



**B'nai B'rith
Senior Housing
Network**



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SENIORITY REPORT

Inform

We want to do our best to stay in touch with you. Please remember to send pictures and updates on the events in your building!

Sign Up

Reading the Seniority Report is a great way to stay informed on what we are doing here at CSS as well as having a pulse on aging in general. To sign up for this resource simply [Click Here](#)

Contribute

Want to contribute to the next issue of Seniority Report? Email us your own story or suggestions at: seniorservice@bnaibrith.org

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**B'NAI B'RITH
INTERNATIONAL**
CENTER FOR SENIOR SERVICES

1120 20th Street, NW, Suite 300 North,
Washington, DC 20036

WWW.BNAIBRITH.ORG

EDITOR: Breana Clark



Recap of the 2017 Housing Conference in Delray Beach, Fla.

By Breana Clark

Just over 80 participants came together for the 2017 B'nai B'rith Annual Housing Conference Dec. 2 to Dec. 5 in Del Ray Beach, Fla. for a long weekend of training, networking and reconnecting. The conference commenced with a welcome reception at a local restaurant, Boheme Bistro, sponsored by SPM Property Management and hosted by the B'nai B'rith Apartments of Deerfield Beach Board of Directors.

On the first day of training, board representatives and managers separated into the Senior Housing Committee meeting and Managers' training, respectively. Boards participated in sessions on Fundraising, Grants and Fair Housing, while Managers received an in-depth Housing and Urban Development (HUD) update. Following a long day of sessions, the whole group took a tour of the Intracoastal Waterway aboard the Delray Beach Yacht on the evening of Dec. 3.

The following day, all participants came together for a day of combined meetings. In light of the hurricanes that devastated Texas, Florida and Puerto Rico, two excellent panels were dedicated to emergency preparedness. In addition, sessions included an update from a local HUD representative, a presentation on

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A Note From The Vice Chair: Abbie Stone

Welcome and sending greetings to you and your communities for an upcoming year that is abundant in health and prosperity. It was wonderful to see all of you who were able to attend our Housing Conference in December at Deerfield Beach. Our gracious hosts SPM Property Management, The Deerfield Apartments Staff, Deerfield Board Members and the B'nai B'rith Center for Senior Services (CSS) staff went above and beyond in creating interesting and informative sessions, entertaining down time and most importantly a time for us to gather together, share our dedication, renew and strengthen our network. There was such a powerful sense of connectedness that occurs when likeminded individuals eager to learn and share gather together. Thank all of you who attended for your participation and contribution to a highly successful event and of course to B'nai B'rith staff for making the event possible.

I have been fortunate to have been part of our last two Resident Leadership Retreats. Each has been an amazing experience in building lasting relationships with residents choosing to make our communities their home. Words do not

adequately describe how joyful it was to arrive at the Deerfield community and reunite with the residents that I've met at the retreats. I was moved and inspired by their enthusiasm, pride and ownership in sharing their accomplishments and putting into practice the concepts and leadership tools from the retreat in their community.

On our most recent conference call, Evan Carmen, B'nai B'rith assistant director for Aging Policy, brought us up to date on the direct impact the current issues our nation is facing has on the residents in our communities. Many of our communities have developed relationships with their respective representatives arranging for site visits and sending letters advocating for transparency and continuity of funding. Evan is a great resource for supporting us and keeping us informed of happenings on the Hill. Please reach out to him so we can continue to empower residents to have their voices heard at: ecarmen@bnaibrith.org.

B'nai B'rith Senior Program Associate Bre Clark kindly asked that we submit current photographs of our buildings to be used for ongoing CSS advocacy efforts. Additionally, please make sure to take the time and submit any changes in your contact information to Bre as well at: bclark@bnaibrith.org. I look forward to seeing many of you on our next video conference in April.

