



**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



Located in the Musician's Village neighborhood of New Orleans, Louisiana, the B'nai B'rith Disaster Relief Fund sponsored this house through Christopher Homes. The funding was donated in response to Hurricane Katrina, which destroyed many homes and neighborhoods

## The Role of Direct Service in B'nai B'rith International and Center for Senior Services

By: Janel Doughten

Ever since the founding of B'nai B'rith International in 1843, helping communities in crisis, or Tikun Olam, meaning to repair the world, has been one of the foundations of our overall mission. As the largest national Jewish sponsor of subsidized senior housing in the United States, the Center for Senior Services (CSS) has been able to expand beyond providing just housing, to serving communities that have experienced a disaster in the United States.

For those unaware of the B'nai B'rith International Disaster Relief Fund, this financial support provides disaster relief to communities that have experienced a natural or man-

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## Letter from the Chair

By Marvin Siflinger

I am happy to report that things continue to move forward at the B'nai B'rith Center for Senior Services!

First, Congress recently appropriated money for the rest of the FY 2020 that will provide sufficient resources for the Section 202 program. In

addition, we are pleased that a small amount of money has even been allocated to produce more senior housing units! Clearly, the trend is beginning to swing in the right direction.

In other news, as people may recall from the annual Housing Conference, B'nai B'rith stands at the ready to help you with your recapitalization and refinance needs. B'nai B'rith has experience working with developers and various financing tools to ensure that your building is able to meet the challenges for the next generation of residents. Furthermore, the Department of Housing and Urban Development recently finalized plans for the RAD for PRAC program. This program will allow PRAC Section

202 buildings to leverage outside money to make capital repairs. This is a great opportunity for our B'nai B'rith community to make sure we can provide affordable senior housing for years to come. CSS is more than happy to be helpful as you navigate the process.

Lastly, I am pleased to report that this year's annual Managers/ Services Coordinators Training will take place June 10-12, 2020, in New Orleans. This meeting is always well attended, and our management professionals walk away learning from top speakers in the field and from other staff of B'nai B'rith buildings. After last year's successful meeting in Puerto Rico, we plan to continue to incorporate a service project to our agenda.

I hope everyone is looking forward to an exciting year! Between our annual meetings and opportunities for growth and preservation, 2020 is shaping up to be one of the best years yet.

Again, if B'nai B'rith can ever be of assistance, please don't hesitate to reach out.

— Marvin

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## The Role of Direct Service in B'nai B'rith International and Center for Senior Services

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made disaster. Be it on an immediate, short-term or long-term relief basis, or even long after other first responders have left a disaster site, the relief fund has been able to continue its mission by supporting those communities in the U.S. and around the world that have been affected by a disaster in different ways. Residents of the B'nai B'rith senior housing network donate to the Disaster Relief Fund, either by providing items of need or through fundraising campaigns.

Over the years, CSS has brought the annual on-site staff training meetings, and/or the annual Conference on Senior Housing, to recovering communities. In this way, CSS has been able to help continue the long-term recovery of these locations beyond just assisting with disaster relief. These three-day meetings support the meeting and tourism industry, but even more importantly, we have provided training to staff of local housing programs that may not have received training otherwise. Additionally, our

network of on-site staff can learn from their colleagues about how to prepare their residents and buildings for potential emergencies in their own communities.

In past years, the two annual CSS meetings have included service and learning components. In Houston, New York City, Chicago, and Hot Springs, Arkansas, participants stuffed and delivered emergency preparedness kits for senior housing buildings that were affected by disasters. In New Orleans, participants learned and saw first-hand the impact of B'nai B'rith Disaster Relief funds distributed to Christopher Homes, an affordable senior housing sponsor, to help rebuild destroyed homes. And most recently in Puerto Rico, participants learned from experts, served a community in need of labor, and saw where the disaster relief funds were distributed.

A new component, which kicked off at the 2019 Managers and Service Coordinators meeting in San Juan, Puerto Rico, is the incorporation of a "Day of

Service" in the meeting. Participants met at 6:30 a.m. for the day of service in conjunction with some of the B'nai B'rith International Disaster Relief partners that are still active in Puerto Rico, including Chef José Andrés's charity, World Central Kitchen. The group volunteered four and a half hours at a farm about a one and a half hour drive away from San Juan. Participants also learned from our affordable senior housing colleagues in Puerto Rico how to prepare for the possibility of large-scale disasters in their own communities. The preparedness training included presentations from the Red Cross and staff from the largest hospital system in Puerto Rico.

