

THE OLIVE PRESS

BY RHODA GOLDMAN PLAZA

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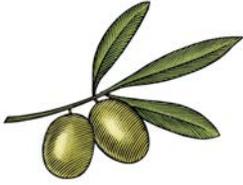
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Above and Beyond



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Ira Kurtz,
Executive Director

Hearing the story of the lost jewelry, I was gratified that our employees showed such initiative and persistence to help a resident. It was a wonderful example of the culture that I have worked to develop and an illustration of what empowered employees can do. I am a proponent of McGregor's management Theory Y philosophy—the belief that people work to carry out meaningful goals, they are inherently trustworthy, self-motivated, valuable, and have the potential to contribute in positive ways. The culture of trust and appreciation supported by Theory Y gives employees the confidence to take the extra step to help residents—to do their jobs above and beyond.

Praise and appreciation are the foundation of this environment. I praise people because I feel that they are not praised enough. Employees who do the day-to-day tasks should be acknowledged as well as those who supervise. To me, all people are valuable and equal—we just do different jobs. We have exceptional people here and I trust their judgment. From the results and thank you letters we receive, I see that Theory Y “works”. We are all on the same page—to benefit our residents, to do good, and to do our best.

November Birthdays

Eva Kashkooli	3
Eva Muttenthaler	3
Bernard Haas	8
Lydia Seebach	9
Toba Herman	9
Marjorie Grayson	14
Maurice Edelstein	20
Sylvia Kaye	20
Joan Haskin	21
Ellen Marquis	23
Amy Hittner	24
Stephen Kaufman	30
Marcella Nardi	30

The Story of Over and Above



“*Bashert*” Amalia stated. “*Bashert* that these wonderful people were here to help me on this day. *Bashert* that it happened on Thursday afternoon when the compactor was not full. “It was a miracle!” she says.

Amalia had inadvertently thrown away her favorite jewelry in the trash; Romualdo and Gumer, housekeeping staff, dug through piles of garbage to find it. They must have felt carrying out a ‘mission impossible’—looking for the proverbial needle in a haystack. But they decided “failure is not an option.”

Amalia tells her story....“I had washed and cleaned some silver jewelry—my favorite pieces—and wrapped them in a paper towel to dry near the kitchen sink. When Sandy the housekeeper came in to pick up the garbage on Friday afternoon, I forgot that my jewelry was in the towels and threw them into Sandy’s trash. Maybe two or three minutes later, I realized what I had done and ran out of the room calling for Sandy. ‘Where is the bag of garbage from my room?’ I asked her. Sandy replied “It is gone. I already sent it down.” (Garbage is dumped into a chute which empties in the dock). Sandy and I ran down to the dock and Sandy frantically radioed Gumer and Romualdo to come to the dock. They thought Sandy had fallen—they rushed to help. As soon as they came, Amalia and Sandy together explained what had happened.

Oh dear! Oh dear!!! The compactor (the machine that squashes garbage before it goes into the dumpster) was already working!! Stop!!! Stop!!! There were hundreds of bags in the compactor, collected from all five floors. How would they find the one with the jewelry?

Gumer and Romualdo were sure they could find it despite there being hundreds of bags already in the compactor. “Oh yes, we knew we would find it,” they said. “It had to be there.” So they started searching....picking up a bag and asking Sandy? Is that the one? No. No. No... Hundreds of bags. They worked for at least an hour...working through the entire contents of the compactor. Checking every bag, Sandy closely screened every bag to identify her bags among all the others. Finding nothing, they moved the bin that the compactor feeds into. As they moved the bin to one side, someone saw a bag hanging onto the compactor; Sandy shouted “That’s it!” They opened it, but did not see the jewelry. Sandy then gave the bag to Amalia who quickly recognized the paper towels and found the jewelry inside. What joy!

Can this miracle be explained? Truly *Bashert* that Sandy saved Amalia’s room for the last before throwing away the garbage? *Bashert* that these people were on duty?

But thanks , Amalia felt, was due. She expressed her gratitude publicly to Sandy, Gumer, and Romualdo in the Resident Council meeting, and has written thank-you grams, and ... and .. and.

“We were just doing our job,” they said.

THANK YOU!

