



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: [seniorservices@bnaibrith.org](mailto:seniorservices@bnaibrith.org)

## Follow Us



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EDITOR: Gracie Cohen

## #HometownHeroes: We Honor B'nai B'rith Senior Housing Network Staff and Volunteers

By: Gracie Cohen



Staff of the Robert Cottingham Property Management Company hung a home-made sign of encouragement on the Sam J. Stone B'nai B'rith Apartments building in Peoria, IL.



Luz Gallego, service coordinator at Strauss Manor on Pantano in Tucson, AZ, delivers groceries to residents that are unable to go to the grocery store.



Building Engineer John Jones (JD) and Cindy Bloom, housekeeping at Amos Towers in Scranton, Pennsylvania, disinfect the building.



[SEE MORE PHOTOS ON THE CSS WEBPAGE HERE](#)

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## A Note From The Chair

By Marvin Siflinger

Hello all,

Obviously, since the last Seniority Report, our world has dramatically changed because of COVID-19. Everyone's daily lives look much different now than they did a few months ago, and that certainly holds true for the residents and staff of our sponsored B'nai B'rith senior housing buildings. First, a big thank you to you, our managers, service coordinators and housekeeping, and facility staff at our properties. You have been on the front lines at the buildings addressing residents' concerns, fixing problems and instituting

best practice procedures to combat the virus. We are happy to honor you as Hometown Heroes and feature your stories on our website and Facebook. Please feel free to send in accounts of the great work you're doing at your buildings.

In addition, I am pleased to report that B'nai B'rith has been in constant communication with our network throughout the pandemic. We have held weekly conference calls for the managers, service coordinators and our buildings' boards of directors. During these meetings, we have provided updated guidance from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the rest of the federal government on matters that impact your buildings and residents. Also, we have been happy to connect our network with your congressional delegation to obtain local health department contact information and reach out to HUD to get administrative questions answered. As always, if B'nai B'rith can be helpful on anything throughout the crisis, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Despite the pandemic, B'nai B'rith has continued to hold meetings with your congressional offices to advocate for senior affordable housing funding for the FY 2021 budget and COVID-19 stimulus legislation. While we were enthused the last stimulus bill included money for affordable housing, we believe additional funds would be appropriate to meet the challenges associated with this pandemic.

Lastly, I am happy to report that we are continuing to work with you on your recapitalization and refinance needs. If anyone has any questions about recapitalization or refinance, we stand at the ready to assist.

With an uncertain future in front of us, I am pleased our B'nai B'rith Washington, D.C., staff has and will continue to be a valuable resource for our communities. Please regularly check your emails for updates from B'nai B'rith on HUD guidance and dates and times of conference calls.

If there is anything you might need, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Stay safe and well.

Best,

Marvin

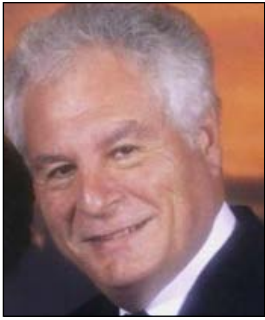
## **#HometownHeroes: We Honor B'nai B'rith Senior Housing Network Staff and Volunteers**

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On behalf of B'nai B'rith Center for Senior Services, we want to honor all of the staff, facilities, housekeeping and volunteers serving on the front lines of B'nai B'rith Senior Housing through our #HometownHeroes campaign. Janel Doughten, associate director of Center for Senior Services, came up with the idea while receiving updates from staff: "We want to salute and highlight the building staff that are all essential employees. They are truly upholding their communities and putting in countless hours as they deal with COVID-19."

To your hard work, to your courage in a time of uncertainty, we thank you for being on the front lines.

We are still accepting photos to post on our website and Facebook pages. You can submit your photos and any questions to Janel at [Jdoughten@bnaibrith.org](mailto:Jdoughten@bnaibrith.org).



## A Note from the Co-Chair

By *Dennis Rice*

Greetings,

Let me start off by giving a huge thank you to the B'nai B'rith Housing staff, maintenance workers and volunteers who are working on the front lines. You all are essential workers doing everything you can for the residents. As you'll read throughout the newsletter, B'nai B'rith honors you all through the #HometownHeroes campaign. Be sure to check the CSS website and Facebook for these photos. I would also like to acknowledge the CSS staff including Mark, Janel, Evan and Gracie for the proactive way you have searched for and shared tools for our local staff to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic.

