Maimonides’ Eight Levels of Charity – Applied to Jewish Literacy

Lowest level is telling someone to just go use Google or another search engine

Level 8 — The donor is pained by the act of giving

Helping someone find information but making it obvious it is a major inconvenience. “FINE, here, see, now you know the answer... bye...”

Level 7 — The donor gives less than he should but does so cheerfully

Cheerfully giving only the minimum information of what was asked for but knowing that the person has more questions and makes no attempts to help further. (Gave what was asked for, but didn’t give what was needed)

Level 6 — The donor gives after being solicited

These are the people that have the training, resources, and/or ability to teach, but want the “honor” of being asked before providing help. The “Knowledge is power” folks. Volunteers only when directly asked and usually for a specified task (Setting up and supporting PJ library event). Won’t return until individually asked again.

Level 5 — The donor gives without being solicited

These are the folks who donate for every occasion to the “Library Fund” and also donates books to the library for the larger community’s use, but not sure if completely applicable. (Here, see if you can use them. If not, you can donate them somewhere else or sell them to buy books you need...) Volunteers by showing up and working, because a need for help is known. Coming during religious school to help littles find books.

Level 4 — The recipient knows the donor, but the donor does not know the recipient

These are the books with the named book plates or other identifying markings (PJ Library); donating because they see the value of the work, but not knowing who may have the need for it. Staff working during times when patrons are not in the library, so that resources are readily available.
Level 3 — The donor knows the recipient, but the recipient does not know the donor

Donors provide quality books/resources with specific groups of the community in mind. (Children/mix marriages/New parents/LGBTQ+/Sephardic families, etc). Staff building targeted displays, ninja placement of books to be ‘discovered’ by a specific patron.

Level 2 — Neither the donor nor the recipient knows the other

This is a library with curated physical and online resources available, trained staff maintains resources and ensures all resources are easily found (signage, more generic displays highlighting a holiday or specific section of the collection (art, cookbooks, etc), annotated resources and link descriptions), but no teaching occurs.

Level 1 — The donor gives the recipient the wherewithal to become self-supporting

Library fully funded with a curated collection meeting a wide spectrum of needs and managed with a trained staff that also teaches literacy classes.