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!

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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

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B’nai B’rith Buildings Prepared for and Spared by Hurricanes


By Evan Carmen, Phyllis Davis, and James Lynch

Over the last few months, the United States has unfortunately been devastated by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria. These deadly hurricanes have left parts of our country severely damaged, and caused wreckage that will likely take months if not years to repair. We are pleased that our sponsored properties in Deerfield Beach, Fla., Houston and Pasadena, Texas were spared from the worst the storms had to offer. As the recovery efforts in Texas and Florida continue, we reached out to our staff in those buildings to find out how they were able to mitigate the storm’s awful impact on the residents of their buildings. We wanted to share their thoughts on preparation before the hurricane, and how that work translated into the residents being as comfortable as possible during the storm.

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A Note From the Chair

By Seth Riklin

I hope this edition finds you and your loved ones all healthy, happy and getting ready for a joyous holiday season. I also hope that I will be seeing you soon at our Senior Housing Conference in Delray Beach, Florida. It is now days away, and it will be one of our best conferences yet. Our host hotel is the Del Ray Beach Marriot, which is a great resort with all the amenities that you would expect.

Mark, Janel, Evan and Breana have been working hard planning the conference. Our local Deerfield Beach leadership, Dennis Rice, Art Fentin and their South Florida team have worked tirelessly with Washington staff to make sure that everything runs smoothly. With the wealth of senior agencies and experts on aging in Florida available to speak to us, the 2017 Conference promises to have more new, interesting speakers to keep us all engaged.

Hurricane Irma both gave us cause for pause, as at the time that it had South Florida in its sights, we knew our residents and leadership in Deerfield Beach were in danger. With the devastating blow that Hurricane Harvey struck to Houston and Southeast Texas, Hurricane Irma had everyone’s attention. Fortunately, our residents and buildings in Deerfield Beach and Houston were able to avoid calamity.

Both buildings’ residents suffered great inconvenience, but it could have been much worse. You need only look a few blocks from Houston’s Goldberg B’Nai Brith Towers to see rampant devastation from the record flooding that destroyed hundreds of thousands motor vehicles, thousands of homes, the largest conservative synagogue in the U.S., one of the largest reform synagogues in the U.S., other smaller synagogues, churches, schools and the Jewish Community Center. Houston will be forever changed by this event.

As someone who studies Climate Change closely, I can assure you that we can expect more frequent and higher intensity weather events for many years to come. As our atmosphere and oceans continue to warm with no abatement in sight, this added solar heat energy will continue to feed the winds and storms, bringing more moisture and intense winds than we have experienced in the past. Climate Change will require that we enact new measures and safety plans to protect our residents, our buildings and our families.

With this knowledge and experience fresh in our minds, this Conference will have a few agenda items that will allow us to discuss the events and our plans to protect the lives and property that are important to us. I am confident that each of you will come away from the conference with a wealth of valuable information.

I also promise that we will spend most of our time enjoying our together in South Florida. Over the years, the fellowship and camaraderie have been a source of fulfillment for everyone who has attended our conferences. Beginning with our cruise in the intercoastal canal, we will have lots of opportunity for fun in Florida.

We appreciate your help and your ideas as we look for new ways to engage the Boards and Management of all our buildings in the Network. With your help, we will continue to gain momentum and make a difference in the years to come.

Be Well,
Seth

Don’t Miss the B’nai B’rith Annual Housing Conference!
December 3-5, 2017
Delray Beach, Florida

We look forward to seeing many of you in December for the 2017 B’nai B’rith Conference on Senior Housing.

The conference will take place Sunday, Dec. 3 through Tuesday, Dec. 5 in Delray Beach, Fla.
Let me begin by thanking 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.