In this way, CSS and the B'nai B'rith International Disaster Relief Fund have partnered to continue the mission of B'nai B'rith International: to improve the quality of life for people around the globe. The mission that still drives our organization is to make the world a safer, more tolerant and better place.



## A Note from the Co-Chair

By: *Abbie Stone*

Greetings All,

Hoping everyone had meaningful holidays within your communities and with your families. In September, many of us attended the Senior Housing Conference in Ft. Worth, Texas. We were warmly

welcomed in the true spirit of Texas hospitality on Saturday evening at a reception, where we had the chance to meet B'nai B'rith President Chuck Kaufman and speak with him about the extraordinary affordable housing communities we serve.

The conference, which was noted as one of the best yet, included valuable information regarding HUD, tax credits for developing new communities, problem solving and the role of board members and more. We were honored to attend the local B'nai B'rith Isadore Garsek Lodge "Jewish Person of the Year" event, courtesy of Rich Hollander's invitation. We visited the Mollie & Max Barnett/Tarrant County B'nai B'rith Apartments, and were welcomed by residents and board members alike. The board generously hosted the group for a delicious dinner at the

famous Joe T. Garcia's restaurant in the historic Stockyards.

We really missed both Mike and Amy Merkin, who were not able to attend, yet sent their famous and delicious chocolate chip cookies! Many other invaluable ideas were shared, and we are so grateful to have these opportunities to gather and carry back new ideas to enhance the lives of individuals living in B'nai B'rith communities. On behalf of Dennis and myself, we thank the entire D.C. staff for the outstanding conference and their heartfelt and constant support.

Be sure to stay in touch via the scheduled conference calls! Each call is a great opportunity to stay in the loop with CSS updates and stay current with happenings in D.C. that impact the viability of affordable housing.

Keep an eye out for further details on the upcoming Managers and Service Coordinators Meeting set for June 10-12 in New Orleans. After last year's "Day of Service" success in Puerto Rico, we'll continue this tradition and serve the community of New Orleans.

See you in June!

**Abbie**

## Art, Wine and a Good Time!

By *Evan Carmen*

The D.C. leaders of our B'nai B'rith Connect group held an art and wine event on December 8th, 2019, for the residents of the Homecrest House senior housing building in Silver Spring, Maryland. Dee Sanae, then chair of B'nai B'rith Connect—D.C. (now co-chair), sought an opportunity for both a community and intergenerational experience: "It was a

wonderful event of painting and great conversation. We wanted to bring young Jewish professionals and bridge them with one of B'nai B'rith's senior housing centers, Homecrest House. We were also joined by B'nai B'rith lodge members and residents Yvette Teman and Marilyn Goldberg. We hope to support and incorporate more events with young leaders

and seniors in the next decade," she said. Trey Meehan, now chair of the B'nai B'rith Connect—D.C. chapter, commented, "We appreciated the opportunity to mingle with Homecrest residents who were eager to share their life stories with us."

Homecrest House, sponsored by B'nai B'rith, has been providing affordable housing for low-income seniors for 40 years.



Homecrest residents and Trey Meehan paint and mingle together.



Residents, BBI Connect members, and Evan Carmen pose for a group shot at Homecrest House.





## ON THE HILL



*By Evan Carmen*

### **B'nai B'rith and Section 202 Government Funding 2020**

B'nai B'rith is happy to report that Congress has passed a budget for the rest of the fiscal year (FY) 2020. This legislation fully funds Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Section 202 affordable housing

program for low-income seniors. In addition, the budget provides some resources for additional Section 202 housing. We are excited that since FY 2017, Congress has appropriated \$251 million for HUD senior housing. B'nai B'rith will be turning the page soon to FY 2021, as we prepare for meetings in the spring with congressional staff.

### **B'nai B'rith Advocates in Washington, D.C., for Section 202 Funding from Congress**

Over the past few months, B'nai B'rith and the American Association

of Service Coordinators (AASC) advocated strongly to many congressional offices regarding the FY 2020 budget. We met with staff members from the Senate offices of John Cornyn (R-Texas), Pat Toomey (R-Penn.), Edward Markey (D-Mass.) and Reps. Bruce Westerman (R-Ark.), Al Green (D-Texas) and Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.). In all of our meetings, we talked about the importance of affordable housing for seniors, and how critical federal government funding is for the Section 202 program.