* What it Really Means

Bashert is a Yiddish word that means “destiny”. It is often used in the context of one’s divinely predestined spouse or soulmate. It can also be used to express the seeming destiny of an auspicious or important event, friendship, or happening.

https://www.torchweb.org/torah_detail.php?id=129

Resident of the Month—Maxene Kotin

Born in Sheboygan, Wisconsin (population 50,000) where she lived through high school Maxene laughs and marvels never imagining the travels she'd make, people she's meet, and experiences she's encountered. This is her story.

It all began with my maternal grandfather who escaped from the Russian army as a young man and fled to what he called "America Wisconsin" where land grants were available to those who tilled it of rocks and glacial deposits. He and other Jewish immigrants became farmers, raised families, and would own land-something they could never before realize. My grandmother lived in New York and through a matchmaker, arrived with all her "finery," when in reality as the wife of a hard working farmer all she needed were aprons! It was here in Arpin, Wisconsin. my mother, her sister, and brother were born and where mother ultimately applied and paid her own way through teachers college, working as a nanny, and later taught in a one room school house, grades first to eighth. She met my father through a mutual friend and together they moved to Sheboygan where he owned a business.

During the summers Dad would drive us to Mother's family farm where we had the freedom to explore and do what interested us. We were given freedom and independence, confidence and life skills and never asked Mother "what should we do today?" Several times my sisters and brother creatively built a store out of cardboard and sold empty boxes of corn flakes and matzo products to neighborhood children who used money we designed from paper. We learned from our environment that life on the farm meant that that animals were born, killed and eaten. To this day I remember watching my *Zada* kill and kosher a chicken.

On the Sabbath work ceased, delicious food had already been prepared on a wood burning stove the day before and on these Saturdays *Bubbe* and I, she



dressed in her "finery", would walk together, holding hands, to the only movie theater in town. I would read the ads on the screen and with the extra ten cents that *Zada* gave me to buy sweets for *Bubbe's* sweet tooth and a small bag of popcorn for me. I loved my *Bubbe* so much.

At twelve years old I caught scarlet fever which developed into rheumatic fever (congestive heart failure) and the prescribed treatment at that time (sulfa to

come later on) was a year's bed rest. Gone were the days of playing basketball, roller and ice skating, and future dances and prom.

Mother knew the ticket for my lonely days by plying me with teen age fashion and movie magazines, books about female journalists (hey, that's me!). I was fascinated by fashionable people who were in the news and making things happen, a harbinger of things to come. And, of course, there was homework. After being allowed to go to high school with only very limited physical activity, at the suggestion by my English teacher, I began a social quasi gossip column-everyone wants their name in print. After graduation my plans to leave Sheboygan were already a given. Onward to University of Wisconsin Madison where I majored in English and Journalism and wrote a column about Sheboygan students for the Sheboygan Press newspaper.

It was in my junior year that I got a late-night phone call from my cousin that my Dad had been in an automobile accident and that I should take the first bus home. It was Yom Kippur Eve and Dad was coming home to be with his family for dinner on this High Holiday. While crying I felt that something was wrong at home. My wonderful father died that night at the hospital, a *shiva* had already been arranged. It broke my heart to see my distraught Mother sobbing with friends trying to console her. I ran to her and held her for so long

hoping to make it all go away. Not to be.

It was at this *shiva* that I met Merritt, the man I would be married to for sixty-four years. He had driven his folks in from Chicago to pay a condolence call because his parents knew my parents. *Bashert*.

Merritt, who was a senior at Northwestern Law School, was so understanding (and, oh, so good looking), was calming and even a little humorous. It was a year later that we married as had my *Bubbe* had predicted. We moved to Chicago, my exciting city. When my daughter Betsy was in high school, I felt I needed to do something creative. Knowing little about the business, I opened a public relations business office in a converted bedroom at home, this before having the luxury of computers, email, cell phones etc. My business took off. I loved it, all those television appearances, opening parties and newspaper articles featuring my clients. I left it on a high, sold it, after twelve successful years after which Merritt and this Sheboygan gal went traveling to countries around the world I had only read about.

After living in Chicagoland for over fifty years, I wanted to move to California, to Marin County where our daughter Betsy and husband Paul lived. I wanted to be with my grandchildren while they were growing up and not just be a sometimes-visiting Chicago grandparent to Jazzy, Samantha and Cody. We left our unsold unfurnished home for San Rafael, later to RGP. We have already welcomed three great grandchildren, Ezra, Elijah, and baby Rosie each of whom have become the love of my life. And I'm loving life.

