



Please Send Us Your Photographs!

The Jewish Press is seeking photographs of past or current Residents of the Rose Blumkin Jewish Home for use in this year's Passover issue, which publishes on March 30th. Photos of Residents who have lived at the Home any time since its opening in 1982 are welcome!

Photos may or may not include other family members or friends and pictures of personal or Blumkin Home celebrations are especially encouraged. Photographs of Residents in their younger years are also being sought; think weddings, military uniforms, business people or homemakers in action.

Photos in good condition (no polaroids) need to be labeled with dates, names and where and when they were taken.



This information can be included in a Post-It note on the back side. Pictures need to be submitted to Carol Katzman, Editor of the Jewish Press, by no later than March 1st. Photos will be scanned and can be picked up at the Rose Blumkin Jewish Home after March 30th.

If you have further questions, please contact the Jewish Press office at 334 - 6450.

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A New Beginning Is Now Underway

a member of the Steering Committee. "Our Home is clinically solid, and our reputation as the best long-term care facility in the region is well earned. But the Blumkin Home was built in 1982, and the philosophy of health care has changed in those twenty-four years. Residents and their families deserve even more than we're delivering. With that in mind, our mission is to ensure that the current building evolves from its traditional hospital-like feel into a dramatically transformed, totally new living environment, one that more closely resembles the kind of comfortable, inviting home we'd custom build for ourselves. A home that people will be happy to live in and that their families and friends will enjoy visiting."

Upcoming issues of "Traditions" will highlight specific areas of the Home, including the new "Main Street" area and special care unit. To talk about the many options available to the community in support of the new Rose Blumkin Jewish Home, please call Howard Kooper at 392-1800.

With groundbreaking completed and prototype rooms under evaluation, things are well underway for the new Rose Blumkin Jewish Home.

Part of the vision statement of The Rose Blumkin Jewish Home and Jewish Senior Services reads, "The fact that people are living longer is both a blessing and a responsibility. Judaism teaches that the elderly must be held in the highest regard; that they are worthy of special treatment. It is our responsibility to support them."

When the Rose Blumkin Jewish Home building was new, it stood out as a premier facility, and many health professionals still credit it with providing the highest quality of care available. But studies made by the Steering Committee overseeing the building project prove that Omaha can't rest on its laurels. "Our goal is simple and attainable," says Mike Silverman, Blumkin Home Executive Director. "We have an outstanding staff committed to exceptional care. Now is the time for our facility to catch up with our care reputation. It's time for us to create a new Blumkin Home that represents who we are today; a Home that will serve the frail and well-elderly of our Jewish community for decades to come."



Aerial depiction of the new entrance to The Rose Blumkin Jewish Home.

Rose Blumkin's late daughter, Frances Batt, agreed. "My mother was a revolutionary. She would say you never want to stand still. There are times to make changes. If we can improve ourselves, we must go forward and look to the future."

"The driving force in this project went far beyond our obligation to house and feed the Residents of the existing Blumkin Home," said Bob Belgrade, President of the Board of the RBJH and Jewish Senior Services, and

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Intergenerational Activities Abound

Everyone knows that children entertain and bring vitality to any event, and the Residents at the Blumkin Home often get the chance to share their activities and holiday celebrations with youngsters.

Sukkah decorating takes place every year at the Home and the students at Friedel Academy look forward to this small way in which they can brighten the lives of seniors. Many Residents enjoy tea on the patio and take time to read the New Year cards hung outside as decoration.

During Grandparents Day festivities in August, Josh Polack, 7, was at the Home to celebrate with his family, including his 97 year old Great Uncle, Ed Berkowitz, a Resident of the



Adults and kids alike enjoyed the Pancake Man on Grandparents Day.

Home. These types of gatherings are planned by the activities staff to bring the ages together for fun and family time. Seniors enjoy the festivities and the company, and children enjoy

the antics of such performers as the Pancake Man, who entertained the crowd that day.



Kids from the "Children's Development Connection" visited and entertained Residents the week of Thanksgiving.



Residents and Friedel Academy students look on as Catherine Kuiper from the Fontenelle Nature Association educates the crowd about animals of the great plains during an intergenerational program.



Friedel students pose under their Sukkah decorations at the Home.

Thank You NCJW!

A big note of thanks to the National Council of Jewish Women for the new automated blood pressure machine they donated to the Rose Blumkin Jewish Home. The donation was made in honor of Sue and David Meyers' 50th Anniversary.

This automated machine can check temperature, pulse, blood pressure and oxygen saturation all from one portable machine on a rolling stand, where previously all of these vitals had to be checked manually with separate pieces of equipment. This is an enormous help to the nursing staff at the Home and a benefit for all Residents.



Nurse, Shelly Spencer, checks Norm Lincoln's blood pressure using the new, mobile Spot Vital Signs machine.

You Could be Having VISIONS

VISIONS is an outreach group offered by Jewish Senior Services for active retirees to whom age is just a number and who are vigorous and eager to pursue new adventures.

