



# Friends of the Russian Bilingual Services Program Newsletter

## BUILDING THE COMMUNITY

We are thrilled to share with you the incredible success of our recent fundraiser on June 7, 2023 in support of the Russian Bilingual Program. It was the first gathering for the program supporters in over three years. Featuring speeches from the program contributors and Hebrew SeniorLife leaders, as well as a slideshow of pictures from the past five years, the event was a huge success with almost 50 attendees and over \$100,000 raised in support of the program.

The tremendous generosity displayed during this fundraiser demonstrates the extraordinary dedication our community holds for our program's mission. We extend our utmost gratitude to each and every individual who contributed, whether through financial donations or volunteering their precious time. These funds are vital to the continued growth of our program, enabling us to provide invaluable support and resources to those in need. With these donations, we can enhance our patients' quality of life by giving them more choices as well as support the staff that takes care of your loved ones.

However, I would like to emphasize that our program's sustainability depends not just on fundraising events, but also on the power of volunteerism. Volunteers not only offer their time and expertise but also bring a sense of connection and compassion that money alone cannot provide. In light of this remarkable achievement, we pledge to organize more events like this in the future. Your feedback and suggestions are crucial as we strive to improve and create more impactful fundraising initiatives. Please read more about our volunteering needs and the value and benefits of volunteering on page 4 of this newsletter. Your support and dedication make all the difference, and we are deeply grateful for it.

*Alexandra Dashevskaya, Director, Russian Bilingual Services Program*



**In this Issue:**

- **Editorial:**  
*Building the Community*
- **Featured Staff:**  
*Karina Asatryan  
Svetlana Yakovleva  
Evoney Chung*
- **Summer Joys:**  
*Testimonials from patients and staff.*
- **Ways to support the program:**  
*The importance of Volunteering and Financial support.*
- **Thank you for your support:**  
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- **Volunteering:**  
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**Русская  
Программа  
HSL**

## Our Featured Staff



*Karina Asatryan*

Karina joined Hebrew Rehabilitation Center 2 years ago as a PCA. She liked working in the field of medicine so much that she decided to concurrently enroll in a nursing program. After completing her studies she is hopeful to become a part of her “favorite hospital”, as she calls HRC, in a capacity of a RN.

Karina has a good sense of humor and enjoys caring for elders. She says, “Life is worth living. Our patients show it to us every day. I find that they have beautiful and unique personalities as well as many interesting life stories to tell.” Karina is energetic and spreads positive vibes. She surrounds patients with kindness and attention and they respond well to her.

Karina is grateful for the welcoming and nurturing work environment. She considers staff members and patients her family. Karina says that she feels their love and support. So, every morning she comes to work with enthusiasm and appreciation. She is highly respected by her team members and families.



*Svetlana Yakovleva*

Svetlana came to the US in 2015 at the age of 33 with her 8-year old son. She initially worked as a chef, but later changed careers and joined HRC.

Svetlana admits that she lost her parents early and always missed their guidance and support. So, she treats patients as if they were her family. She notices that elders smile more and are happier when she chats with them, helps them get showered or just makes them look beautiful. It boosts their mood and brightens the day. Svetlana says that it is seeing patients’ smiles that makes her feel rewarded and reminds her why she loves her job.

Being a hard worker, Svetlana was promoted to a Senior PCA position. Her peers have a lot of respect for her. Svetlana jumps to help if needed and picks up extra shifts. Svetlana shares that she is married and satisfied with her personal and professional life. While working at HRC, she improved her English and made friends. Her son is now 16 and doing great in school. In her free time, she likes to cook something special and stays in touch with her family back in Ukraine



*Evoney Chung*

Evoney’s family emigrated from Jamaica to the US when she was 12. Prior to joining Hebrew Rehabilitation Center, she worked in the Vascular Surgery at Brigham and Women’s hospital for 9 years. In May 2007, she started her career at HRC as a Receptionist/Admissions Assistant in the Social Work Department. Over the years, the position evolved and she began working directly with Bilingual Russian Program, including Interpreter Services. Evoney says, “My job is more fulfilling than any position I have ever held and I can truly say “I love, love, love my job. The Russian community is very much like my home and the fact is we are a team! Working with this group of special people is one of the most fulfilling parts of my life”.

