



# Friends of the Russian Bilingual Services Program Newsletter

**THE JOYS AND CHALLENGES OF AGING AND CARING FOR YOUR LOVED ONES.**

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How do we start difficult conversations? How do we open our hearts and minds to the reality that our loved ones may need help? One way is to support each other and come together as friends to brainstorm and talk about our experiences. Another way is to listen to experts share advice on what could be done to make it easier for families to deal with challenges of caring and advocating for their aging family members.

Over the years, a dedicated group of Friends of the Russian Program has formed to volunteer and support the program financially. This group includes families of current and former residents (some staying involved for many years after their loved ones passed away), physicians, researchers, and some caring individuals who consider helping our elders their mitzvah. A few months ago, this wonderful group put together an exciting benefit event for the Russian-speaking community where guests could gather to support the program and to have a chance to interact and have an unhurried conversation with some of the best eldercare experts about how to best support aging family members. What was remarkable about this event is that we raised funds to support a unique cause, the "Music and Memory Program," an innovative dementia therapy for Russian-speaking patients at Hebrew Rehabilitation Center (HRC). We are proud to report that we have raised over \$7,000! These funds will be spent to purchase the equipment for the program. If you want to learn more about this program, please follow this link: <http://blog.hebrewseniorlife.org/music-and-memory-services-comfort-patients-dementia>

We need your help. Please come and join our growing group of Russian Program supporters! We believe that with your help we will be able to raise more funds, enrich the lives of our residents, and bring innovative services and programs to our Russian-speaking community at HRC.

We appreciate the feedback you have provided to us about potential future events. Please stay tuned for invitations to beautiful and entertaining gatherings in the coming year where you can support a great cause and meet our growing group of the Russian Program supporters.

**Русская  
Программа  
HSL**



## Our Featured Staff: Anna Landucci



Anna Landucci was born in Tyumen, Russia. She was adopted and came to the United States in 2002. Her American family recognized the importance of keeping her cultural heritage, so Anna grew up bicultural and bilingual. In 2015 she graduated from the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth with a nursing degree.

Anna has a lot of interests. She likes to read, and is fond of science fiction. She tries to stay active and enjoys water sports, tubing, hiking, running and mountain skiing.

Most recently Anna became involved with the Medical International Relief Team and went to Cambodia for 10 days as a nurse volunteer where she performed community and hospital work.

Anna admits that she always dreamed about traveling as a nurse to help underprivileged population.

“Growing up in an orphanage and being helpless myself made me develop a strong desire to help others”, Anna says. In 2015, Anna joined Hebrew Rehabilitation Center’s Russian-Speaking Program. She always wanted to work with Russian-speaking people. She feels a sense of culture here.

“This wonderful organization gives me an opportunity to grow as a nurse,” Anna says. She is also a part of a Together Enriching Lives Committee where she serves as a liaison. In addition, Anna

actively participates in a patient engagement program where she enjoys doing various activities with the seniors. Her favorite one is dominos.

## Our Featured Patient: Dora Koltov

Dora Koltov was born in Minsk, Belarus. When Nazis came to her hometown, she was 13 years old. During the war Dora and her parents were evacuated via freight train to Ulyanovsk, Russia. Dora recalls that everyone was starving. A typical daily meal consisted of a piece of bread and water. After the war ended, the family returned to Minsk, where Dora studied journalism. However, two years later her parents convinced her to change her major to dentistry after a couple of famous journalists were detained for political reasons.

Dora met her husband Semyon during her sophomore year in college. It was the post-war period when young men were dressed in impressive military uniforms. She recalls that a handsome man entered her class, looked over the room and sat next to her. All female classmates were jealous that he chose Dora. The couple started dating and got married a year later. They had three wonderful children (a son and twin girls). Dora and Semyon celebrated 67 years of marriage. Semyon’s last name Koltov means “the best” in Hebrew. Dora says that he definitely turned out to be the best husband.

After Semyon passed away Dora felt emptiness and her health deteriorated. She came to HRC in 2015. Dora appreciates the staff’s kindness, professionalism and understanding. She developed a warm relationship with the nursing staff on 2Berenson. Dora also enjoys helping a Harvard University student who visits her every week to study Russian.



## Our Featured Volunteer: Joseph Weisburd



When my family members moved to Hebrew Rehabilitation Center (HRC), I soon realized how good this organization was and wanted to express my admiration and gratitude not only with money donations, but also with volunteering. I enjoy spending time with seniors, listening to their stories, particularly if they grew up in small towns (shtetls), as my parents did. Last year I volunteered to participate in a Rosh Hashanah celebration playing the shofar. I found my audience to be amazingly grateful. Even those who had never lived in shtetls or celebrated any Jewish holidays before listened with interest and attention. Those who observed Jewish traditions in the past shared their memories.