## **Preserving Your B'nai B'rith Community for the Next Generation: RAD for PRAC and Conventional Preservation!**

*By: Evan Carmen*

As we talked about at our annual Housing Conference in Fort Worth, Texas, please reach out to B'nai B'rith International if you are interested in recapitalizing or refinancing your building. B'nai B'rith can help you analyze your capital needs to make sure you have the appropriate funds to ensure that your building is ready to provide affordable housing for years to come. In addition, refinancing or recapitalization can lead to additional resources for resident programming.

Recently, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has allowed Section 202 buildings to start participating in RAD (Rental Assistance Demonstration) for PRAC (Project Rental Assistance Contract). RAD for PRAC is a HUD program that allows Section 202/PRAC buildings to refinance or rehabilitate their property. This program will give Section 202/PRAC buildings the opportunity to obtain additional financial resources to modernize these buildings.

As Mark Olshan wrote in October, please don't hesitate to reach out to B'nai B'rith if we can be of any assistance.

## RESOURCES

### **The National Senior Games**

*By: Evan Carmen*

<https://tinyurl.com/sjus47q>

### **A Proactive Approach to Seniors, Guns and Dementia**

*By: Evan Carmen*

<https://tinyurl.com/vhv75or>

### **Pizza and the Americans with Disabilities Act**

*By: Evan Carmen*

<https://tinyurl.com/u9lmk44>

### **Democratic Presidential Primary – Who's Going to Win?**

*By: Evan Carmen*

<https://tinyurl.com/yxy9m2et>

## Why the 2020 Census Matters (From the United States Census Bureau)

The 2020 census marks the 24th time that the US has counted its population since 1790. Due April 1st, 2020, the count is conducted by the United States Census Bureau and includes the populations of all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

### Why should we fill it out?

- The census results help determine how billions of dollars in federal funding flow into states and communities each year.
- The results determine how many seats in Congress each state gets.

CSS will be sending out more information in the next few months on how to ensure that your community is adequately counted. Let's get the word out on why everyone should fill out the 2020 Census!

[Click here](#) for the Census 2020 Fact Sheets in English and translated versions.

## The 2020 Census and Confidentiality

*Your responses to the 2020 Census are safe, secure, and protected by federal law. Your answers can only be used to produce statistics—they cannot be used against you in any way. By law, all responses to U.S. Census Bureau household and business surveys are kept completely confidential.*

### Respond to the 2020 Census to shape the future.

Responding to the census helps communities get the funding they need and helps businesses make data-driven decisions that grow the economy. Census data impact our daily lives, informing important decisions about funding for services and infrastructure in your community, including health care, senior centers, jobs, political representation, roads, schools, and businesses. More than \$675 billion in federal funding flows back to states and local communities each year based on census data.



### Your census responses are safe and secure.

The Census Bureau is required by law to protect any personal information we collect and keep it strictly confidential. The Census Bureau can only use your answers to produce statistics. In fact, every Census Bureau employee takes an oath to protect your personal information for life. Your answers cannot be used for law enforcement purposes or to determine your personal eligibility for government benefits.

### By law, your responses cannot be used against you.

By law, your census responses cannot be used against you by any government agency or court in any way—not by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), not by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), not by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and not by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The law requires the Census Bureau to keep your information confidential and use your responses only to produce statistics.



### The law is clear—no personal information can be shared.

Under Title 13 of the U.S. Code, the Census Bureau cannot release any identifiable information about individuals, households, or businesses, even to law enforcement agencies.

The law states that the information collected may only be used for statistical purposes and no other purpose.

To support historical research, Title 44 of the U.S. Code allows the National Archives and Records Administration to release census records only after 72 years.

All Census Bureau staff take a lifetime oath to protect your personal information, and any violation comes with a penalty of up to \$250,000 and/or up to 5 years in prison.

## RESIDENT EXTRAORDINAIRE

### Barbara Miller and Pat Durasavin, Homecrest House

By: Gracie Cohen

Every other year, two residents who display leadership qualities are selected from each building to attend our “Resident Leadership Retreat.” Our resident extraordinaires, Barbara and Pat, came together from Homecrest House in Silver Spring, Maryland.



Pat Durasavin and Diane Ealy pose together at the 2019 Leadership Retreat.