Evoney is always ready to walk an extra mile when it comes to helping our residents. She has a lot of patience while talking to the families on the phone. She has truly become a part of the Russian-speaking community. Evoney understands our way of thinking. One can say that she is culturally Russian.

Outside of work, Evoney is devoted to her family. She has wonderful children and 3 grandsons. Her daughter is studying to be a nurse. She also takes care of her sisters. Evoney has a big heart and everyone who knows her appreciates her as a colleague and as a person.

## Summer Joys



*We are here for our residents. We come up with ideas and activities to elevate their mood, so that they do not feel sad and isolated. That is why we often take our patients outside as much as possible to enjoy fresh air and re-energize.*



*Getting together with each other brings us joy and takes sickness away.*



*We are grateful for all the care. Both Acia and Lana are wonderful. Acia's singing and Lana's energy makes us feel young again.*



*The summer was wonderful! Despite the wet weather Lana was still taking patients outside and engaging them in activities. Patients always look forward to that time. It is very important to change the scene, and admire nature. In a way, it works as a meditation, which certainly relaxes the patients.*



*Everyone benefits from breathing fresh air, especially when it's warm. Personally, I love summer. The sun is shining and I can enjoy my favorite activity: gardening and my friend likes reading.*



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### **VOLUNTEERING YOUR TIME AND SKILLS TO THE BILINGUAL RUSSIAN PROGRAM IS NO LESS IMPORTANT OR VALUABLE AS YOUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT!**

As always, we want to repeat our plea for volunteers as we have had some departures and turnover among our volunteering team. Volunteers have a huge impact on our program and our loved ones. Please come and give HSL patients a gift of your time! Some of them have no families or their families live far away and are not able to visit. In general, volunteering at HSL is extremely important for several reasons. HSL residents need **Companionship**: Many feel lonely and isolated and are desperate for emotional support and social interaction with people who are not HSL staff. Such interactions really improve their **Quality of Life** and enhance their **Well-being**, reducing feelings of depression and anxiety. Volunteers often engage residents in activities, such as games or exercise, which can contribute to their physical health and mobility. They also provide **cognitive stimulation**: Social interactions and mental stimulation through conversations and games help keep residents mentally active and engaged. Residents also need **Community Connection**, as volunteering fosters a sense of community and connects different generations, promoting understanding and empathy among volunteers and residents.

Research has shown that volunteering also delivers major benefits for those who do it. Volunteering provides a **meaningful purpose and a sense of fulfillment**, knowing that you are making a positive impact on someone's life. It enhances **empathy and compassion**, promoting a deeper understanding of human struggles and vulnerabilities. Volunteers acquire **valuable caregiving, communication, and problem-solving skills** that can be very useful later in life. The act of helping others can **reduce stress and improve mental well-being** among volunteers. It **fosters a sense of happiness and satisfaction**. Volunteering often involves working with a diverse group of people, leading to the formation of **new friendships and a broader social network**. Assisting frail and sick individuals can offer a different, enhanced perspective on life's challenges and priorities, helping individuals reassess their own values and goals. Volunteering strengthens communities by supporting vulnerable members and addressing their needs, creating a more inclusive and caring society. It can be a truly transformative experience, leading to **personal growth and a greater appreciation for the value of health and well-being**.

#### **SUPPORT US FINANCIALLY - HELP IMPROVE OUR PATIENTS' LIVES**

- **Give a gift in honor of a special caregiver**
- **Donate in memory of a loved one**
- **Give to help us honor special occasions like birthday & holidays**
  - ⇒ **Give online (make a quick, secure online donation).**
  - ⇒ **Mail a check**
  - ⇒ **Double your gifts through Matching Gifts**

#### **THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!**

Check our website at: [www.hebrewseniorlife.org/giving](http://www.hebrewseniorlife.org/giving) or  
[www.hebrewseniorlife.org/russian](http://www.hebrewseniorlife.org/russian)