You don't have to be Jewish to be Jew-ish

This column strives to provide a better understanding of Jewish culture.

At the beginning of November, Americans look forward to Thanksgiving, celebrating the early Pilgrims' seeking religious freedom. Today it provides us an opportunity to show gratitude, to others and to G-d for the abundance we enjoy, and to share this gratitude with those around us and in our hearts.

A question was recently asked as to whether Jews celebrate Thanksgiving? Jewish Americans see Thanksgiving as a civil celebration similar to Independence Day, with no specific religious connection. However, the day is generally viewed as a good match of American and Jewish values.

Judaism posits that the gratitude felt in connection with any holiday (or holy day) be expressed by performing deeds of kindness, charity, hospitality and with prayer. There is a deep sense of responsibility prescribed by the Torah. A goal not always achieved but a goal, nonetheless

Is there a similar event in Judaism that centers on appreciation? Funny you should ask. In fact, the Jewish people have many opportunities for expressing thankfulness throughout the year. Purim commemorates the salvation of the Jews from extermination. And Passover—one must certainly recognize the thankfulness inherent in the story of the Exodus. Shavuot recalls the Revelation of the Torah on Mt. Sinai and Sukkot, associated with the blessing of the Autumn harvest. Oh, and let's not forget Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights, also gives rise to a powerful message of thanks for allowing the Jewish people to regain their religious freedom. But that's an issue for the next month.

So, there it is. Thanksgiving offers a wonderful spirit of togetherness to Americans of all backgrounds. For those who are blessed with the bounty around us, let's strive for the goal noted above by showing compassion toward others less fortunate while at the same time reveling in the blessing of our diversity and our togetherness.

Put your written questions in the mailbox outside the administration office or email them to (askrgplaza@gmail.com)



Health Notes

Adrienne Fair, MSN, RN,
Assistant Executive Director

Above and Beyond... and the Great Beyond

Very often, I find myself marveling at some detail of care or particular kindness demonstrated by health services staff. Indeed, all departments show such attention to their work – and really get to know residents well. I hesitate to single out any particular staff-member because everyone takes such genuine pride and responsibility for their work. Without naming names, I would like to take a moment to sing the praises of RGP staff.

If you have ever had the pleasure of dropping by the Terrace, Memory Care, you probably noticed some fantastic resident fashion. When I walk up there in the morning, I can smell shampoo from all the showers – and residents are sporting their best outfits. Care staff are not only keeping residents clean, but also take pride in jewelry choices, hairstyles, lipstick, and brightly patterned clothing. This may seem trivial at first glance, but that extra work on the part of care staff allows residents to really look and feel their best.

I am also impressed at how well staff know resident routines. This may make you feel a bit paranoid, but the servers can probably predict what you want for a meal before you order. Likewise, the Med-Techs are adept at finding you at any given time of the day for your medications. When a resident seems a bit confused or more tired than usual, caregivers notice this – and notify nursing staff. What was that song by The Police? “Every step you take, I’ll be watching you.”

Taking care of someone is really an up close and personal interaction. Caregivers provide bathing, dressing, and toileting with such graciousness and dignity – I truly admire how much love and attention care staff pour into their work. One example in Memory Care comes to mind in particular: a resident with memory loss called her main caregiver “Mama”.

She looked for this caregiver to take care of her, and to comfort her when she was worried. This is really a wonderful compliment – to provide such loving care, that a resident with memory loss would mistake you for her own mother.

RGP care staff really get to know each resident as a unique individual. I can’t even count how many times care staff have been brought to tears when a resident under their care has passed away. One family member described how RGP staff all stopped what they were doing and bowed their heads as her mother’s body was transported away by the mortuary. Caring for residents in their final days is truly an honor. Health Services, and all RGP staff, along with Hospice, have the responsibility and privilege of making a resident’s final days as comfortable and fulfilling as possible. Again, this is a real honor – to provide care, support, and kindness to residents and their families at the end of life.

Let me change the subject a little bit – to how far RGP residents have gone above and beyond lately. At our October 19th on-site flu vaccine and Pfizer booster clinic, we provided close to 200 Pfizer boosters and 150 flu shots. As I write this article, our vaccination rate for residents is at 100% for the flu—and almost 100% for the booster for residents who received the Pfizer vaccine. Staff are also nearing 100% vaccination for the flu. Going forward, we are facilitating flu shots and COVID boosters for new residents, and those who received COVID vaccines other than Pfizer. Anyway, this was my round-about way of complimenting residents for taking all these shots in the arm for the good of the community. Aren’t we amazing?