B’nai B’rith Advocates for Section 202 Funding from Congress

During the past few months Congress has worked on the Fiscal Year (FY) 18 Budget and B’nai B’rith has been active on Capitol Hill advocating for affordable senior housing and the Service Coordinator Program. We have met with staff members from the offices of Sens. Ted Cruz (R-Texas), Bob Casey (D-Pa.), Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.), Tom Cotton (R-Ark.), Bill Nelson (D-Fla.), as well as Reps. Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.), Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.), Glenn Grothman (R-Wis.), Cheri Bustos (D-Ill.), John Carter (R-Texas), and Ted Deutch (D-Fla.). Additionally, we met with staff from the Senate Special Committee on Aging and Appropriations Committee from both the House and Senate to champion Section 202 funding in the upcoming FY 18 Budget.

B’nai B’rith was pleased that Grothman’s legislation to cut funding for Section 202 rental subsidies was defeated in the House of Representatives. We contacted his office before the vote to express our disappointment with the legislation. In addition, we met with his staff to express why his legislation could have negatively impacted his constituents at B’nai B’rith Covenant House in Sheboygan, Wis., and countless Section 202 residents throughout the country.

Lastly, we were pleased that Engel stopped by to personally say hello during a meeting we had with his office. This was a great opportunity for us to tell him all the great things going on at the Adelstein Family-Project H.O.P.E. B’nai B’rith House in the Bronx, N.Y.

Congressman Charlie Dent Tours B’nai B’rith Apartments in Allentown, Pa.

B’nai B’rith was very excited to host Rep. Charlie Dent (R-Pa.) at B’nai B’rith Apartments in Allentown, Pa. Dent was treated to a tour of the building and answered questions from about 90 B’nai B’rith Apartments residents. To read more about this event, see page 6.

House and Senate Appropriations Staff Takes Tour of Section 202 Building

B’nai B’rith was pleased to host Angela Ohm, a staff member from the House Appropriations Committee at Homecrest House in Silver Spring, Md. Ohm toured the building and spoke with the residents about their experiences. The tour included a model apartment, the library, common areas and the gym.

Two months later staff members, Gus Maples and Jordan Stone, from

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On The Hill

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the Senate Appropriations Committee toured Homecrest House as well. These appropriation committees are responsible for writing legislation that funds Section 202 buildings, and these tours were a great way to showcase all the great value affordable housing brings to low-income seniors.

After the tour Maples and Stone said, “We want to thank B’nai B’rith and Homecrest House’s residents and staff for welcoming us to view their property on Thursday. It is important to us to meet with people directly affected by HUD programs, and hear their perspectives on the services funded through the Appropriations Committee. Our trip was very educational, and we again thank the residents and staff for taking the time to meet with us.”

B’nai B’rith Advocated Against Graham-Cassidy Health Care Bill

B’nai B’rith advocated strongly against the Graham-Cassidy health care legislation. As the legislation was being debated on Capitol Hill, we issued two separate statements where we expressed our serious concerns about the bill and encouraged bipartisan cooperation in Congress to find health care solutions that benefit older Americans. We also signed onto a letter from the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations and joined with national Jewish organizations expressing our reservations with cutting health care funding. B’nai B’rith will continue to monitor additional health care legislation as it develops and will speak out as appropriate.

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

B’nai B’rith issued a press release after the House of Representatives released their tax reform bill. We are concerned about the elimination of the medical expense deduction, and the negative consequences it could have on health care expenses for seniors. We are troubled that adding an additional $1.5 trillion to the federal deficit over a decade will provide lawmakers cover to argue for cuts to important programs seniors rely on like Medicare and Medicaid. We were happy to see our efforts noted in an article by the Jewish Telegraph Agency (JTA).

WHAT’S GOING ON AT B’NAI B’RITH?

December 3-5, 2017
Annual Conference on Senior Housing, Delray Beach, FL

January 23, 2018 at 10:00 a.m. EDT
Senior Housing Network video conference call for Board Members
RESIDENT EXTRAORDINAIRE

Timothy Pease, Gerd & Inge Strauss B’nai B’rith Manor on Pantano, Tucson, Ariz.