Until then,
Abbie

Residents of the Irving B. Matross Covenant House Apartments Collect Donated Goods for Victims of Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico

By Janel Doughten

After Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico last September, Josh Lakin, a B'nai B'rith member from Boston, became involved with the relief effort through his employer. The company Josh works for employs people in Puerto Rico and encouraged their stateside workers to collect household supplies needed as a result of the disaster. The plan was for donations to be collected and sent to their colleagues affected by Hurricane Maria. It was then that Lakin had an idea and reached out with a request, "would B'nai B'rith be able to help set up a collection site in Boston and assist with getting the word out to people to drop off donations?"

This need was a perfect match for Irving B. Matross Covenant House, a



Left photo: (L-R) Residents Diane Daria and David Levy from Irving B. Matross Covenant House pictured with B'nai B'rith member Josh Lakin. **Right photo:** Donations for those affected by Hurricane Maria collected by residents and staff at Irving B. Matross Covenant House.



B'nai B'rith sponsored senior housing property located in Boston and home to about 250 residents. With the building serving as the collection site, members of the Residents' Association oversaw the operation, sorting and bagging the

supplies. Most of the items were donated by the residents and staff themselves. Donations included canned goods, trash bags, water, batteries, battery operated radios and lanterns, pet food, first aid

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ON THE HILL

By Evan Carmen



First of all, I would like to thank everyone for responding to my emails requesting information about B'nai B'rith sponsored buildings. These statistics are vital for when we advocate to congressional offices on behalf of the residents in your building. It was great seeing everyone during the Housing Conference last December in Florida.

B'nai B'rith advocates for Section 202 Funding from Congress!

During the past few months Congress has worked on the Fiscal Year 18 Budget and B'nai B'rith has been active on Capitol Hill advocating with the American Association of Service Coordinators (AASC) for low-income senior affordable housing and the service coordinator program. We have met with staff members from Sens. John Cornyn (R-Texas), Ron Johnson (R-Wis.), Dick Durbin (D-Ill.), Dick Harris (D-Calif.), Cory Booker (D-N.J.), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.), Ed Markey (D-Mass.),

Ben Cardin (D-Md.), Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.); and Reps. Tony Cardenas (D-Calif.), Bruce Westerman (E-Ark.), Lloyd Smucker R-(Pa.), Ann Wagner (R-Miss.) and staff members from the Senate Special Committee on Aging.

Despite an uncertain Fiscal Year 18 Budget, the White House has released its Fiscal Year 19 Budget. B'nai B'rith will monitor the budget and speak out when appropriate. Obviously, we will be advocating for full funding of the Section 202 rental subsidies and other programs critical to low-income seniors.

Congresswoman Bustos Visits B'nai B'rith Covenant Apartments

We are delighted to report that Rep. Cheri Bustos (D-Ill.) visited B'nai B'rith Covenant Apartments in Peoria, Illinois in January. This visit was a great opportunity for the Congresswoman to learn about the Section 202 program and see firsthand how seniors benefit from affordable housing. B'nai B'rith Covenant Apartments is more than just an apartment building; it is a residential community where seniors can age in place. The Congresswoman learned about the wonderful amenities the building offers such as low cost meals, a beauty salon, grocery store, community rooms and libraries.

After taking a tour of the buildings the Congresswoman gave some remarks and took questions from several of the residents.

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Left photo: Resident of B'nai B'rith Covenant Apartments in Peoria, Illinois asks Rep. Cheri Bustos (D-Ill.) about the security of senior healthcare. **Right photo:** Rep. Cheri Bustos (D-Ill.) takes questions from B'nai B'rith Covenant Apartments residents.

RESIDENT EXTRAORDINAIRE

Bobbie Rudolph, B'nai B'rith Apartments, Allentown, Pa.

By Breana Clark

Though she has called B'nai B'rith Apartments home for nearly three years, Bobbie Rudolph has been a longtime resident of Allentown, Pa. Before coming to B'nai B'rith Apartments, Bobbie enjoyed her work at the Morning Call, a local Allentown newspaper, in the advertising department. In addition to being a local, Bobbie has long been a familiar face to management as a result of her mother's 16-year residency at the same building.

