality flaws.” He recalls how Larry, whom he describes as “a friend, an advisor, and a spiritual mentor at the synagogue,” gently coerced him into the position after pointing out that they make a good team. “I said, ‘Sounds great, sign me up.’” The duo introduced new events to the club, including a virtual scotch tasting during the pandemic and a poker tournament.



Peter is the principal at Alexander Wolf & Son, a general contracting and construction-management company founded 121 years ago by his great-grandfather. There, he works alongside his father, Daniel; their professional expertise informs Peter's work at PAS, where, as a member of the sanctuary committee, he is helping manage the renovation project.

Peter is following in his father's footsteps as a Simhat Torah honoree. "My father is my role model, the person I look up to the most on the planet, and knowing that he received this honor in 1999, it means a lot." Peter describes how "we're a very close-knit family, so 'generation to generation' is very important to us" – a principle that motivates and inspires his work on the PAS board. To him, "making sure that our kids learn the same way we did and are brought up in a similar way that we were brought up is the most important thing. It's about the people and the education and the *Jewishkeit*." Larry sums up his drive, calling Peter "the embodiment of a mensch – thoughtful, generous, deeply committed to family, community, and the Jewish people."

Peter's dedication to PAS and his commitment to its future stem from his longstanding relationship with the synagogue and the significant role it has played throughout his life. Looking ahead, he hopes for PAS to remain "the premier conservative synagogue in the U.S." and is committed to congregants' learning and engagement, emphasizing the importance of prayer and knowledge in "keeping the community strong. I think of PAS as a home and a place where I feel very comfortable and happy and love to be." Through his dedication, he is helping make PAS a second home for all congregants.