



**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: [seniors@bnaibrith.org](mailto:seniors@bnaibrith.org)

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**EDITORS:** Janel Doughten  
and Evan Carmen



Participants packing emergency preparedness bags.

## Training Session With Heart

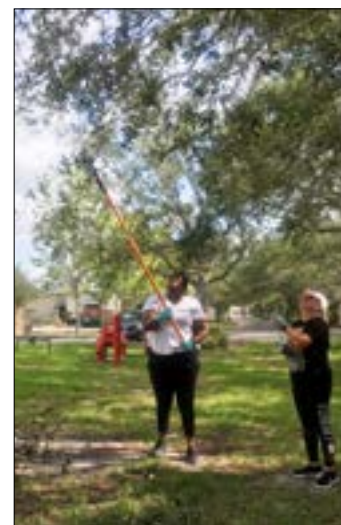
*By Janel Doughten, Associate Director, Center for Senior Services*



The B'nai B'rith Center for Senior Services (CSS) held its annual Housing Network Managers and Service Coordinators Training June 14-16 in Fort Myers, Florida. This annual session is for on-site building staff

of the B'nai B'rith Housing Network properties, focusing on issues that impact day-to-day activities of staff and residents in our affordable housing buildings.

As part of the broader mission of B'nai B'rith International—which includes a focus on disaster



Trimming trees that were damaged during Hurricane Ian.

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## Training Session With Heart

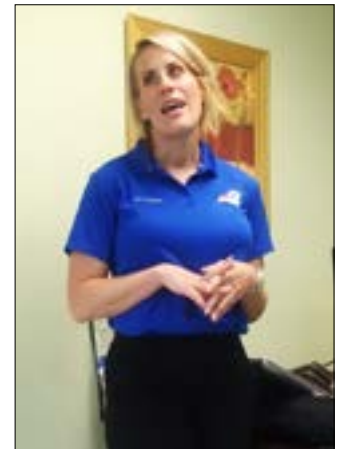
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Distributing emergency preparedness bags and lunch to residents of Villa Vincente.



Villa Vincente, site of the service project.



Special guest Allyson Rae, the chief meteorologist from local affiliate NBC2, addressing the group.



Cleaning up the landscaping that was damaged during Hurricane Ian.



Volunteers painting restrooms.



and emergency relief—CSS aims to hold this annual meeting in locations that have been impacted by disasters, in an effort to continue that community's road to recovery.

With disaster recovery in mind, the meeting kicked off with a service project in conjunction with the B'nai B'rith Disaster and Emergency Relief Committee at Villa Vincente, a Section 202 senior housing building that was impacted by Hurricane Ian in September 2022.

Our managers and service coordinators spent the day cleaning up the landscaping, painting common areas, stuffing and distributing emergency preparedness bags and delivering lunch for residents of Villa Vicente.

They also packed emergency preparedness bags for residents of three additional buildings in the Fort Myers area. Special guest Allyson Rae, the chief meteorologist from local affiliate NBC2, addressed the group about the issues facing building managers preparing their residents for weather disasters.

Day two included sessions focusing on resident issues and

senior housing industry updates. Vacharee Howard, executive vice president of National Alliance for Mental Illness Lee County focused a talk on mental health and mental wellness in senior housing; a session, "How to Create Harmony Among the Residents" was led by CSS Associate Director Janel Doughten and CSS Director of Aging Policy Evan Carmen and Amanda Atkins, president, Atkins Consulting Professionals.

The Service Coordinators attended a session, "Working with Adult Protective Services" led by Kendra Kuehn, Master of Social Work, policy analyst at National Adult Protective Services Association and Nicole Negron, MS, AT, FCCM, Senior Human Services program specialist, Adult Protective Services, SunCoast Region, Florida Department of Children and Families, as well as a robust discussion on residents living with dementia.

The managers breakout session featured updates on U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

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## A Note From The Chair

*By Marvin Siflinger, Chair of Center for Senior Services*

Hello friends,

As we enjoy the summer, things have been busy at the Center for Senior Services (CSS). First, I am pleased to report in April, Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) staff addressed our senior housing network regarding the dramatic insurance rate increases our buildings have experienced. They provided critical information on how our properties can absorb the costs and answered questions from attendees. Special acknowledgement to Christie Newhouse, acting director of the Office of Asset Management and Portfolio Oversight, Multifamily Housing; and Robert Iber, senior advisor in the Office of Multifamily Housing Programs from HUD, for providing their time and sharing their expertise.