At the 2017 Resident Leadership Retreat, B'nai B'rith Center for Senior Services staff had the pleasure of meeting Bobbie and learning about her leadership in the building. They learned it did not take long before Bobbie started assuming responsibility in her

community. She quickly put her bookkeeping skills to use by becoming the treasurer of the Resident's Association. In addition to this, she monitors the computer room, assists with serving food for the county nutrition site program, and coordinates Friday night services four times a year. For Bobbie, it's as simple as seeing something that needs to be done and stepping up to the plate.

When asked about what she loves most about living at B'nai B'rith



Apartments, Bobbie shared, "the office and maintenance staff is just fantastic. They know you by name. Last year when we had a storm, the on-site maintenance man was outside with a snow blower so the residents with dogs could come outside. It's a pleasure to live here. We've had recent updates and improvements. And there's freedom. I know I'm safe."

When Bobbie is not working to improve the day-to-day at her building, she spends her time driving seniors in the community to medical appointments through a local match-making service. It's clear that B'nai B'rith Apartments and the Allentown community can call themselves lucky to have a resident like Bobbie Rudolph.

BUILDING HIGHLIGHT

B'nai B'rith Covenant House, Sheboygan, Wisconsin

By Evan Carmen

Established in July 1990, B'nai B'rith Covenant House is a small Section 202 building in Sheboygan, Wis. and home to 36 residents aging in place.

Recently, Camille Solberg, who serves as the senior case worker for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and as regional director in Sheboygan County for Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.), visited the property, took a tour of the building and spoke with residents about their concerns.

Residents asked questions regarding the debate on health care and future funding for senior housing. The tenants were very impressed with Solberg, and were encouraged to contact her anytime.

June Allison, president of Rosenthal Associates, who manages the building said, "This was such a great opportunity

for our residents to voice their concerns, and to feel involved, without having to leave their own homes. Senator Johnson's representative, Camille Solberg, could not have been more approachable. She sat with everyone, listened to what they had to say, took notes, and shared some of her own personal stories. They all felt that Camille truly cared about what they were saying as she was so warm and easy to relate to. It was a wonderful learning experience. The fact that an elected official took the time to listen to their point of view, and always will was certainly



Camille Solberg, senior case worker for the U.S. Housing and Urban and Development (HUD) and regional director in Sheboygan County for Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.), speaks with B'nai B'rith Covenant House residents about their concerns.

appreciated by the residents. This visit makes a phone call or writing an email to Senator Johnson easier because they now know there is someone on the other end that cares, and will take them seriously."

On The Hill

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The residents were able to learn Bustos' positions on important topics that touch their lives every day such as Social Security, Medicare, affordable housing rental subsidies and nutrition assistance. In addition, Bustos offered to help residents with any federal agency casework.

After the event Bustos said, "I had a great discussion with the seniors of B'nai B'rith Covenant Apartments today about all of the issues affecting them and their families. Our seniors worked hard all of their lives and they deserve to retire with dignity, and that includes providing them with affordable housing options through the Section 202 program. I believe that all seniors should be able to retire with peace of mind which is why I'm fighting hard to protect the Social Security, Medicaid and Medicare benefits they've earned."

Senate Staffers to Take Tours of Section 202 Building

We are very happy to report that Samantha Koehler and Rashage Green (who represent Sen. Bob Casey, D-Pa., Ranking Member) from the Senate Special Committee on Aging recently visited B'nai B'rith Apartments in Reading, Pa. During their visit they saw the sun room, library, convenience store, common room and a model apartment.

After the tour, Koehler and Green sat down with 20 residents to talk about matters important to seniors, such as Medicare, affordable housing and transportation issues. It was a great



Representatives from the Senate Special Committee on Aging, Samantha Koehler and Rashage Green, visit with residents at B'nai B'rith Apartments in Reading, Pa.

opportunity for the residents of the building to tell Capitol Hill staffers how public policy impacts their lives.