Information provided by Nancy B. Bills, vice president, Biltmore Properties

The following is a letter by Timothy Pease, a resident of Strauss Manor in Tucson, Ariz. Each year, the Arizona Department of Housing (ADOH) has a Housing Forum. There, Nancy Bills, vice president of Biltmore Properties, participated in a session where she shared success stories, one of which was Timothy Pease. Timothy is now living and thriving at Strauss Manor where he is working hard to create a Resident Council. Below, he shared his heartwarming gratitude to live in a B’nai B’rith building and his call to all of us to be a better neighbor to one another.

August 11, 2017

Being homeless anywhere whether as a result of losing a job or something you cannot control, or in my case self imposed, is very humbling.

We must help each other. I thank the Lord daily for B’nai B’rith, H.U.D., Biltmore, our staff, our residents, our society, and everyone who cares.

Being blessed with Strauss Manor as my home has brought me together with the most caring people, to date, in my life.

When you do not have the basics, you tend to lose faith in yourself and others. It is my prayer and fervent wish that the homeless and everyone everywhere can become a community of sharing and caring people, for each other’s common good and well being- we have a lot of work to do.

Thank you for helping.
Timothy E. Pease

WHAT TO EXPECT IN THE SENIORITY REPORT: WINTER 2018

- Intergenerational Programming
- Center for Senior Services visit with a Holocaust survivor of Terezin
- Recap of the 2017 Annual Senior Housing Conference in Del Ray Beach, Fla.
We were very pleased to welcome Rep. Charlie Dent (R-Pa.) recently to B’nai B’rith Apartments in Allentown, Pa. Dent has been an influential member of Congress since January 2005, and presently serves on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development. This committee is responsible for appropriating money for the Section 202 Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) housing program. B’nai B’rith is a proud sponsor of Section 202 HUD housing, was excited to show Dent all the great residents, staff and amenities in the building.

B’nai B’rith’s long history with Section 202 housing started in 1971 when we formed a partnership with HUD to sponsor housing for low-income seniors. The B’nai B’rith Senior Housing Network in the United States comprises 38 buildings and serves more than 8,000 people. B’nai B’rith International is the largest national Jewish sponsor of low-income housing for seniors in the country.

When Dent arrived he was treated to a tour of the building which featured an apartment unit, patio, common area, computer room and arts and crafts room. The tour allowed the representative to see all the building’s wonderful amenities and how Section 202 properties provide a community and family atmosphere for seniors. After the tour Dent spoke with about 90 B’nai B’rith residents regarding Section 202 rental subsidies, social security and health care. This Q-and-A allowed residents to directly tell the congressman how these federal programs affect their daily lives and for Congressmen to share his perspective on important issues that impact seniors.

After the event Dent said, “I truly appreciate the great work B’nai B’rith has been doing here in Allentown, Pa. for decades. B’nai B’rith provides affordable housing options to many seniors they very much like it here so we are blessed to have this organization in the community. And we want to continue to support organizations like B’nai B’rith and other who providing affordable housing in 202 for so many seniors and elders across the country.”

In attendance from the B’nai B’rith housing community were B’nai B’rith International Associate Director of the Center for Senior Services Janel Doughten; B’nai B’rith Assistant Director for Aging Policy Evan Carmen; B’nai B’rith Senior Program Associate Breana Clark; as well as B’nai B’rith Apartments staff including Board President Barbra Butz; Project Administrator Bob Sipos; Property Management Assistant Kathy Andreas Heath; Service Coordinator Jennifer Leffler; Rental Assistant Jessica Yaich and Recertification Specialist Beth Gonzalez.

During the past few months we are happy to report that Reps. Jamie Raskin (D-Md.), Matt Cartwright (D-Pa.) and Grace Meng (D-N.Y.) have visited B’nai B’rith sponsored buildings in their districts. These congressional visits have given representatives firsthand exposure to the critical importance Section 202 buildings play in the lives of low-income seniors. Hopefully members of Congress leave Section 202 buildings with the understanding that they are not just a pile of bricks sitting on concrete— they are buildings that provide a safe and secure community for seniors, and more importantly a place for older Americans to call home.
B’nai B’rith Buildings Prepared for and Spared by Hurricanes

By Phyllis Davis, Management Agent, BHC Property Management, LLC, Pasadena Interfaith Manor and Goldberg B’nai B’rith Towers

In the case of Hurricane Harvey, staff began visiting each resident three days before the hurricane was to reach land to find out if they were leaving the property. If they were leaving the property, we had a form that we filled out indicating where they were going and contact numbers where they could be reached. During Hurricane Harvey we had several households/apartments that were leaving to go with family. In the situation of Hurricane Harvey it was not a mandatory evacuation and many residents stayed.