I am thrilled by how CSS staff and the network have come together through weekly conference calls. They continue to work through these challenging times and share resources with each other. One major concern is how to engage residents while adhering to social distancing. The last thing we want our residents to face is social isolation and depression, when this is the time to stay connected. Staff members have shared their handouts and activities with each other, which you will also find on the CSS webpage. And following a webinar, Janel provides her insight into combating social isolation. You all are doing incredible work!

We are grateful to have the boards serve the residents during this crisis, too. Board members are assisting their facilities by going shopping, and even making arrangements with local grocery stores to open early for their residents. I cannot emphasize enough to please reach out if there is a need in your building.

B'nai B'rith is here for you.

I'm also proud to share the B'nai B'rith Stories of Hope campaign with you all. CSS staff is looking for stories on what helps you get through these tough times. We hope your stories will lift each other up.

Again, please do not hesitate to reach out if you need anything.

I wish you good health,  
Dennis

## 2020 Census: Deadline Update

By: *Gracie Cohen*

You may not see any enumerators out and about or going to door-to-door, but you can still fill out your Census form for this year's count. And for those who wonder about deadlines in the time of COVID-19, you now have an **extra three months** to complete your forms.

Pre-pandemic, the planned schedule for the "Self-Response Phase" was March 12- July 31. Now, the revised schedule has pushed back the deadline until Oct.31. Perhaps one silver lining of staying at home during the COVID-19 crisis is that our residents are still able to complete their forms online at [2020census.gov](https://2020census.gov), on the phone by calling the U.S. Census Bureau at 844-330-2020, or by mailing in the forms.

Remember, the Census results are key to future decisions impacting your community! The number of residents in the count determines the following: the number of seats each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives plus congressional and state legislative districts. The results additionally inform funding for federal programs, including Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers and much more.



**MAKE SURE YOU COMPLETE YOUR FORMS BY OCT.31!**



# ON THE HILL



By *Evan Carmen*

## **B'nai B'rith and Section 202 Government Funding to Fight COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

We are pleased to report that the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act was signed into law, and happy to see Congress recognize the need to appropriate financial resources for senior housing in response to the COVID-19 crisis. Costs for these buildings will likely rise because of the pandemic, and the buildings will most likely require more funding over time.

Our office continues to call on Congress to increase funding for Section 202 affordable housing. The additional aid would potentially provide the following: monies to expand service coordination, WiFi access for all residents, funds earmarked for additional

expenses associated with extra staffing, cleaning supplies, personal protective equipment and security personnel.

Additionally, we participated in a town hall discussion with Rep. Chrissy Houlahan (D-Pennsylvania), where we advocated for additional funds for affordable housing for seniors in a potential fourth stimulus package.

Lastly, we appreciate the Internal Revenue Service's (IRS) decision to provide direct stimulus payments to all Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients, regardless of whether they filed a tax return. The updated IRS guidance will allow payments to move more quickly to the people who need the financial assistance the most during the crisis.

## **B'nai B'rith Continues Advocacy on the Hill**

B'nai B'rith and the American Association of Service Coordinators (AASC) continues to advocate strongly to congressional offices regarding the FY 2021 budget. We met with staff members from the Senate offices of Elizabeth Warren (D-Massachusetts),

Chris Murphy (D-Connecticut), Diane Feinstein (D-California), Richard Shelby (R-Alabama), John Boozman (R-Arkansas), Richard Durbin (D-Illinois), Chris Coons (D-Deleware), Roy Blunt (R-Missouri), Marco Rubio (R-Florida), Martha McSally (R-Arizona) and Robert Menendez (D-New Jersey) and the House offices of Sylvia Garcia (R-Texas), Cheri Bustos (D-Illinois), Katherine Clark (D-Massachusetts), Matt Cartwright (D-Pennsylvania), Ann Kirkpatrick (D-Arizona) and Grace Meng (D-New York) and senior staff to the Senate and House Appropriations Committees.

Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, we are looking to find best practices following requested assistance from the network. We are able to connect with congressional offices and relay contact information back to the housing network. Additionally, we continue to reach out to the Department of Housing and Urban Development to obtain formal guidance on behalf of the housing network.

As always, please don't hesitate to reach out to B'nai B'rith if we can be helpful.

## **B'nai B'rith Stories of Hope: How We Inspire One Another**

By: *Gracie Cohen*

B'nai B'rith CSS is looking for your stories of hope and inspiration. In this time of uncertainty and very bleak news, and now adhering to physical distancing, we want to know:

### **What lifts you up when you are feeling alone?**

We hope these life stories will serve as a reminder for our residents that in times of struggle, the B'nai B'rith community encourages you to stay strong. Tell us about a time when you learned resilience, found hope, or learned a life lesson. You may

also share what inspires you right now, or what is the best use of your time during this pandemic.