Koehler and Green made the following statement after their visit: "Thank you to B'nai B'rith House for a tour and to the residents for sharing with us the importance of affordable housing for older Pennsylvanians. There are more than 17,000 Section 202 housing units in the Commonwealth, and as Pennsylvanians age, the need will only increase. Senator Casey is an advocate of affordable housing and we are looking forward to sharing our experience at B'nai B'rith House with him."

In addition, Ben Florsheim, outreach assistant for Sen. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) visited and met with residents from Fountain Heights B'nai B'rith Senior Housing in New Haven, Conn.

Lastly, Camille Solberg, senior

case worker and regional director for Sheboygan County for Sen. Ron Johnson's (R-Wis.) office visited B'nai B'rith Covenant House in Sheboygan, Wis. To read more about this visit see page 4.

B'nai B'rith Expresses Concern Regarding House Tax Reform Legislation

B'nai B'rith issued two press releases in December raising concerns about how the recently passed tax reform legislation could hurt seniors. We expressed serious reservations about this bill because of the damaging impact it could have on funding for Medicare and Medicaid attributable to rising deficits that will give cover to members of Congress to slash spending. In addition, the negative consequences repealing the Affordable Care Act's (ACA) individual mandate will have on older Americans. We brought our concerns straight to congressional offices during our regular scheduled Capitol Hill visits regarding Section 202. However, we certainly applaud Congress for not eliminating the Low Income Housing Tax Credit, which is critical for affordable housing construction, and the medical expense deduction which is incredibly important to countless seniors with high health care costs.

WHAT'S GOING ON AT B'NAI B'RITH?

April 24, 2018 at 10:00 a.m. EDT

Senior Housing Network video conference call

June 20-22, 2018

Managers & Service Coordinators Meeting, San Antonio, TX.

Oct 28-30, 2018

Annual Conference on Senior Housing, North Hollywood, Calif.

WHAT HAS STAFF BEEN UP TO?

In late November, Evan Carmen, B'nai B'rith assistant director for aging policy, paid a visit to the B'nai B'rith Monroe Township unit in New Jersey. The unit is comprised of residents from a variety of local retirement communities. Evan spoke on issues that impact seniors such as health care and tax reform. B'nai B'rith is especially grateful for the dedication of B'nai B'rith Monroe Township President Marshall Klein, and appreciative of the support from its members.

Evan paid another visit to New Jersey in December when he participated in the South Orange B'nai B'rith Federation House 25th Anniversary Party. There he talked about the "Save HUD 202" campaign and where everything presently stands in Washington, D.C. regarding the Section 202 program. The attached picture is from the South Orange event.

In December, during the 2017 Housing Conference in Del Ray Beach, Fla., Janel Doughten, B'nai B'rith



Left photo: Evan Carmen, B'nai B'rith assistant director for aging policy, speaks to B'nai B'rith Monroe Township unit in New Jersey about senior issues. **Right photo:** (L-R) Art Fentin, board president of B'nai B'rith Apartments of Deerfield Beach, presents a plaque to Janel Doughten, B'nai B'rith associate director for the Center for Senior Services, acknowledging her 20 years of dedication to B'nai B'rith International.

associate director for the Center for Senior Services, received a plaque from the conference host, The B'nai B'rith Apartments of Deerfield Beach



Board of Directors, acknowledging her 20 years of dedication to B'nai B'rith International.

Recap of the 2017 Housing Conference in Delray Beach, Fla.

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Constituent Services delivered by a district director from the office of Rep. Ted Deutch (D-Fla.), and a legislative update and strategy on advocacy from the Center for Senior Services team.

