



FRIENDS OF THE RUSSIAN BILINGUAL SERVICES PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

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Русская
Программа
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Multigenerational Programs Improve Well-Being for All

Nothing lights up the faces of your loved ones in our Roslindale community like visits from children who participate in our Multigenerational Programs. Children bring youthful energy when they visit that is truly infectious for everyone – patients, children, their teachers and staff, and recent months have been chocked full of events! Here are some highlights.

For several years, we have enjoyed a partnership with the Solomon Schecter Day School. This past winter, kindergarten students celebrated the holidays with us, and their teacher, a Russian speaking musician, led an interactive program that engaged all members of our community. Also in December, we launched a new partnership with the Happy Child preschool, which includes several Russian students and staff members. The creative juices were flowing as students and seniors worked on craft projects together, while the din of lively conversation filled the room.

Our extraordinary Life Enhancement team, and a number of Russian volunteers, have helped make other multigenerational programs accessible to our entire community as well. In the next couple of months, we look forward to welcoming back students from Brandeis University to interview our patients and create bilingual books of their personal journeys, and we are exploring the possibility of a youth art exhibition in the Roslindale Daniels Art Gallery featuring the work of young Russian students from the area. Multigenerational Programs are a two-way street. They not only benefit our patients, but the children as well. The beauty of these programs is that they spread joy and warmth amongst our population, while supporting deeply impactful learning experiences for youth, fostering the growth of a caring and compassion new generation.

We are grateful to work as a team to bring this rich programming to our community. If you are able to share contacts and ideas regarding additional Russian multigenerational program opportunities, please contact Lynda Bussgang – LyndaBussgang@hsl.harvard.edu or Jana Galvin – JanaGalvin@hsl.harvard.edu.



OUR FEATURED STAFF: **Victoria Gorodetsky, NP**



Victoria was born in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, Russia. After watching the news about a devastating earthquake in Armenia she decided to become a doctor to help people. Victoria graduated from a pediatric MD program in Russia and moved to the U.S. in 1996. Her first job in the U.S. was at Hebrew Rehabilitation Center (HRC). She was among the first bilingual employees who joined a Bilingual Russian Program led by Alexandra Dashevskaya. While working as a certified nursing assistant and then as a nurse, Victoria finished a nurse practitioner program at Regis College in 2003.

Victoria says that during these rewarding years at HRC she has experienced personal, professional, and spiritual growth. When working with her patients, Victoria always looks in their eyes and uses a gentle loving touch. Her kindness and warm-hearted personality help her connect with people. Victoria takes her time to listen to patients and answer their questions. Seniors love and trust her. They feel her responsiveness to their needs and allow her into their space.

What's also unique about Victoria is that she recognizes the importance of patient-centered care and treats the patients as individuals. "Being a medical professional, my eyes, ears, and hands are trained to identify patients' medical issues, many of which are age related. At the same time, I see beyond the age, wrinkles, deficiencies, and debilities. I see the human," Victoria says.

Victoria is passionate about helping seniors and feels privileged to be a part of the Russian Program, which she sees as a gift to our parents, grandparents, and the whole Russian-speaking community. "I always feel and tell my co-workers that we are lucky to have such an opportunity to create so much of a Mitzvah," Victoria says. "There are many wonderful physicians, nurses, personal care assistants, therapists and other caregivers with whom I have worked for many years and who are dedicated to helping elders. I encourage all of us to continue to grow, be respectful toward each other and do more of a Mitzvah," Victoria concludes.

OUR FEATURED PATIENT: **Vera Fridman**

Vera was born on July 6, 1925 in Sverdlovsk, Russia (now Yekaterinburg). During WWII, at the age of 18, she joined the army and served in the 29th logistics unit as a truck driver.

Vera regularly donated blood. After that she would often faint due to malnutrition. She recalls that the typical food allowance at that time was balanda (a watery soup) and a piece of bread. During the Siege of Leningrad Vera was evacuated to Sverdlovsk where she worked as a production inspector reviewing the quality of the artillery shells for Katyushas. Vera admits that after witnessing the horrors of the war, she is still haunted by images of severely wounded soldiers and civilians.

In the post-war era, life returned to normal. On September 25, 1945, Vera married the love of her life (also a War Veteran) with whom she lived harmoniously for 69 years. In Sverdlovsk her husband became a well-known seamster

while Vera enjoyed a career at UralMash, a heavy machine production plant. Being a responsible and hardworking person, she had an important position which required business trips to Moscow and meeting with top officials.

Years later, the family decided to immigrate to the U.S. Vera became involved in her house association committee, helped others, and assisted as a volunteer during the elections. Her son Stanislav was an endocrinologist while the other son Vladimir was a leading cardiologist at Mass General Hospital. Unfortunately, both passed away untimely. Eventually, after losing her entire family of 5 people, Vera became very depressed. With the assistance of Clara, a social worker in her apartment building, Vera applied for a long-term care placement at Hebrew Rehabilitation Center. She says that she likes it here, and this place has become her home. Vera developed warm relationships with staff and appreciates the support she receives here.