Theater outings, mystery trips, educational programs; members enjoy many diverse presentations with cultural and social events planned throughout the year. Luncheon meetings with guest speakers and entertainment are held every other month at the JCC and other restaurant locations.

Recent outings have included trips to the Hotel Pattee in Perry, Iowa and a tour of Girls and Boys Town. The Dancing Grannies performed at December's luncheon meeting along with a presentation on senior fitness by Ellen Jackson of the JCC Physical Education Department.

Upcoming plans include local theater events and a trip to Minneapolis. VISIONS is currently taking members for 2007. If you're interested or need more information, please contact Maggie Conti at 330-4272.



We're Always Entertaining!

Have you attended one of the recent concerts presented free of charge by Jewish Senior Services and The Rose Blumkin Jewish Home?

Did you know that recent performances have included acts ranging from the Avi8ors, a World War II era musical ensemble, to the Heartland Philharmonic Orchestra?

These community concerts are part of the outreach services offered by JSS. They are open to everyone in the community and to Residents of the Blumkin Home. "These quality concerts are a great way to bring community seniors together for an enjoyable evening and to also stay connected with Jewish Senior Services", says Maggie Conti, Director of Activities and Outreach Programs for JSS and the Rose Blumkin Jewish Home.



Dr. Christopher Stanichar conducts the Heartland Philharmonic Orchestra.

Music is one way many Residents at the Home find joy and entertainment. The programs being offered are top quality performers such as the Sweet Adelines International. This group of 47 singing and dancing women recently performed a one-hour show at the JCC featuring songs like "Take a Chance" and "We are Family."

The Heartland Philharmonic Orchestra performance included a

symphony of players performing music from Jurassic Park and Phantom of the Opera.

Sound Interesting? You're always welcome! Contact Maggie Conti at 330-4272 for more information on upcoming events.



The Sweet Adelines sparked!

"Getting to Know" Our Social Work Staff

Social Workers at the Blumkin Home were the focus of a recent "Getting to Know You" luncheon, where Residents could sit with them and spend some time gaining more knowledge of the background and personal interests of some of the people so integral to the Home's success.

Special guests of honor were Bert Benson, Abigail Erpelding, Shelly Fox and Shane Kotok. Residents dined and chatted with them and then got to hear each of them speak a bit about themselves.

Bert Benson, who previously served the Home in an activities position, has now been with RBJH for twenty-one years. During her comments to the Residents, Bert said, "It's a wonderful place to work. I'm privileged and I feel honored every single day to know all of you and to hear your stories and to help in any way that I can in your day-to-day life here at the Blumkin Home."

Shelly Fox, a staff member for three years, performs admissions and community outreach work. She followed Bert's comments by saying, "I absolutely adore my work and working with seniors in the community. Bert used the word 'privilege' and that's just a perfect word to describe the way we spend our days. It is an absolute privilege to get to know, to assist and help seniors in the community as well as the folks that live here at the Blumkin Home."

To finalize the event, Norm Lincoln, President of the Blumkin Home Resident Council, thanked each of the honored guests for their service to Residents.

It's dedicated people like these who make the Rose Blumkin Jewish Home an enjoyable experience for every Resident, every day. The Home is also privileged; privileged to have these staff members with us. Thank You!



Staff and Residents dined together at the "Getting to Know You" luncheon.



Norm Lincoln, President of the Resident Council, presented each staff member with a gift of thanks.



Residents and their families already know what a fantastic facility the Rose Blumkin Jewish Home is, and about the support available through Jewish Senior Services. The recent publication of a group of new brochures allows JSS to better communicate the range of services currently being provided, including outpatient rehabilitation and short-term care following hospital stays. To receive more information call 330-4272.

Model Resident Rooms Improve and Evolve

The usability testing of two prototype Resident rooms at the Rose Blumkin Jewish Home has led to a major design change.

“We’ve redrawn the blueprints to enlarge each room – single and double – by at least four feet,” said Mike Silverman, Executive Director of Jewish Senior Services and the RBJH. “This added space means the rooms will now more easily accommodate oversized lounge chairs, and this improvement ensures we’ve actually built the kind of rooms that our Residents want and need. The time we’re taking at the beginning of our New Beginning project lets us focus on details and anticipate possible contingencies,” Silverman continued. “We know that poorly thought-out decisions can be costly, so we’re following the old carpenter’s adage – measure twice and cut once – to show the community that we’re acting responsibly.”

In planning Resident rooms for the new Blumkin Home, it has been kept in mind that while functionality is key, special attention has been paid to creating a less institutional, warmer environment. “The institutional design of the current facility interferes with the level of control that our parents and grandparents deserve to have



over their lives,” said Silverman. “The major improvements at the Blumkin Home will have a positive affect on the Residents’ personal comfort, privacy, sense of independence and overall quality of life. That’s of prime importance to us.” According to Silverman, every Resident room will be fitted with longer, lower windows so those who are bedridden or in wheelchairs will be able to enjoy a view of the outside. Each room will get new flooring, wall coverings, furniture and enhanced lighting,

and separate thermostats will allow Residents to control the individual temperature in their rooms. Resident bathrooms, in addition to being enlarged so staff can more easily provide necessary assistance, will feature ceramic tile floors, ample counter space and cabinetry for personal items. “We’re touching everything in each room to ensure we provide the very best for our Residents,” Silverman said. “The new Blumkin Home will be rich with amenities.”