Whether it's an issue distinct to one building or a matter which impacts the entire network, we are eager to assist our B'nai B'rith senior housing network family. As the former director for the HUD office in New England I am pleased whenever we can strengthen our relationship with HUD in Washington, D.C. B'nai B'rith has a long history of working with HUD staff to assist our buildings and we are pleased to continue our relationship with the department.

In addition, our rehabilitation projects in New Haven, Connecticut and Reading, Pennsylvania, are progressing, and we are excited to preserve these properties for the next generation of residents. Our plans will provide a wide range of benefits to our residents and ensure their homes remain affordable in perpetuity. Our proposed scope of work includes improvements to the grounds, the buildings' exterior, mechanical systems, units, common areas, fire detection devices and life safety systems. These efforts, together with the expansion of supportive service offerings, continue to serve our mission and provide exceptional housing opportunities for seniors within safe and enriching environments. When all the work is done, the residents will feel like they are living in a new unit. We look forward to keeping everyone in our network updated on the progress throughout the months to come.

Lastly, as I mentioned in my last column, we are excited that our Annual Conference on Senior Housing (November 5 to November 7 in Tucson, Arizona) and Resident Leadership Retreat (August 2 to August 8 at Pearlman Camp) are in person events this year. Because of the pandemic, we haven't been able to hold these programs in person and it's great for our housing network to get together again. If you have any thoughts regarding the Housing Conference, please feel free to share them with me or CSS staff.

As always, if B'nai B'rith can be helpful in any matter please don't hesitate to reach out to our staff. They are always waiting to help.

Hope you are having a great summer!

Marvin



Lending a hand to clean the windows at Villa Vincente.

## Training Session With Heart

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policies and procedures with Daniel M. Ortiz, branch chief and Clarence Quarterman, branch chief, HUD Multifamily Southeast Region and Amanda Atkins of Atkins Consulting Professionals.

Day three included a first-hand account of the impact of Hurricane Ian on the Fort Myers area by Alan Lessack, former B'nai B'rith vice president of Field Services Congressional and current resident of Fort Myers; updates on federal regulations from Evan Carmen of CSS,

and Kendra Kuehn, Master of Social Work, policy analyst, National Adult Protective Services Association, and the American Association of Service Coordinators. I led additional workshops that included a focus on emergency preparedness for staff, active shooter updates and a look at how to create a collaborative working relationship among building staff. The conference concluded with a networking session discussing and sharing issues happening in the buildings.



## A Note from the Co-Chair

*By Abbie Stone Tenen, Co-Chair of Senior Housing Committee*

Greetings All!

The March virtual gathering of onsite staff, management and fellow board members from the B'nai B'rith Senior Housing Network was truly a heartwarming experience. Once again, the stellar D.C. staff Janel, Evan and Mark offered exceptionally informative sessions and shared a wealth of valuable and useful information. This provided us with a glimpse of our much anticipated first in-person housing conference in three years, which will be hosted by Covenant House and Strauss Manor in Tucson, Arizona, Nov. 5 – Nov. 7. As a long-time resident of Tucson, I am really excited about the upcoming conference and the positive impact and contribution it will have on all who attend. Not to mention the beautiful setting and treasures of the Sonoran Desert. Please make sure to look for your registration materials in the near future. Your participation in our annual housing conference is essential for our organization to stay current and at the forefront of national housing trends. Consequently, allowing us to continue to provide outstanding support and services to seniors living in B'nai B'rith communities across the nation.

This along with the terrific news that the Resident Leadership Retreat at Perlman Camp is once again part of our programming. The camp is tucked away in Lake Como, a small village in Wayne County, Pennsylvania. The setting is incredible, cool evenings, rustic accommodations and a week of leadership and intergenerational activities for residents to gain knowledge and skills to develop a new or enhance an existing resident association program in their respective communities. The benefits of having resident representation at camp are far reaching. The curriculum is designed to empower residents to exercise their independence and strengthen communications, inclusivity and relationships within their communities. The communication skills participants acquire extend to fellow residents, onsite staff and management as well as board members. In addition, there are sessions exploring how to advocate for themselves through interacting with their local and national elected officials about issues that impact the quality of life for all seniors.

Hope you are having a pleasant and relaxing summer and look forward to seeing you in Tucson in November.

