



**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!

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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
INTERNATIONAL**
CENTER FOR SENIOR SERVICES

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

WWW.BNAIBRITH.ORG

EDITORS: Janel Doughten
and Evan Carmen



B'nai B'rith International President Seth J. Riklin welcomes conference delegates.

Center for Senior Services Hosts In-person Conference

By Cheryl Kempler, Editor and Writer for B'nai B'rith IMPACT and Contributing Editor and Staff Writer for B'nai B'rith Magazine

With a roster of speakers including B'nai B'rith Center for Senior Services (CSS) staff and housing committee board members, the B'nai B'rith Conference on Senior Housing occurred in Tucson, Arizona during Nov. 4-7. It was the first to be held in person since 2019, before the onset of the pandemic. Virtual programming was arranged in 2021 and 2022.

The city is home to two B'nai B'rith senior residences with the boards and staff hosting the conference, Strauss Manor on Pantano and Covenant House of Tucson, where visits by the conference attendees were scheduled.

The meeting focused on the maintenance of residents' mental and physical health and featured sessions on emergency preparedness, sustainability and other issues. B'nai B'rith International President Seth J. Riklin, whose involvement with CSS has continued for more than 30 years, delivered welcome remarks.

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Center for Senior Services Hosts In-person Conference

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A highlight was the visit to the conference by the “Brain Bus,” an interactive mobile neuroscience laboratory run by the Center for Neurosciences Foundation, where visitors learn about advancements in research, and which was augmented by scientist and emeritus professor Lynne A. Oland’s presentation on “Brain Health.” CSS staff, Evan Carmen, director of Aging Policy gave a Congressional update and Janel Doughnten, associate director, presented on various topics including information on building security, grant making and fundraising. Doughnten also advised conference members on “Creating a Working Relationship in Your Building.”

Doughnten noted: “This was the first time since 2019 this group has been together in person. This annual meeting brings together onsite management staff and boards of directors for three days of training from experts in the field, which did continue to provide virtually during the pandemic. Just as important is the opportunity to network, discuss building issues and learn from each other: That is hard to do

in a virtual meeting. Additionally, this conference is always held where our senior residences operate, so that we can arrange a tour. Participants always bring back new ideas to improve their own buildings, physically or programmatically.”



Participants visiting B’nai B’rith Covenant House of Tucson.



The group’s hands-on encounter with the mind in living color at the “Brain Bus,” operated by The Center for Neurosciences Foundation.



Conference participants



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A Note From The Chair

By Marvin Siflinger, Chair of Center for Senior Services

Hello friends,

The Center for Senior Services (CSS) has been full steam ahead to start 2024. As always, staff are advocating on Capitol Hill for our legislative priorities and planning training meetings throughout the year. Our goal is to ensure that each year is better than the previous, offering our network informative programing and services to meet their needs.

Before previewing 2024, it's important to recap 2023. Last year our Annual Conference on Senior Housing returned to in-person programing. Attendees of the housing conference enjoyed visiting Tucson and learning new information to better their senior housing properties. Our programing also included the Managers and Service Coordinators Meeting and Resident Leadership Retreat.

Also, for the second consecutive year members of our housing network benefited from the B'nai B'rith Virtual Spring Training.

In 2024, we are excited to offer our housing network new speakers and sessions to ensure that our buildings remain first rate. First, I am pleased to announce that our Virtual Spring Training will be held from March 10th to 11th. This virtual programing provides a forum for our housing network to attend sessions from the comforts of their home or office. Our previous virtual training courses have been well received and we are eager to hear people's ideas for new sessions in the future. In the months ahead please look out for announcements regarding the dates and locations of our Managers and Service Coordinators Meeting and Annual Conference on Senior Housing.

In addition, we are beginning a presidential election year, and CSS is keeping an eye on how the election results can impact Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) senior housing. Our advocacy efforts on Capitol Hill continue by making sure your elected officials know the critical importance affordable housing, income security and health care programs play in the lives of seniors. One of the best ways to advocate for HUD senior housing is to invite your member of Congress to speak with residents and tour your property. Prior to the pandemic, the CSS regularly organized tours of our senior housing properties around the country. Last year we scheduled tours for congressional staff and a member of Congress at B'nai B'rith Homecrest House in Silver Spring, Maryland and Asher Rubin B'nai B'rith House in Claymont, Delaware. Visits included a tour of apartment units and building amenities. In addition, residents had the opportunity to speak with a member of Congress or congressional staff about the critical role health care, housing and nutrition programs play in their lives. If you are interested in hosting a member of Congress at your building, please reach out to CSS.

As always, B'nai B'rith stands at the ready to be helpful to our housing network. Please don't hesitate to reach out.

Best,
Marvin

Center for Senior Services Hosts In-person Conference

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Participants visiting the Gerd and Inge Strauss B'nai B'rith Manor on Pantano.



A Note from the Co-Chair

Dennis Rice, co-chair, B'nai B'rith Senior Housing committee

In addition to being co-chair of the B'nai B'rith Senior Housing committee, I also serve as the president of the Board of the B'nai B'rith Deerfield Beach Apartments. This facility consists of three buildings with over three hundred residents. Serving on the board affords me the opportunity to interchange with residents while walking through the corridors of the main building, as well as at holiday parties and community events. At the recent holiday party, I was speaking to one of the residents who has resided at B'nai B'rith Deerfield for about five years. She was beaming; I asked her about her experience living there. She said she emigrated to the U.S. in 1989 with her husband. She lived relatively comfortably until he passed away and she only had Social Security to live on. About six years ago she applied to be a resident at the B'nai B'rith Deerfield Apartments. She was accepted a little over a year later. Her next comment gave me goose bumps. She said that someone was looking out for her to allow her to live in such a wonderful and caring facility. She feels so blessed, because everyone cares about her well-being. These words are why we volunteer our time in helping to assist in maintaining our buildings at the highest standards possible.