These properties have two generators that power one elevator, emergency lighting and electricity on the first floor where residents with oxygen can have power and people can charge mobile devices.

At Pasadena Interfaith Manor, the manager knew what to do and was very responsible; fortunately we did not have any flooding or significant damage within the building. Goldberg Towers has two project monitors who live on-site for after hour emergencies and the manager also stayed on-site during Hurricane Harvey as it stalled over the Houston area. Our staff is excellent, they know what to do and they did it. At both buildings we credit training on a regular ongoing basis along with planning as being our success in times of emergencies. Overall, being responsible stewards of housing in general, prepares us the best we can in the event we have an emergency and weather that has many unexpected variables.

After the hurricane our residents expressed their gratitude for the great work of our staff:

“From the bottom of my heart I would like to express my gratitude to our manager Angie. I’m sure that I’m not only speaking for myself, but also for all our residents. During the harrowing and dangerous days of Hurricane Harvey, Angie was with us at Goldberg Towers every day and night. She worked tirelessly together with other staff—Andretta, Jason and Marcy, always keeping calm, supporting us physically and emotionally. May God bless her! Many thanks to other Goldberg Towers staff as well.”

With sincere gratitude and love, Sofiya Konstantinovskaya, resident of Goldberg Towers

“We, the residents of Goldberg B’nai B’rith Towers, would like to express our enormous gratitude to Angie Futch, the real hostess of our big home. All the days during the hurricane, she stayed in house, providing help to the more vulnerable tenants. She organized the work of the staff on duty with perfection and her stay inspired confidence for our well-being. We really want her to be recognized in the city and also by her superiors. We wish her health and prosperity.”

With respect and appreciation,
Revekka Smolyanitskaya
Liliya & Yuriy Chertkov
Ivetta Karash, residents of Goldberg Towers

By James Lynch Administrator, SPM Property Management, B’nai B’rith Apartments in Deerfield Beach, Fla.

At B’nai B’rith Apartments in Deerfield Beach, Fla, we have a hurricane preparedness plan. Every year in June we always have our Annual Resident Emergency Disaster Preparedness Meeting — where I have a speaker from our local senior center come...
B’nai B’rith Buildings Prepared for and Spared by Hurricanes

Continued from page 7

speak to our residents along with my service coordinators and myself. At the meeting we hand out tons of literature in several languages. I also make sure that our Disaster Preparedness Manual is hand delivered to every resident on June 1 every year. During the hurricane months there is always literature posted on the boards and reminders of how to prepare in case there is a hurricane approaching. I also make sure that all three buildings have all the hurricane supplies replenished every June. We check to make sure we have fresh batteries, check flashlights, water, first aid kits, coolers, rope, plywood, and gas cans are full with gas if needed.

If a Hurricane is approaching we send out notices to residents again with the five day plan, we also ask them to fill out a family Disaster Plan in case they decide to evacuate to let us know where they are after the storm.

During Hurricane Irma I had two maintenance staff members onsite 24/7 for two days, before, during and after the hurricane. One of my social workers and I were also available for our residents before and right after the storm. All three of our buildings do have generators and luckily we did not have to use them for Irma; and we do have an ice maker on generator in case people need ice. The tenant association council members and volunteers had coffee and food readily available for all the residents in our Community Room where many residents like to congregate during the storm so they are not alone. The first floor not only has hurricane impact windows but additional hurricane shutters around the entire room so they feel really safe there. It really is a group effort. We were very lucky this year and I believe very well prepared.