Barbara, 74, has lived at Homecrest House since November 2015 and has helped make the building and its community the best it can be ever since. Whether she volunteers at the front desk, helps grocery shop for those who are not able to, or even turns cards on the weekends (this is a wellness-check feature, where a card on the resident’s door indicates if they are doing okay for the day,) Barbara continues to lend her support to the community. When she was asked to attend the retreat, Barbara was interested and curious to learn more.

The big takeaways? “Be kind to each other. Everyone has their own troubles and problems, and we don’t know what they’re dealing with. Maybe they’re grouchy on a certain day, you still have to be kind. Or maybe they’re from a different cultural or religious background that’s different than yours. It doesn’t matter. We have to treat everyone equally,” Barbara said.



Barbara Miller, above, played her best at the B’nai B’rith Trivia night.

Pat, 81, has lived at Homecrest House for two and a half years. As a very social resident who enjoys many of the movies, lectures, and other activities at Homecrest, she thought it would be valuable for her to connect with other leaders at the retreat. “I had a great time and met many people from all over the United States living in other B’nai B’rith buildings,” she said.

Post-retreat, both she and Pat came back to Homecrest with newfound knowledge. Neither had known the full extent of what B’nai B’rith International as a humanitarian non-profit. “I had no idea B’nai B’rith provides disaster relief and offers community support throughout the world,” Barbara said. “It was really powerful for me to learn about all the good this organization does.”



# Crosscultural Dignity : Some Rhymed Reflections

**Francisco Gomes de Matos**, a peace linguist, Recife, Brazil

**Dedicated to Michael Prosser**

Crossculturally are we learning to live ?  
To Global Crosscultural Dignity what can we give ?

When aspects of cultures we compare  
Do we show them as mutually dignifying pairs ?

When aspects of cultures we describe  
How wisely do we deal with cultural norms they  
prescribe?

Crossculturally ,how will Humankind advance ?  
By educating every person/community crosscultural  
cooperation to enhance

Crosscultural Dignity : when do we seriously violate ?  
When our culture from other cultures we  
narrow-mindedly isolate

Crossculturally how can the world improve  
East and West ?  
When in crossculturally dignifying ways,  
we share our best

When crosscultural dignifiers will be become ?  
When all forms of crosscultural humiliation  
we prevent and overcome

## New Year, Fresh Discussions!

By: Gracie Cohen

If you're looking to spark some dialogue and further engage your residents, I suggest sharing Francisco Cardosa Gomes De Matos's poster poem below, "Crosscultural Dignity: Some Rhymed Reflections," on a communal bulletin board or in the common areas. I know, poetry? Don't panic! I think there is something for everyone to take away, no matter the line or question in the poem itself. Your residents (and staff) each have a piece of their lives and culture to share with one another. Personally, I love that the first two questions offer a chance for readers to reflect on their cross-cultural knowledge, and in turn, what they can offer to the community. As we discussed at the last two conferences, your residents are from all over the world and want to talk to each other. I hope this poem can bring even more of your residents together.



# Center for Intercultural Dialogue

The Center for Intercultural Dialogue (CID) is a neat hub of online resources. Although geared towards scholars who are interested in intercultural dialogue, many of the resources (including case studies, blogs, podcasts, videos, and more) are useful for people from all walks of life, no matter their background. Let this be one of many tools to better connect your residents.

You can find the poem [here](#). For another bulletin board idea, check out the [CID's posters](#), all of which may be downloaded, printed and shared for free, as is, as long as CID is acknowledged as the source.

## WHAT HAS STAFF BEEN UP TO?

By: Gracie Cohen

On Jan. 25, Evan and Janel took part in a conference call with B'nai B'rith Connect leaders. B'nai B'rith Connect has events across the country for professionals aged 21 to 42 who meet to further B'nai B'rith's mission of repairing communities.

There are many ways your building can partner together with B'nai B'rith Connect. If you are interested in having intergenerational activities, looking for volunteers to help staff an event or even working together on advocacy initiatives, please contact Janel Doughten at [jdoughten@bnaibrith.org](mailto:jdoughten@bnaibrith.org) for more information.

## IMPORTANT UPCOMING CSS EVENTS

**JUNE 10-12, 2020**

**2020 Annual Managers/  
Service Coordinators Training**

New Orleans, La.

**NOVEMBER 2020  
(tentative)**

**2020 Annual Conference on  
Senior Housing**

Check back for details