The last day of training on Dec. 5 provided a visit to B'nai B'rith Apartments in Deerfield Beach, Fla. Visitors were greeted by many residents, showing off and selling their artwork, a hallmark of the rich programming that takes place in the building. Sessions at the building focused on the relationship between the management, board and residents association. Of particular interest, residents and staff demonstrated a number of the building's resident-run activities and programming such as the English as a Second Language



Art Fentin, joined by members of his family, opens a gift from B'nai B'rith International to recognize his 25 years as the board president of B'nai B'rith Apartments of Deerfield Beach.

class and Dance Troop. Following this, participants were given a tour of the impressive three building, nearly 300 unit, campus.

The conference concluded with

a formal recognition of Art Fentin, the 25 year board president of B'nai B'rith Apartments of Deerfield Beach. A long time supporter of B'nai B'rith International and avid supporter of seniors and affordable housing, Fentin has been an irreplaceable part of the B'nai B'rith Housing Network. Fentin was joined by many members of his large family and received a digital photo frame with pictures throughout his tenure from B'nai B'rith International.

We hope that B'nai B'rith Housing Managers and Board Members will plan to join us Oct. 28 to 30 for the 2018 Annual Housing Conference hosted by B'nai B'rith Golden Years Apartments in North Hollywood, Calif. Stay tuned for more information.

2017 B'nai B'rith Center for Senior Services Year in Review

By the B'nai B'rith Center for Senior Services Team

It has been a busy 2017 at the Center for Senior Services (CSS), and we are pleased to report on our advocacy efforts. Throughout the year we have been advocating on a wide range of senior issues relating to health care (Medicare and Medicaid), Social Security and affordable housing. Our work included meetings on Capitol Hill, organizing tours of B'nai B'rith sponsored buildings and co-sponsoring rallies on affordable housing. During the year we were excited that our work was noted by the Jewish Telegraph Agency (JTA), The Times of Israel and the New York Jewish Week.

Our advocacy efforts went into high gear in March when the White House's proposed 2018 "skinny" budget was released, which called for a 13 percent reduction in the Department of Housing and Urban Development's budget. A few months later when the administration's more detailed budget was announced, B'nai B'rith was severely disappointed that Section 202, which is housing that was developed for low-income seniors, was underfunded and the White House proposed a rental increase for residents.

Staying on top of the issue, the CSS team started visiting senator and representative's offices on Capitol Hill that represent B'nai B'rith sponsored buildings. Specifically, we met with offices that work on the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development. These committees are responsible for writing legislation that funds rental subsidies for the Section 202 program. During the course of these meeting we explained to staff members how damaging the White House's budget would be for low-income Section 202 residents. While the 2018 budget has not been finalized we are hopeful that our advocacy efforts on Capitol Hill will lead to the Section 202 program being funded more.

In addition, we followed up those visits by inviting members of Congress



Left photo: Residents living in B'nai B'rith sponsored buildings come together on the last night of the Resident Leadership Retreat to show their support for the Section 202 program. **Right photo:** (L-R) Janel Doughten, B'nai B'rith associate director for the Center for Senior Services, Breana Clark, B'nai B'rith senior program associate, and Evan Carmen, B'nai B'rith assistant director for aging policy, take a selfie after a day of Hill visits advocating for seniors.



and their staff to tour B'nai B'rith Section 202 buildings throughout the country. We are pleased to report that Reps. Jamie Raskin (D-Md.), Matt Cartwright (D-Pa.), Grace Meng (D-N.Y.) and Charlie Dent (R-Pa.), representing both political parties, toured our sponsored properties. Furthermore, three of the four members who visited B'nai B'rith sponsored buildings work on the Appropriations Committees. These tours were a fantastic opportunity for members of Congress to see the benefits of the Section 202 program, and gave residents a chance to speak with their elected representative. Residents were able to directly tell their member of Congress the vital role Section 202 housing plays in their lives.

B'nai B'rith was also pleased to co-host with LeadingAge the "Save HUD 202" Rally and partner with the National Low Income Housing Coalition for the "National Housing Day of Action" over the summer. These rallies took place on Capitol Hill and featured representatives and senators who spoke about the need for affordable housing. We were certainly delighted members of Congress who represent B'nai B'rith sponsored buildings attended the event.