After the hurricane, resident Carole Ross said, “It wasn’t as if I wasn’t scared at times, especially with the tornado alerts, but I was in the best possible place thanks to the staff at B’nai B’rith.”

BUILDING HIGHLIGHT

B’nai B’rith Elmwood House

By Evan Carmen

Created in October 1997, B’nai B’rith Elmwood House consists of 91 units, and is located in Evesham Township, N.J. Elmwood House is a Section 202 building, and a proud member of the B’nai B’rith Senior Housing Network.

On Sept. 10 Elmwood House celebrated its 20th Anniversary with a party, which was attended by residents, Board President Bart Greenspan and staff members! This party highlighted the important role Section 202 buildings like Elmwood House play for low-income seniors in the community.

During the party, residents were treated to a delicious lunch buffet and musical entertainment. Residents put the music to good use by getting on the dance floor!

Members of the community like Rep. Tom MacArthur (R-N.J.), the Senate and General Assembly of New Jersey and the Burlington County Board of Chosen Freeholders were noted for sending congratulations to the building to commemorate the occasion. In addition, it was great to see the original residents of the building receive commemorative t-shirts marking the two decades. These residents who have called Elmwood House home for 20 years illustrate how important Section 202 properties are for seniors who want to age in place.

As more buildings in the Network celebrate milestones, we are excited to share in the occasion.
WHAT HAS STAFF BEEN UP TO?

In September, Evan Carmen, B’nai B’rith International assistant director for Aging Policy, attended the 20th Anniversary party of B’nai B’rith Elmwood House. To read more about this great event, see the Building Highlight on page 8. Evan also had the opportunity to attend the rededication ceremony of Nathan I. Nagler Queens B’nai B’rith House in October.

B’nai B’rith International Associate Director for the Center for Senior Services Janel Doughten, was recently invited to present at two industry conferences, one in Washington, D.C. and the other in Florida. In October, approximately 70 members of Leading Age D.C. attended a one-day conference in the District of Columbia. The conference topics included ageism, memory loss and Janel’s presentation on how to deal with difficult residents. Her presentation highlighted how to de-escalate a tense situation, have empathy for residents and create programming to bring residents together.

Later that month, more than 100 maintenance staff from the Southeastern Property Management (SPM) Florida properties attended a three day training meeting, in Clearwater, Fla. There, Janel led a session on how to deal with difficult residents with a focus placed on maintenance’s unique role.

In November, B’nai B’rith International, along with B’nai B’rith Europe held a combined 2017 Leadership Forum and Annual Convention in Prague, Czech Republic. Janel and B’nai B’rith International Senior Program Associate Breana Clark, were on the ground in Prague providing logistical support. Tours arranged by B’nai B’rith included the opportunity to see Terezin, a former concentration camp. As a part of this, Janel and Breana made an arrangement to meet a local Prague resident and Holocaust survivor of Terezín, Doris Grozdanovič.

RESOURCES

Oral Health Guide and Resources

Compassion & Choices—diagnosis decoder

The New Old Age: New York Times column
http://nyti.ms/2x88xds

Social Security Matters blog

B’nai B’rith podcast from SSA Chief Actuary, Stephen Goss
http://bit.ly/2BmT8Ui

2017 Social Security Trustee Report Analysis
By Evan Carmen

The Aging of Our Nation’s Homeless Population: A Devastating Trend
By Breana Clark
http://bit.ly/2k5oeMX

The “Tax Cut And Jobs Act” And The Low income Housing Tax Credit
By Evan Carmen

Repealing And Replacing The Affordable Care Act And Its Implications On Medicare
By Evan Carmen

The Invisible Caregivers: Can You See Me?
Originally appeared in the B’nai B’rith Magazine
By Mark Olshan
http://bit.ly/2hX4Ln3

Janel Doughten and Breana Clark, staff from B’nai B’rith Center for Senior Services having lunch with Doris Grozdanovič, a resident of Prague and a Holocaust survivor of Terezín, during the combined B’nai B’rith International and B’nai B’rith Europe 2017 Convention.