Submit your stories any way you'd like, including: a short-form essay, a poem, a drawing, a video etc.

B'nai B'rith Stories of Hope is open to all residents, staff, and board members. We will post your submission on the B'nai B'rith website and facebook following review. Please send your stories of hope, or any questions to me at [gcohen@bnaibrith.org](mailto:gcohen@bnaibrith.org).



## B'nai B'rith Disaster Relief Helps Seniors Throughout COVID-19 Pandemic

By Rhonda Love

The B'nai B'rith Center for Community Action has long provided a link between our senior housing buildings and volunteers, focusing on disaster preparedness or even just bringing residents together with our young leaders (our B'nai B'rith Connect members) for an intergenerational activity.

We have been fortunate to have had joint programming in the recent past including a visit by B'nai B'rith International President Charles O. Kaufman to the B'nai B'rith Apartments of Deerfield Beach, Florida on March 1st. He was joined by B'nai B'rith leadership members Frieda Stangler, Esther Cember, Hank Meyer\* and Ed Feinberg for a "President's Roundtable" meeting. The roundtable was hosted by Senior Housing Co-Chair Dennis Rice and building administrator Jim Lynch. Following the meeting, B'nai B'rith leadership toured the building.

The B'nai B'rith Disaster Relief Fund has opened a campaign to support communities in the United States and around the world as they deal with the impact of the coronavirus. This current situation – impacting us all – has also confirmed the important ways volunteers can assist those who are vulnerable, such as the senior population. We are fortunate to have an amazing network of senior housing buildings around the United States, and while these locations are focused on independent living, it is especially clear that the senior population has a harder time being independent when the need for social distancing must be preserved to safeguard the residents.

Many need help getting out to buy food or personal hygiene products. Many do not have protective clothing, such as masks and gloves.

The need for volunteers is also high since staff and local board leaders are also dealing with their own health and welfare at this time.



L-R: Frieda Stangler, Esther Cember, B'nai B'rith International President Chuck Kaufman, Senior Housing Co-Chair Dennis Rice, Hank Meyer and Ed Feinberg were part of the President's Roundtable Hosted at the B'nai B'rith Apartments of Deerfield Beach, Florida.

The first thing we want to do is find out what the buildings need from B'nai B'rith. We have been asked to assist with providing a connection for potential volunteers. Are there residents who have no family, who are in need of a friendly call? Maybe a volunteer can "adopt" a senior as a "phone-friend?" If you have activity books, notepads, pencils, pens or art supplies in need of a new home, we are able to make the connection with a building to provide these items residents who may need these materials.

If there are specific needs within the building, we are looking for proposals that can be shared with the B'nai B'rith Disaster Relief



Leon Petrocelli, B'nai B'rith of Queens handyman, helps bring in the food donation into the building.

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## B'nai B'rith Disaster Relief Helps Seniors Throughout COVID-19 Pandemic

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Committee for potential support for the residents.

One example of this is when the staff of B'nai B'rith of Queens expressed concern for residents not able to obtain groceries. The building staff had reached out to B'nai B'rith on April 20th. We were able to connect with the Metropolitan Council, who then donated an emergency food delivery of pantry staples and fresh fruit to B'nai B'rith of Queens on April 23rd. B'nai B'rith is grateful to the Metropolitan Council for this donation. The residents who received this donation of food are representative of those who need it the most.

Please contact Rhonda at [rlove@bnaibrith.org](mailto:rlove@bnaibrith.org) for more information.



Staff organized the grocery staples and fresh fruit into bags for each resident, with an extra 60 bags remaining.

\*B'nai B'rith staff, members and supporters were saddened to learn of the passing of Hank Meyer in mid-April. He was a dedicated leader and he will be missed.

### WHAT HAS STAFF BEEN UP TO?

*By: Gracie Cohen*

B'nai B'rith CEO Dan Mariaschin interviewed CSS staff members Mark, Janel and Evan on how we are supporting our seniors and individual building staff and residents throughout our network during the coronavirus crisis. The interview, now live on our website, also dives into emergency preparedness and CSS's continued advocacy for seniors on Capitol Hill. The interview additionally provides information on what's going on in your properties.