Candiece Milford,
Managing Director of Marketing

Hiding in Plain Sight

We are blessed with extraordinary staff at all levels whose daily kindnesses and generosity of spirit is pervasive. When people walk into the community for the first time, they are visually pleased but have no idea that the true beauty of Rhoda Goldman Plaza lies in treasures hiding in plain sight . . . the 162 full time staff who serve our 137 residents.

An amazing example of one staff member who neither seeks nor wants praise is our “Wizard of Odds”—what are the odds that one person can orchestrate the smooth internal and external maintenance of a healthy, seven-story building? Only our own Samson Legesse.

When I came to RGP five years ago, the Maintenance Department area was a dark maze. With years of accumulated equipment, furniture, and spare parts piled up, there wasn’t an inch to spare. It took over six months for Samson’s staff to organize it, while also troubleshooting resident requests around the building. Today the Maintenance area is so immaculate, you could have an art show in there—new, clean flooring, white walls, store rooms for each department to store their goods, and all the tiny screws, nails, bolts etc. meticulously organized in their own shelves. It is a masterpiece of organization.

Our Wizard also manages the updating of twenty to thirty apartments every year, and manages his staff as they fulfill resident requests, clear blocked pipes, and hang art shows. Samson coordinated the replacement of that massive skylight in the Lobby, replaced aging windows, solved a major annual flooding problem, oversaw the recent cooling tower replacement on the roof using an enormous crane, updated all the laundry rooms

and the gym, and is currently overseeing the installation of tempered glass panels on the third floor terrace with subsequent plantings of flowers. This is just a sampling of a huge job this quiet and talented man handles.



As you know we also have live, 24/7 receptionists. Have you ever stopped to witness just how much they handle? I think they were born multi-tasking. It’s almost like they’re octopuses,

constantly in motion, responding in the moment to telephone calls from families, doctors, vendors, and from residents, managing the parking gate and lower lobby access, making sure everyone signs in, including a myriad of vendors, signing people in and out, always troubleshooting residents who come to the window with a request, dealing with radios when caregivers check in and out. I have to stop. The list goes on and on and it exhausts me listing just these few tasks.

It’s so easy just to expect service and never really reflect on the people who deliver it, when, in fact, we have a goldmine of talent and dedication on staff. We don’t make a big deal of it. Going above and beyond is just what we do while hiding in plain sight . . . and we love doing it!



Elizabeth Wyma-Hughes
Director of Resident Services

It's the Little Things

“The world, and in particular, a good segment of our country, could learn a great deal about being humane, supportive, caring and collaborative from RGP. I am so grateful that my sister is there, and that I am treated like one of the ‘family’ members.”

Letters of gratitude make our day. They seem to indicate that perhaps we are doing things right. Doing things right starts with every employee, from the first day. To new hires, the first thing I try to impress upon them is that this is our residents’ home, and that it is essential to treat it as such.

Our Front Desk staff learn a myriad of technologies to assist residents in their life at RGP—camera systems, radios, phones, etc, but learning to recognize residents and be able to address them by name is among the most important. We want residents and their loved ones to feel welcomed immediately and know that they can always ask the staff at the Front Desk for help. Time and time again I’ve had residents express their amazement that the staff are able to remember each resident and share how comfortable it makes them feel.

We start with knowing residents’ names, but quickly move on to getting to know friends and family members and becoming familiar with residents’ routines. We know the late risers

(don’t call before 10 am!), the people who pick up their mail as soon as it arrives (they’ll remind us to put up the “Mail is Here” sign if we forget), and those who go out for their morning walk like clockwork (and we worry if they aren’t there at the usual time). Each quick conversation gives us a bit of insight into what is happening in their life. The attention to detail is what makes the difference.

Around this time of year, the Front Desk starts getting a lot of calls from residents and family members asking how they can contribute the Employee Appreciation Fund. (Make checks out to “RGP Resident Council” and put them in the payment box or bring them to Administration office.) For those who don’t know, the Employee Appreciation Fund was developed by the Resident Council in lieu of tips as a way to thank our hourly employees for all the work they do throughout the year. Every year at the annual holiday party, checks are distributed to hourly employees. This year we will have our second Employee Appreciation Week (filled with lots of food, raffles, and themed dress days) to make up for not being able to host a large party.