Our advocacy during the course of the year didn't just stop with affordable housing. We spoke out against the White House and Congress' attempts to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act (ACA). After analyzing various proposed bills, B'nai B'rith was very concerned how these policies could negatively impact seniors. For example, many of the proposed replacement bills would have cut critical funding to Medicaid, allowed older Americans to be charged more for insurance, repealed vital taxes that help fund Medicare and waive important regulations that protect health care consumers. We spoke out on these issues by releasing press releases, blogs and joined with like minded organizations opposing this legislation in a full page advertisement in Politico.

Recently, B'nai B'rith has been very vocal against the recently passed tax reform legislation. We expressed serious reservations about this bill because of the damaging impact it could have on funding for Medicare and Medicaid attributable to rising deficits that will give cover to members of Congress to slash spending. In addition, the negative consequences

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2017 B'nai B'rith International Center for Senior Services Year in Review

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Left photo: Following a town hall style Q and A, Rep. Jamie Raskin (D-Md.) greets a resident at B'nai B'rith Homecrest House in Silver Spring, Md. **Right photo:** (L-R) Janel Doughten, B'nai B'rith associate director for the Center for Senior Services and Evan Carmen, B'nai B'rith assistant director for aging policy stand outside of B'nai B'rith Apartments in Allentown, Pa. on the day of Rep. Charlie Dent's (R-Pa.) visit to the building.



repealing the ACA's individual mandate will have on older Americans. We brought our concerns straight to congressional offices during our regular scheduled Capitol Hill visits regarding Section 202. However, we certainly applaud Congress for not eliminating the Low Income Housing Tax Credit which is critical for affordable housing construction, and the medical expense deduction which is incredibly

important to countless seniors with high health care costs.

The CSS team embarks on 2018 looking to continue our success from 2017. We will certainly look to invite more members of Congress and their staff to B'nai B'rith sponsored buildings, and advocate for the Section 202 program and other policies that are vital to seniors.

Residents of the Irving B. Matross Covenant House Apartments Collect Donated Goods for Victims of Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico

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kits and toiletries. Lakin shared his delight over the contributions saying he "was surprised by the quantity of donations people gave," and especially praised the participation from residents stating, "Kudos to the residents on that one!" B'nai B'rith is proud of the way residents and staff exuded its organizational mission by working together to provide relief to those in need and improving the quality of life for people around the globe.

Helping those in need after a disaster is a core principle that has

guided B'nai B'rith since 1865. When floods, wildfires, earthquakes, tornadoes or hurricanes devastate a community or attacks on civilians impacted by war requires a humanitarian response, B'nai B'rith volunteers, members and supporters are ready to help. Spanning over three centuries, B'nai B'rith has responded with millions of dollars of needed assistance to help victims of these natural and man-made disasters around the world.

The B'nai B'rith Disaster Relief Fund is always open, because there

RESOURCES

AARP Blog: The Power of the 50+ Voter

<http://bit.ly/2x8oM9g>

TED Talk: Let's End Ageism

<http://bit.ly/2fu2IVj>

U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging: Turning 65—Navigating Critical Decisions to Age Well

<http://bit.ly/2n8mMHB>

Flu 2018: Myths and Facts for Older Adults

<http://bit.ly/2CcNQuf>

About Seniors: The Increasingly Urgent Need to Fund Senior Housing

This piece originally appeared in [B'nai B'rith Magazine's Winter 2017 issue](#).

By Mark Olshan

<http://bit.ly/2CBaS3x>

Seniors and Voter Identification Laws

By Evan Carmen

<http://bit.ly/2BtkIEe>

is always a need to assist victims of disasters when they happen. Once we assess the impact, we open a fund for specific events. B'nai B'rith currently has a Hurricane Maria assistance fund. To further this, the Disaster Relief Fund volunteers and Center for Senior Services staff are working in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to identify ways the fund can assist Section 202 Senior Housing facilities in Puerto Rico.