[Watch the interview here.](#)

Janel was invited to join the International Council on Active Aging's "COVID-19 Industry Task Force." The purpose of the task force will be to develop, in conjunction with Centers for Disease and Control and Prevention, recommendations and guidelines for safeguarding residents' health and wellbeing, as communities start to plan reopening wellness, therapy and other onsite activities and services.

The CSS staff has been working

remotely since March 16th to help #flattenthecurve. How? By e-mail, calls, or maybe even snail mail. Although we relocated, Mark, Janel, Evan and I continue to remain in constant communication with each other and our B'nai B'rith Senior Housing Network.

Additionally, we cannot thank the B'nai B'rith Housing network enough for all of their hard work and dedication to their residents and staff. From us to you (coming from our new home offices):





## How To Keep Residents Engaged in a Socially Distant Era

By: Gracie Cohen

Through enforcing “social distancing,” we know those of you on the B’nai B’rith senior housing front lines have taken proper precautions to protect your residents from COVID-19. Whether you have canceled all in-house programs, limited the number of visitors per resident or temporarily locked communal rooms, you continue to engage residents in other ways. We would like to share a few ideas with the community, which are also now on the CSS webpage.

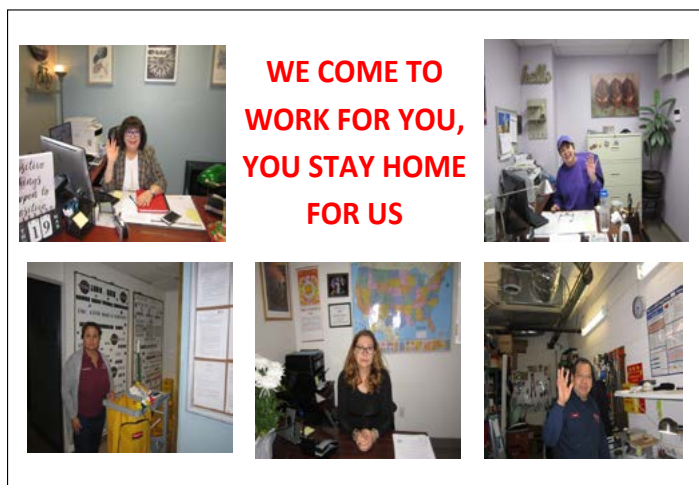
The use of technology has certainly come into play during these times. Be sure to download our WhatsApp and Zoom guides to help connect residents to each other, friends and loved ones. You may even use Zoom to facilitate Bingo or ESL classes. Need to keep residents physically engaged? Encourage one of your residents to lead a stretching class for the community through Zoom.

Include residents in the #FlattenTheCurve movement and raise awareness that they are protecting their neighbors! Have them take photos of staying inside and holding up a #FlattenTheCurve sign, or #Hometown Heroes to honor building staff (see “What Has Staff Been Up To?” for some examples).

Make sure your residents are getting some fresh air. Some buildings have started a walking club, where residents wear masks and walk outside, adhering to the “6-feet apart” policy. Others have allowed up to one resident at a time in their communal gardens.

### Show Residents You Care For Them

Even though you are physically distant from residents, now is the time to show residents you care about them. Here is what staff at B’nai B’rith Golden Years Apartments in North Hollywood, California, have made:



Yvette Garwood, property manager of B’nai B’rith Chesilhurst House in Chesilhurst, New Jersey, came up with the following: “I’m going to the local Dollar Tree to get coloring books and colored pencils for residents. We’ll have a contest for the ‘nicest’ and ‘most colorful’ pictures. I will keep the photos they color,

and my plan is to make a collage of their work to hang in the Community Room after this pandemic ends.”

Some staff have alternatively placed activities or kind reminders in residents’ door baskets. Here are a few highlights and examples you can use, too:



**Here are a few other motivational quotes you can easily print out or email your residents:**

*“When life gives you a hundred reasons to break down and cry, show life that you have a hundred reasons to smile and laugh. Stay Strong”*

*“In time, things will fall right in place.”*

*“Feelings are much like waves. We can’t stop them from coming but we can choose which one to surf.”*

### Make Sure Residents Have A Buddy to Check Up On Them

Many residents may have faced social isolation even before the pandemic started. Some residents may even be at a higher risk, depending on their medical history. Now is a crucial time to ensure residents are

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## Social Distancing: Why and How We Need to Combat Social Isolation

By Janel Doughten

I recently watched a webinar on social distancing vs. loneliness from the International Council on Active Aging (ICAA). We keep hearing that we need to practice social distancing, but what we really need to practice is *physical distancing while increasing our social and emotional connections*, particularly for our residents. Many of our residents were suffering a loss when they moved into the building: Maybe the loss of a job, a spouse, their health and/or home. Due to COVID-19, our residents are now suffering an additional loss: their independence.

