



FRIENDS OF THE RUSSIAN BILINGUAL SERVICES PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

Meeting the Challenge Together

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www.hebrewseniorlife.org/russian

This is a very special issue of our biannual newsletter, dedicated to our outstanding staff going above and beyond in their extraordinary efforts to reduce the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and accompanying social isolation on your loved one. For over 20 years, our staff have been the center and the heart of the Russian Bilingual Program serving the Russian-speaking community.

You've often heard me speaking highly of my exceptional colleagues. I never imagined that our team's strength and compassion would be tested in this way. You cannot be there in person to observe them on the floors interacting with your family members, but let me tell you that we should all be profoundly thankful for the life-saving work they are doing under such extremely difficult circumstances.

Our hearts are full from hearing extraordinary gratitude from families and the community: your donations are vital, your in-kind gifts are deeply appreciated, and your thank you letters bring great joy to our staff as they risk their lives in providing care and supporting our patients to the best of their ability – you'll see excerpts from these notes throughout this newsletter. I am certain that when we celebrate **the 20th anniversary of the program** you will get an opportunity to pay tribute to our heroes whose compassion and hard work has been outstanding. I feel privileged to work alongside such dedicated people.

Alexandra Dashevskaya, Director of the Russian Bilingual Services Program



Русская
Программа
HSL

A Day in Our Lives

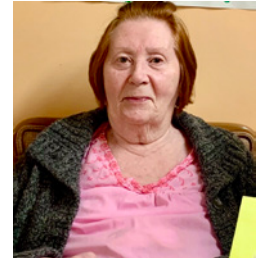
Since you haven't been able to visit, we wanted to share photos with you of what life has been like for your family member these last two months.



Valentina - Our Hairstylist

It all began when patients started asking Valentina where they could get a haircut since the HRC salon was closed. Well aware that she had dressing talents, Valentina decided to give it a shot. In fact, she had been doing one patient's hair for a while. Simple root touch ups made her patient look pretty and feel happy.

Since the pandemic began, Valentina observed many patients whose appearances and spirits had declined. One of the patients was particularly sad. Valentina could not stand it and found time to cut and color her hair. Seeing her patients smiling and thankful during this difficult time made her feel very good. When Valentina noticed that another patient's hair had turned quite gray she spoke with the Charge Nurse who got in touch with the family. They bought Julia's desired hair color. The rest was magic. Julia's PCA made sure she had a shower and Valentina did the coloring. Julia was really blooming, and even started talking, which she had not done in a while. Her husband, also a patient, could not be happier either and kept saying how wonderful and helpful everybody was. Seeing the smiles on the patients' faces, motivated Valentina to do haircuts and coloring more regularly to raise their spirits. Small acts of kindness really brighten our patients' days and make staff feel awesome, too. "Helping people is inspiring and makes me stronger and happier," says Valentina. She earned the nomination "the best stylist ever!"



Connecting Families via FaceTime and Zoom

Despite these challenges, we hope that you are able to derive comfort in knowing how well your loved ones are cared for and that we continue to find small joys, celebrate life, and look for moments of hope.



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Communication is key - I get frequent calls with an update on my parent's condition. Weekly FaceTime calls are helping incredibly - great to be able to see them!"

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"With your help, we've been able to talk to our Dad via FaceTime that is so important for all of us. It's hard to imagine how in such hard times, you've all been able to put other people's needs before your own, and we wanted to remind you that your hard work is appreciated and will never be forgotten."



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"Kudos to staff for doing everything possible to close the quarantine gap by setting up video visits through Skype, Zoom and FaceTime."



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"We especially appreciate the video calls that allow us to feel a little closer despite the restrictions."



Victory Day Celebration: **VIRTUAL CONCERTS AND MORE...**



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“You are my Heroes! I use “Face Time” for talking with my father. I can see familiar faces in blue masks and hear their voices with “OK’s”. And I know that my father is in good hands.”



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“In our family, May 9 was always the Biggest Holiday of the year. My Dad was a war veteran and we always celebrated this day with all our family and friends. It was very important for us to see my mom on FaceTime on V-day and also wish her Happy Mother’s Day!”

BIRTHDAY PARTIES



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“Thank you for the exceptional care and for creating a positive and loving atmosphere. Such self-sacrificing work is rare these days and I am forever thankful to you for it. Every single day I pray for you and your safety. It is your great achievement to bring together such a wonderful team of dedicated professionals”

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“During the time of pandemic and national emergency you went above and beyond your duties and responsibilities. You made our mom and dad happy on their Birthdays in our absence and created a real party for them! This is very hard to overestimate! Surprise b-day cakes and pictures were awesome!”



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

From Olive FACEBOOK Group and BAZAAR SUPERMARKETS with love and admiration!



"You sacrifice your safety and the safety of your families to get there every day to serve, to heal, and to support our dearest. You are bringing them joy, happiness, hope and a gulp of fresh air. You replaced their families during this terrible time. We are so grateful for you being there!"

#Feed The Front Line Health Workers



"We can't visit our loved ones right now, but knowing that they are well taken care of pro-vides comfort to all of us. We greatly appreciate that you always find time in your busy schedule to provide an update over the phone and to connect with us via FaceTime when we want to see and hear our loved ones. Thank you VERY much!"



"We would like to express deep appreciation for what you have been doing for my mom and other patients, for balancing their safety and informing us about their conditions via FaceTime, email and phone. We also appreciate all activities you organize for our parents and relatives despite the lockdown."



"Just wanted to thank every single worker at Hebrew Rehab for the job they all have done and continue to do during this pandemic."



"I am grateful that I can call nurses any time to find out about my parent's situation and be informed about the situation in general. Thank you very much for arranging video calls with my parents! Now, that I can't visit, your attention and kind-ness are especially important. Thank you for celebrating Victory Day and Mother's Day and signing greeting cards."



LEADING THE WAY

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the community has rallied around Hebrew SeniorLife as we go above and beyond to keep those in our care and our employees as safe as possible. Donations to Hebrew SeniorLife's COVID-19 Senior Response Fund, which launched in March, have totaled more than \$1.4 million, including more than \$270,000 in in-kind donations of personal protective equipment. We are incredibly grateful to the members of **the Russian-speaking community** who have stepped up to support the fund with both many contributions and in-kind gifts.

Because of the community support that gives us the resources our staff need to provide incredible care, senior care organizations across the state and country have looked to Hebrew SeniorLife to learn from our best practices. Our mission compels us to care for the most frail seniors – seniors in nursing homes across the state are extremely vulnerable to this dangerous virus – and to freely share our expertise, magnifying our impact beyond those we directly care for at HRC. In May, state government leaders reached out to Hebrew SeniorLife to help the long-term care industry protect residents, patients, and staff during this pandemic. Hebrew SeniorLife is establishing infection control policies for the state that every nursing home must follow. We were mentioned by Governor Charlie Baker during several of his press conferences, when the Governor said that Hebrew SeniorLife “has a lot of credibility on ... infection control.” We are incredibly grateful for the opportunity to influence the care of thousands of seniors across Massachusetts.