RBJH Reaches Out at Chanukah

Residents of the Home enjoyed Chanukah activities ranging from special concerts and sing-a-longs to latkes and sfnaiyout. Jewish Senior Services also reached out to the residents of Livingston Plaza with a Chanukah Tea on December 19th.

RBJH Staff prepared and served latkes, fresh fruit and desserts to Livingston residents while Jonathan Rathsam lit the candle and performed traditional songs for the crowd, accompanied by Esther Wax.



RBJH staff prepared latkes themselves for Livingston Plaza residents.



Jonathan Rathsam entertained the crowd.



Livingston residents appreciated the festive atmosphere.

Congratulations!



Jose Delbosque

Recipient of the 2006 Jack and Sonia Shragar Employee of the Year Award

Outstanding employees like Jose Delbosque, an Environmental Services Aide, were celebrated on December 20th when he received the Jack and Sonia Shragar Employee of the Year award. Jose has been with the Rose Blumkin Jewish Home for six years and his work has been exceptional. "His dedication to our

facility, our staff and our community is outstanding," says Mike Silverman, Executive Director of RBJH. Quarterly winners included Valentina Etus, Tony Smith and Juliana Naw from Food Services; Rick France, Activities Aide; Mira Loftus, CNA; and Linda Fitzgerald, Activities Director. Thank you all for your efforts and congratulations!

New Discussion Group Needs Members

Come help facilitate a discussion, or just volunteer your opinion. The members of the Blumkin Home's discussion group are looking for individuals from the community who are interested in joining Residents to share their personal stories, discuss current events and visit with the group.

This energetic and motivated collection of people from the Home and the community meet on the second and fourth Thursday of every month from 3:00 - 3:30 pm in the RBJH Auditorium. Anyone is welcome. If you'd like to give some of your time to seniors, please call Linda Fitzgerald, Activity Director, at 334-6520.



Feedback from the usability testing has given high approval to the added amenities and new decor in the Resident rooms. "The sheet application flooring in the entryways looks exactly like wood and is a huge success. Everyone loves it," Silverman said. "Visitors find the rooms bright and cheery, and the beautiful new bathrooms get especially high marks. Through this trial run, we now know that the bathrooms will easily accommodate a two-person assist and mechanical lift, and also allow wheelchairs to move freely without banging into the walls. We're very pleased with that finding. Based on other comments, we plan to reconfigure cabinetry in Resident bathrooms to accommodate taller bottles, and adjust the doors and rods in closets for easier accessibility. Of course, we'll continue to listen closely to our ultimate consumer - the Blumkin Residents - until we've tweaked everything as best we can to answer their needs."

As Director of Community Outreach and Admissions at the RBJH, Shane Kotok watches the construction and improvements with particular interest. "Residents and their families have come to expect more and more of

the Blumkin Home staff and facility," she said. "And we meet and exceed their expectations every day. But we need a building that more accurately reflects who we are - Omaha's best and only choice for Jewish seniors who want, need and deserve an up-to-date haimish atmosphere. We've talked about this and waited for so long and now it's really happening. This truly is a b'reshit - a beginning - and it's very exciting."

While ongoing feedback continues to bring suggestions from Residents and their families, it also gives the Blumkin Home's nursing staff a chance to weigh in on matters of health care delivery and safety issues. "Staff recommendations are vital to this process," Silverman said. "Pre-testing these model rooms allows us to provide safety and security to

the Residents, while also creating an environment in which the Blumkin nursing staff can do its job in the best way possible. The time we spend now to work out details will pay off later. We're definitely on the right track."

The next big step in the New Beginning construction involves relocating the current Blumkin Home entrance to the south side of the building. "The temporary entrance will be highly visible and easy to access from the main JCC parking lot, and our receptionist will be situated at the temporary entrance to better accommodate visitors to the Blumkin Home," says Silverman. Upcoming issues of "Traditions" will highlight other specific areas of the Home and their changes and improvements.



Welcome To Main Street

The new center of activity at the Rose Blumkin Jewish Home. These artists' renderings give a glimpse of the enhanced living environment to come for our Residents.



Plenty of conversation areas will accent Main Street. Residents and their visitors will be able to enjoy an environment that feels like being outside.



Guests and visitors will enter the new Rose Blumkin Jewish Home via "Main Street" where Residents and visitors alike can meet up, relax and talk or just enjoy the sunlight streaming in from the windows overhead.



Blumkin Home activity spaces and staff offices will appear as Main Street buildings, such as schools and storefronts.



An indoor playground will provide a perfect place for visiting children, with a seating area where Residents and guests can enjoy watching the play in action.