OUR FEATURED FAMILY MEMBERS: **Leonid & Tamara Yakhind**



Before our parents' (Vladik and Zinaida Yakhind) admission to long-term care at Hebrew Rehabilitation Center last year, we never really thought about what it means to age. It is at HRC that we discovered an opportunity to redefine the idea of aging for the first time. This experience affected us emotionally as it happened to our own parents. Most of the time we do not appreciate things in life until we experience them first hand.

As my wife and I started visiting, we saw a whole generation of people, a whole new segment of life. Every time we saw a wonderful job the staff members were doing when providing care and comfort to the patients, we became more appreciative of their hard work. It made us wonder what we could do to help

bring joy to both staff and seniors. This desire to do something really nice came like an impulse. Having consulted with Alexandra Dashevskaya, we decided to make a video of patients' lives at HRC, specifically featuring many couples who reside there together.

It was fascinating to interview patients and staff. We recorded their extraordinary stories. Everyone's life is unique and we wanted to record as much as possible while our loved ones were with us. The idea was to celebrate their lives and cheer them up, put a smile back on their face and create fun. It goes without saying that smiling and laughing lift one's spirit and elevate mood. It felt extremely gratifying to do this very sentimental, emotional and fulfilling project.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM PATIENTS' LIFE:

CELEBRATION OF LOVE



It was amazing to see that despite their age and life challenges, people can stay so positive, optimistic and joyful! What an incredible pleasure it was to see them laughing and holding each other's hands!

Their love lit up the room and our hearts. It is a great pleasure to be part of our great community and work with such amazing people! Valentine's Day is over, but Love is Endless.

Celebration of Love will continue warming our hearts long into the future. We do our best to preserve these great moments and memories by taking pictures and making videos. Here is the link to the most recent video of this beautiful event so you could share it with family and friends.

<https://youtu.be/il1baTkxgNg>

On February 14th, we had a wonderful Valentine's Day Celebration – **Celebration of Love**.

We are very blessed to have 23 couples on 1 & 2 Berenson floors. We are so happy to have them as part of our community! **Celebration of Love** was a joyous event filled with beautiful music, laughter, singing, and dancing.

You could almost feel "love in the air!"

Our patient couples shared their love stories as well as some of the secrets to a happy and long life together. Some of them have been together for over 72 years! Yet, they still have that sparkle for each other in their eyes!



SUPPORT US FINANCIALLY – HELP IMPROVE OUR PATIENTS' LIVES

- Make a gift to the Annual Fund
- 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
 - Contact us for leadership opportunities
 - Double your gifts through Matching Gifts

"Many of our programs are funded exclusively by Friends and Supporters of the Russian Program. Thank you all for helping us create true home for our seniors."

Alexandra

Thank you for your generosity!

Check our website at: www.hebrewseniorlife.org/giving or www.hebrewseniorlife.org/russian

**Bilingual
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Why Multigenerational Programs Are So Important

One of the biggest threats to the health and well-being of American seniors is loneliness. Recent research has concluded that loneliness and social isolation are major public health concerns leading to a range of health issues such as higher risks of heart attacks, strokes, depression, anxiety and early death. For example, a University of California study found that participants 60 years old and older who reported feeling lonely saw a 45% increase in their risk of death and a 59% greater risk of mental and physical decline than their more social

leading to long-distance caregiving, and many caregivers face extreme pressure to balance work and childcare obligations with taking care of their loved ones, leaving little capacity for meeting seniors' emotional and social needs.

In response to this epidemic, multiple solutions have emerged, ranging from using communication technology such as Facetime and Skype to connect to nursing home residents to new laws allowing Medicare managed care plans to provide coverage



counterparts. Last year's national polls indicate that one in three seniors (34%) reported feeling a lack of companionship and 27% reported feeling isolated from others. This problem is exacerbated for those who are homebound or live in a residential setting or a nursing home. There are multiple factors that contribute to this epidemic: due to advanced age, social circles shrink, friends and relatives pass away, restricted mobility, combined with hearing and vision loss, affect driving, impair communications, and limit existing social connections, multigenerational households are becoming more and more rare. Families are more dispersed geographically, often

for transportation and social services. Bringing multigenerational programs to long-term care facilities is one of the most promising solutions, as they not only reduce isolation, but also bring meaning, a sense of purpose, and joy to frail elders.

Hebrew SeniorLife is on the forefront of fighting this epidemic and has been recognized for the quality of their award-winning programming throughout our campuses. By breaking barriers between young and old, Hebrew SeniorLife is fostering new frontiers in compassionate, world-class care while enhancing the lives of all participant.

Please read about the efforts to bring multigenerational programming to the Bilingual Russian Program on page 1 of this Newsletter and read about all other HSL programs here:

<https://www.hebrewseniorlife.org/multigen>