One patient recalled that a typical food served on a festive Rosh Hashanah table was the head of a fish. It symbolized the desire to be the "head and not the tail" during the coming year.

Arkady G. reminisced about gatherings in the synagogue in Mogilev, Belarus where people greeted each other “L’Shana Tovah,” which translates as “for a good year.”

This year we performed a Purim play written in Moscow in the early 80’s. Purim Celebration at HRC turned out to be a genuine holiday for me. I had an interesting role in the play, tasted homemade homentashen and sang Yiddish songs with our audience. Many people danced

and sang along! I found real pleasure in talking and listening to those who reside at HRC, a

unique organization that provides exceptional care to our loved ones.

## OUR NEWS:



## MUSIC AND MEMORY SERVICES ARE OFFERED TO HSL PATIENTS



How many times have you heard a song and gotten a strange sense of déjà vu? With even just a few notes played, you are reminded of people, places, and events you may not have thought about for years. New research is confirming and expanding an idea long held by those who work with Alzheimer's and dementia patients: music has a way of invoking memory. It helps the brain to focus and stay in alignment.

Regina Dain, Music Therapist at Hebrew SeniorLife, says: "Music has the unique ability to bypass cognition. Patients who may not be able to form sentences can recognize tunes and remember lyrics in their entirety." Music is the perfect outlet for those with Alzheimer's or dementia because it can help to shift feelings from negative to positive, reduce stress, and create positive interactions.

Music and Memory is a relatively new trend in Dementia Care. The individualized play lists and iPod players are utilized to stimulate a patient's ability to reminisce, sing, and move to music, feeling an overall better connection to their environment. It improves a patient's mood and decreases unwanted behavioral symptoms.

Dain says that she has already seen the treatment have a significant impact on many patients. They are happier and more social and staff regain valuable time previously lost to behavior management issues.

Volunteers have a unique opportunity to contribute to our patients' quality of life by interviewing patients for their musical preferences, assisting them in listening to music, downloading play lists, donating iPod. The infrastructure of Music and Memory is relying on generous contributions from our supporters. Thank you to all who gave us a head start.

### 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**

*"I am excited to know that my donation was used for purchasing Amazon Fire Sticks and new stereo systems for our Russian program."*

*Anonymous Donor*

***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)

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## What You Should Know About Medications If You Have Elderly Family Members.

Polypharmacy, defined as taking more than 5 medications, poses a major problem in the elderly. By going to multiple providers and specialists, people tend to accumulate a significant amount of prescribed medications by the time they reach age of 70.

However, as we age, our response to medications changes, and some medications can cause harm as our age advances. When this problem is left unrecognized, it may lead to serious side-effects, resulting in hospitalizations and emergency room visits. It's essential to review yours or your loved one's medications with your primary doctor at least once a year to ensure all your prescriptions remain appropriate, given current age, medical conditions and most recent goals of care.

There are certain classes of medications senior patients should avoid. Common allergy medications (antihistamines) and its most popular over-the-counter representative, Diphenhydramine, also known under the brand Benadryl, shouldn't be considered due to high risk of confusion and falls among older adults. Older adults should also be careful in using another popular type of over-the-counter medication, commonly used for pain and fever, called NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) due to their potential heavy impact on stomach, cardio-vascular system and kidneys. NSAIDs include Ibuprofen (Advil and Motrin) and Naproxen (Naprosyn). We also recommend avoiding old school (tricyclic group) antidepressants like Amitriptyline, given their cardio-vascular risk and effect on cognition. Quick-fix anxiety medications, known as benzodiazepines, which include Lorazepam (Ativan) or Clonazepam (Clonopin), are known to lead to falls and confusion among older adults, as well as to potential dependency on them.

Please, be mindful what medications you or your elderly loved ones take since the fine line between remedy and poison, harm and benefit shifts as we all age. Read more about this common problem here:

<https://khn.org/news/americas-other-drug-problem-copious-prescriptions-for-hospitalized-elderly/>

*Kent Bakaev, MD, Medical director for LTCH and RSU in Roslindale*

### There are several helpful steps caregivers can take to improve medication management for your loved ones:

- ◆ **Organize** all medications using pill boxes and plan for more than a week ahead. Find the pill boxes with large individual compartments and large letters, so they are convenient for older adults to use.
- ◆ **Create** a medication list or ask primary care physician or visiting nurse to share one with you. Make sure to keep it updated and include supplements and medications from Russia your loved ones may be using. Ask them to take this list to all their medical appointments.
- ◆ **Learn** about new technology that is now available to help with medication management. For example, medication lists can be shared electronically. Now there are many options for "smart" electronic pill organizers and dispensers. Some of them will sound an alarm when it's time to take pills and that send notifications to caregivers when pills have or have not been taken. There are also motion sensors that will notify you when your loved ones reach out to their pill boxes.