When residents or family members ask about other ways to show their appreciation, I remind them about “Thank You Grams”—a way for residents to express their appreciation for a staff member who has done a particularly good job. The employee gets a copy; it is kept in the employee file and considered when we offer merit-based raises. Sometimes a resident needs only one thank you gram to thank an employee for going above and beyond, others may take a stack to share gratitude for the many staff members who touch their lives on a daily basis.

The Treasure Across the Street

by Jeanne Halpern, Resident

The large, beige brick building at 2200 Post Street, right across Scott Street from RGP, was conceived in 1887, born in 1897, wed in 2012, and has parented numerous offspring in our neighborhood. Of course I'm referring to the original Mount Zion Hospital (MZH). It has, in its illustrious history, improved the well-being of wave upon wave of 20th century immigrants, responded to the human consequences of World Wars I, II, and Vietnam, and worked on medical emergencies including the AIDS epidemic. It now bears the official name UCSF/Mount Zion.

Where it was once a crowning jewel of San Francisco's Jewish Community, which, from the outset, accepted needy patients of all faiths, it is now a nominal part of California's medical and educational systems.

But why "Mount Zion?" Why in this Western Addition neighborhood? And why such a magnetic attraction for doctors, medical students and patients over the years? Though the term Mt. Zion refers to the most eastern of the two hills on which ancient Jerusalem was built, Mt. Zion generally means Jerusalem itself, as it often does in the Old Testament. And so, the hospital's name unmistakably reflects its Jewish beginnings. Notably and unusual at the time, it was a San Francisco hospital that welcomed Jewish doctors on the staff.

On November 3, 1887, forty-three members of San Francisco's Jewish community met to plan a hospital for the purpose of aiding the indigent sick without regard to race or creed, and to be supported by the Jewish community. In 1897, when it was dedicated, Mt. Zion began in a wooden building on the south side of Sutter Street, with twelve beds and two surgical suites, becoming the first Jewish hospital in the West. This neighborhood location between Divisadero and Fillmore Streets had, by then, become home to many poor European immigrants. Gradually, and especially after the 1906 earthquake, it had also become a thriving Jewish community with markets, restaurants, theaters, and even a roller skating rink. Since then, Mt. Zion's prominence grew because of its medical innovations such as the Psychiatric Clinic and the Alternative Birth Center; its inclusion, from the start, of psychological and social services for the larger community; and its nationally respected research and teaching.

The first thing Dr. Herbert Goodman, former President of the Medical Board and Chief of Staff at MZH, said to me about his forty-four years at Mount Zion Hospital was, "We never turned anyone away." When other hospitals refused to admit patients of color or patients without money or insurance, Mount Zion accepted them. He also said the emphasis for all patients, whether after surgery or other hospitalizations, was to enable them, as soon as possible, to recover at home.

As we talked, Dr. Goodman's pride in what he called "the wonderful history of the hospital" was evident. He mentioned several of the programs at MZH that had helped attract large numbers of medical interns and residents from around the country—in those long-ago days when private hospitals were also teaching hospitals.

Among the specialties MZH was noted for, were its community-based clinics. The Psychiatric Clinic, for example, was overseen by MZH professionals; it also included psychiatric and psychoanalytical consultants who participated in teaching the hospital's residents. Among these was RGP's own Dr. Richard Greenberg, who had a psychiatry practice in San Francisco and was also a clinical professor at Langley-Porter at UCSF. Dick described Mount Zion as a highly prestigious center for psychological treatment and education. Another noteworthy psychologist teaching at MZH was Dr. Erik Erikson, who was also conducting research at Berkeley for his soon-to-be famous book *Childhood and Society*, published in 1950. At the MZH Psychological Clinic, Erikson treated U. S. veterans suffering emotional battle scars from World War II.