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## B'nai B'rith Talks...About Senior Housing

B'nai B'rith CEO Daniel S. Mariaschin talked with Michelle Missler, president and CEO of the American Association of Service Coordinators (AASC), a professional membership association and a national resource for service-enriched housing professionals, as part of our Conversations with B'nai B'rith series. Missler highlighted the critical role service coordinators play in senior housing, aging in place during and after the Covid-19 pandemic, and the strong relationship between our organizations and our shared policy goals.

**[Watch the interview: Helping Older Adults During Covid and Beyond: Service Coordinators.](#)**

Staff from our Center for Senior Services frequently partner with AASC in Congressional advocacy efforts regarding affordable housing, and we have consistently pushed Congress to have service coordinators included as part of the crucial Section 202 federal housing program.

**[Our Conversations series featured an interview with another specialist in senior issues.](#)**

Deborah Royster, assistant director of the Office for Older Americans at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), discussed the important work the bureau does safeguarding older adults from fraud and financial exploitation.

Royster spoke with Mariaschin about the challenges of protecting older adults from scams, and the important work CFPB does defending seniors by increasing financial literacy, and by sharing available tools and resources with older Americans and their caregivers.

**[Watch the interview: Protecting Older Adults From Fraud.](#)**

**[READ ABOUT THE B'NAI B'RITH CENTER FOR SENIOR SERVICES.](#)**



# ON THE HILL



*by Evan Carmen  
Legislative Director for  
Aging Policy*

## CSS Meets with Congress to Advocate for FY24 Budget

During the winter and spring, CSS staff met with staff members at a number of congressional offices and committee staff to advocate for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) senior housing program. As always, right by our side were our friends from the American Association of Service Coordinators (AASC). We pressed upon congressional staff the critical role housing plays in the lives of older Americans. In addition, we championed expanded internet access for HUD senior housing communities and made Congress aware of the dramatic insurance premium increases that so many of our buildings are facing.

We met with staff members from the following offices:

### SENATE

John Fetterman (D-Pa.)	Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.)
Chris Coons (D-Del.)	Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.)
Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.)	Ben Cardin (D-Md.)
Diane Feinstein (D-Calif.)	Krysten Sinema (I-Ariz.)
John Boozman (R-Ark.)	Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.)
Dick Durbin (D-Ill.)	Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.)
Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.)	Senate Appropriations Committee
Marco Rubio (R-Fla.)	
Bob Menendez (D-N.J.)	
Kattie Britt (R-Ala.)	

### HOUSE

Lisa Blunt Rochester (D-Del.)	Kay Granger (R-Texas)
Mikie Sherrill (D-N.J.)	Peter Aguilar (D-Calif.)
Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick (D-Fla.)	Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.)
Mario Diaz-Balart (R-Fla.)	Matt Cartwright (D-Pa.)
Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-N.J.)	Susan Wild (D-Pa.)
John Rutherford (R-Fla.)	Katherine Clark (D-Mass.)
Steve Womack (R-Ark.)	Sylvia Garcia (D-Texas)
Adriano Espaillat (D-N.Y.)	Eric Sorensen (D-Ill.)
Juan Ciscomani (R-Ariz.)	Glen Grothman (R-Wis.)
Tony Gonzales (R-Texas)	House Financial Services Committee
	House Appropriations Committee

## HUD Addresses Senior Housing Network

CSS held a special Housing Network call with HUD to address the issue of very high building insurance renewals and policy exclusions that many of the buildings have received recently. Representing HUD were Christie Newhouse, acting director of the Office of Asset Management and Portfolio Oversight, Multifamily Housing, and Robert Iber, senior advisor in the Office of Multifamily Housing Programs. Both are familiar with the CSS portfolio, each having participated in past CSS trainings. Although not on the call, all of the issues brought up by the network were discussed with Ethan Handelman, deputy assistant Secretary for Multifamily Housing.

Iber and Newhouse provided guidance for how buildings can try to receive additional funding to compensate for the insurance premium increases. In addition, they took questions from participants. CSS staff will continue to advocate on this issue to congressional staff on behalf of your buildings.

**ON THE HILL**

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**Debt Ceiling Legislation**

In June, Congress and the White House reached a deal on the debt ceiling to ensure the federal government has the financial resources to pay its obligations. Under the legislation Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid will not be impacted. In addition, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) will not change for anyone who is above 55. While the legislation caps government spending for the next couple of years, it is too early to tell how it will impact the HUD senior housing program. In addition, the legislation claws back money that was appropriated in response to the pandemic. CSS will be monitoring to learn how this could impact HUD senior housing.