The stay at home orders in most states – which are most stringent for many of our residents who are more vulnerable to COVID-19 because of age and health conditions – leave residents at a huge disadvantage. Some are not able to go grocery shopping, making them dependent on others to get them food and toiletries. There are no longer any social activities in the building, where many would use these programs to connect with other residents. They no longer have coffee get-togethers, group activities or even have the opportunity to just eat out together.

How can we keep residents socially connected, while trying to keep residents safe through physical isolation? We do not

want to cause loneliness, which can cause even more distress in a very stressful time. Keeping active social connections is very important for seniors while physically distancing themselves. Facetime, WhatsApp, or webinar services such as Zoom, allow participants to actually see the other person or persons on a call. The [CSS website](#) has downloadable documents to help guide people through using these technologies.

For those who do not have access to technology, you may recall a few options which pre-date computers. One of the easiest ways to stay in touch is by daily phone calls, as well as sending cards and letters through the mail. Just talking and communicating with someone can ease feelings of loneliness, especially for those who are isolating alone in their apartment. In many of our buildings, staff and volunteers do phone checks. Additionally, many local governments are using volunteers to make telephone calls to seniors at home.

Building staff and board members have also created activities for the residents. Coloring books, crossword and word-find puzzles, newsletters, contests, anything that keep people mentally and socially connected with one another are being

distributed. Residents let management know they want to participate, and items are left at the residents' doors on a weekly or even daily basis.

Another important element to avoid loneliness? Give people a sense of purpose: Staying at home will help reduce the spread of the virus to protect ourselves, our loved ones, building staff and our neighbors in the building, as well as the greater community. Having a sense of purpose and a mission, that we are all in this together, can keep that sense of community alive in a building where we are telling everyone to stay away from one another. Many staff have left uplifting messages on their office doors, making sure that residents know that even though they are separated because of physical distancing, they still care about them. Residents are able to see these messages when they leave their apartments to check the mail, or leave the building to get some exercise.

Working together, though physically apart, we can combat the unintended consequences of loneliness while still being physically distant during the pandemic.

For the most up-to-date information, resources and tools from ICAA, [click here](#).

### How To Keep Residents Engaged in a Socially Distant Era

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not alone. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends establishing a “buddy” system to make sure residents stay connected: “Residents can seek out a “buddy” who will regularly check on them (using preferably non-face-to-face communication) and help care for them if they get sick.\* This

person cannot be a person who is at higher risk of complications if they become ill with COVID-19.” The buddy system is a practical tool for you to use in your communities to not only potentially help identify cases of COVID-19, but to prevent any further outbreak to residents and staff.

If you would like to share any suggestions on helping residents stay connected, please send them to Janel at [jdoughten@bnaibrith.org](mailto:jdoughten@bnaibrith.org).

\*In this “Buddy System” detail, it should be noted the CDC refers to this guidance for healthcare providers and homecare caregivers.



## **A Special Thank You Note To B'nai B'rith Apartments of Deerfield Beach Staff**

*By CSS Staff*

We would like to share a note of appreciation staff of B'nai B'rith Apartments of Deerfield Beach received from resident Hannah Rosner:

To the Attention of James Lynch  
Manager/Administrator  
B'nai B'rith Apartments  
Deerfield Beach, FL

Dear Jim,

I would like to thank you and all of the staff at B'nai B'rith for all the hard work you have put into keeping the residents here as safe and healthy as possible. The effort you have put into cleaning and sanitizing the buildings, as well as the regulations you have implemented with the goal of keeping everyone in good health, are GREATLY appreciated.

You, along with all of the staff have been working so hard to do anything possible for our community. You have kept us informed, directed and managed the staff to insure the best outcome possible.

Thank you to Lisa, Tameka and Angie for their help and friendly words. Thank you to Janet and Lynn for calling every resident to check on them and help with whatever is needed, and to Mel, Ike and Bram for all their hard work along with Carlos for keeping up with the extra cleaning and sanitizing. And always, all of you with a smile.

I am very grateful to be living at B'nai B'rith under your leadership.

Thank you for all that you do.

Sincerely,  
Hannah Rosner

We know all staff in the B'nai B'rith network are working so hard to ensure residents' safety and well-being. If you have notes of appreciation from residents you would like to share, please send them to Gracie at [gcohen@bnibrith.org](mailto:gcohen@bnibrith.org).