Another nationally known program was the Alternative Birth Center. The ABC, implemented at Mt. Zion in 1976, truly was an alternative to the birth process we experienced before the 1970's. Judith Bishop, a nurse-midwife at Mt. Zion through the 1980's who delivered hundreds of babies there, describes the ABC this way: "Instead of separate places for arrival at the hospital, labor, delivery, recovery, and baby-to-the-nursery, the ABC was based on a concept of one-stop-birthing. It offered, in fact,

an opportunity to enjoy the feeling of an at-home delivery with the reassuring back-up of hospital specialties like emergency procedures, pediatrics, and surgery.”

A cover article in the August 17, 1978, *Bay Guardian*, titled “The Birth Story,” underscores the attraction of Mt. Zion’s program. “So common are these centers today, it’s hard to believe that when Mt. Zion opened its own in May 1976, it was the first ABC of any private hospital in the country.”

Even as MZH continued to improve and expand its internal activities, the world kept sending new challenges. In the late 1930’s, a broad cross-section of German-speaking Jews had begun to arrive in San Francisco, which stopped when America entered WW

II. For them and also for Holocaust and other survivors, MZH provided free medical check-ups, counseling, and family care. Next came thousands of Russian immigrants in 1971-79, and more thousands in 1991, when the Soviet Union crumbled. As it had at the beginning of the century, especially after the 1906 earthquake, Mount Zion ended the 20th century by taking care of Jews and a mix of ethnic groups and nationalities as varied as the restaurants in the Fillmore.

And then it didn’t. In 2012, when MZH’s cash reserves could no longer support the uninsured and neediest among us, and UCSF was hungry for centrally located hospital facilities, a new entity was born: UCSF/Mt. Zion. But is Mount Zion part of what remains? Yesterday, I thought

I’d walk up the stairs and into the old Mount Zion Hospital (where I’d never been) to find out.

A woman at the top step told me there was no way to go in there; I had to go through the doors of UCSF/Mt. Zion on Divisadero. There, none of the three people I queried could imagine why I wanted to go into the old building. I told them about this column, said I wanted to see the photographs that Dr. Goodman had told me lined the walls. “No,” said a young man, “they were all taken down about three weeks ago.” I

nevertheless talked my way in, escorted – and he was right. Clean white walls greeted us, with one framed plaque, but when I took out my camera, he said, “No pictures allowed. This whole building is going to be redone.” I thanked him, walked outside and circled the block that now

contains UCSF/Mount Zion.

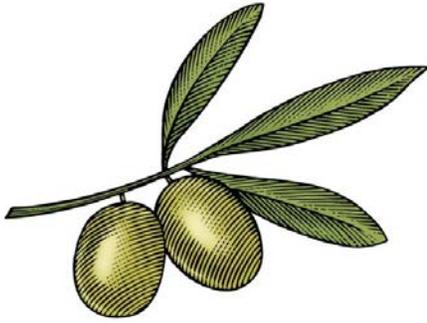
As I walked down Sutter and onto Scott, I saw, of course, Rhoda Goldman Plaza. And then I remembered: a book I’d read for this column had said that Rhoda Goldman had actually been one of the presidents of MZH. When I got upstairs, I found it. Calling her “the most influential lay leader of the Bay Area’s Jewish community,” it confirmed that she had, indeed, successfully led MZH through difficult times of transition in the 70’s and 80’s.

As I stared out the window toward Mount Zion Hospital, I thought, maybe “the treasure across the street” is no longer an old hospital but our own current home, centered in the old neighborhood and carrying its own hope for a well-cared-for future for us, and those who will follow us at Rhoda Goldman Plaza.



Our intrepid reporter approaches Mount Zion Hospital.

photo credit: <https://www.ucsf.edu/locations/mount-zion>



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*Founded by Jewish Family and Children's
Services and Mount Zion Health Fund*

RHODA GOLDMAN PLAZA

The appeal of Rhoda Goldman Plaza is undeniable. Older adults and their families prefer our unsurpassed assisted living and memory care community enriched by culture and tradition.

Residents enjoy superb, “made-from-scratch” cuisine that is always well reviewed by our most vocal critics; our residents! While our dining selections please the appetite, accommodations showcase spacious, private apartments designed to maximize space and comfort. In fact, we’re re-defining your life as Living Well With Assistance—we believe our community is every bit as good as a five-star hotel. And, professionally trained, courteous staff promotes your health and well-being with choices of activity programs both on and off-site.

Our Terrace Memory program provides specialized memory care to residents through therapeutic activities that enhance physical, mental, and emotional health. Both privacy and companionship are afforded on our self-contained Terrace.

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