**Congressional Staff Visit Homecrest House**

Prior to the pandemic, the B'nai B'rith International Center for Senior Services regularly organized tours of our Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) senior housing properties around the country. These tours provide an opportunity for members of Congress and their staff to see the critical importance affordable housing plays in the lives of seniors.

In June, staff members from the House of Representatives committee responsible for funding rental subsidies and service coordinators for HUD senior housing toured Homecrest House, a B'nai B'rith sponsored property in Silver Spring, Maryland. Staff members Kate Koschewa and Christina Monroe toured the campus where they saw an apartment unit, the gym, the library and dining room. They also spent time talking with residents about their experiences living in Homecrest House.

We thank Mike Goldman, president of the board of directors for Homecrest House and staff members for attending. Attending on behalf of B'nai B'rith was Evan Carmen, legislative director for aging policy. Alayna Waldrum and Kendra Kuehn, representing the American Association of Service Coordinators' policy team, also took part.

"B'nai B'rith thanks Kate Koschewa and Christina Monroe for visiting Homecrest House and appreciates their time touring the property and speaking with residents. Homecrest is a great example of how HUD senior housing can make a big difference in the lives of older Americans who are worried about paying health care and grocery bills," Carmen said.

**2023 EVENTS**

- |                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| <b>August 2-8</b>   | <b>B'nai B'rith Resident Leadership Retreat</b><br>Perlman Camp, Lake Como, Pennsylvania |
| <b>November 5-7</b> | <b>B'nai B'rith Conference on Senior Housing</b><br>Tucson, Arizona                      |

## Times are Changing. An End to the Public Health Emergency.

*By Evan Carmen (Originally Published June 7, 2023)*

Recently, I walked into my doctor's office and saw the strangest thing. People's faces! For what feels like forever, people, in some capacity, have been masking up. The last time I had walked into a doctor's office without a mask was early 2020.

Times, they are changing! You don't have to look any further than the White House. Last month, the Biden administration ended the Public Health Emergency (PHE). Since the beginning of the pandemic certain things have become the "norm," whether that's telehealth, accessible covid vaccines, treatments and testing. Several times the federal government offered free at home covid tests simply by registering for them on covid.gov. I remember requesting tests for my house and my parents.

Working at the Center for Senior Services (CSS), news is always viewed under the guise of its impact on older Americans. Consequently, I thought it might be good idea to explain how the PHE ending impacts seniors and Medicare.

First, let's start with the biggie, covid vaccines. The covid vaccination has not been one and done. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) over the past several years has advised multiple boosters for people, which vary based on age and health. According to the CDC, "Once the federal government is no longer purchasing or distributing COVID-19 vaccines, people with Traditional Medicare pay nothing for a COVID-19 vaccination if their doctor or other qualified health care provider accepts assignment for giving the shot." This is important news because it's impossible to tell how many additional boosters will be needed to fight against COVID. Secondly, the CDC reports that Medicare will continue to cover

the costs for treatments, (ie. Paxlovid and Lagevrio) and for people who are paying a deductible or cost sharing, that expense will remain. Also, Medicare will cover the cost of covid testing ordered by a doctor, however, Medicare will no longer cover the costs for over-the-counter tests.

Furthermore, what about telehealth? Personally, I never had a telehealth visit before the pandemic—now maybe I do about half my appointments through a video platform. The PHE increased access for Medicare recipients to use telehealth services. This access for seniors has been extended through 2024. We hope that this benefit will continue beyond 2024 and well into the future.

At CSS we recognize the critical importance of internet access for older Americans, especially in Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) senior housing. We regularly meet with congressional offices and advocate for programs that benefit seniors, including expanding access to the internet. The pandemic shined a spotlight on why the internet is important for everyone, with seniors being no exception. Whether it's communicating with family and friends, or a thousand other things, too many people in HUD senior housing properties don't have access to the internet. Unfortunately, seniors suffer from social isolation and mobility issues, and gaining better access to the internet will help alleviate those problems.

Thankfully, for many 2023 has felt more like 2019 than the previous few years. For seniors, the end of the PHE means some things will change and some will remain the same. To learn more about how the PHE news will impact seniors, please go [here](#).