B'nai B'rith International and the B'nai B'rith Center for Senior Services department meet with the building management both in person and via zoom on a regular basis. They discuss relevant issues such as the high cost of insurance and recognizing elderly scams. They then convey this information back to their residents, advising them on how to address these issues.

Three times a year, B'nai B'rith holds network wide conferences to support our sponsored properties. Our Annual Conference on Senior Housing and Managers and Service Coordinators Meeting are in-person events while our Virtual Spring Training is attended over the internet.

At our most recent housing conference, one day was dedicated to providing management training for staff, while board members meet separately to discuss successful programs at their respective facilities. The sharing of information is invaluable. On the second day, there is a joint session that includes discussions on HUD issues, the role of the board, grants, and fundraising, to name a few. A visit to one or more of the B'nai B'rith buildings in the area takes place, one of the highlights for the participants. They glean from these visits ideas to take home and implement at their own facility. This year's conference was one of the best and participation was relatively large just coming off the coronavirus pandemic.

Every two years the B'nai B'rith Center for Senior Services has a Resident Leadership Retreat at the B'nai B'rith Perlman Camp in Pennsylvania. Residents from B'nai B'rith senior facilities across the country are invited free of charge to attend. They participate in learning sessions, intergenerational programming and learn about B'nai B'rith. They go back to their homes with wonderful memories and great ideas to implement through their resident associations.

I feel blessed to be able to help so many people at these wonderful facilities, providing safe, secure, and affordable housing to older Americans.

WHAT STAFF HAS BEEN UP TO:

Janel Doughten, Associate Director, B'nai B'rith Center for Senior Services

In August 2023, Janel presented at the Annual American Association of Service Coordinators Training Conference, focusing on the Role of the Resident Association. Over 200 service coordinators attended the session.

In October and November 2023, Janel ran workshops with caregivers in Maryland and Washington, D.C. on Emergency Preparedness for Older Adults.

In January 2024, Janel participated in Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's webinar: Elder Justice Collaboration in Faith Communities. (see page 9 for more information).



ON THE HILL



*by Evan Carmen
Legislative Director for
Aging Policy*

CSS Meets with Congress to Advocate for FY24 Budget

During the second half of 2023, CSS staff met with congressional offices to advocate for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) senior housing program. Advocating alongside us were our friends from the American Association of Service Coordinators (AASC). We spoke about the vital role HUD senior housing plays in the lives of older adults. Additionally, we strongly advocated to congressional offices about the need for a fully funded FY24 budget, emphasizing how disastrous government shutdowns and short-term budgets are for HUD. Currently, the government is being funded through a short-term budget; CSS will advocate for a fully funded FY24 budget until one is passed.

We met with staff members from the following offices:

SENATE

Tommy Tuberville (R-AL)
Ron Johnson (R-WI.)
Ted Cruz (R-Texas)
John Cornyn (R-Texas)
Tammy Duckworth (D-IL)
Tom Cotton (R-AR)
Mark Kelly (D-AZ.)

HOUSE

Donald Norcross (D-NJ)
Al Green (D-Texas)
Jamie Raskin (D-MD)
Tony Cárdenas (D-CA)
Chrissy Houlahan (D-PA)
Paul Tonko (D-NY)
Barry Moore (R-AL)
Bruce Westerman (R-AR)
Mikie Sherrill (D-NJ)

Rep. Blunt Rochester Visits Asher Rubin B'nai B'rith House in Claymont, Delaware

United States Rep. Lisa Blunt Rochester (D-DEL) visited the Asher Rubin B'nai B'rith House in Claymont, Delaware in September, where she toured the premises and engaged with residents. This visit provided the congresswoman with an opportunity to witness firsthand the vital role affordable housing has in all aspects of the lives of senior citizens.

Blunt Rochester toured two sample apartments, the building's convenience store, library and computer room. She also engaged with residents and participated in a Q&A session that focused on various key topics, including health care, affordable housing, income security and nutrition.

"One of my top priorities since coming to Congress has been ensuring that everyone in our state and nation has a safe and affordable place to call their home," Blunt Rochester said. "One of the best ways we know we

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ON THE HILL

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can accomplish that goal is by increasing our stock of affordable housing throughout our communities. That's why organizations like B'nai B'rith are so important and why facilities such as the Asher Rubin B'nai B'rith House in Claymont play such a critical role in creating dignified housing for Delawareans. I want to thank B'nai B'rith for their commitment to allowing seniors in Delaware to age with dignity and I'll continue my work in Congress to support affordable housing policy."

Zach Baron Interviewed by B'nai B'rith CEO Dan Mariaschin

B'nai B'rith was pleased to interview Zach Baron, Director at the O'Neill Institute for National and Global Health Law, housed at the Georgetown University Law Center. On the Conversations with B'nai B'rith podcast, Baron and Mariaschin discussed the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and its impact on Medicare and prescription drugs. Baron also addressed the current litigation regarding the IRA. Watch the interview [here](#).

Elder Justice Webinar

On Wednesday, Jan. 17, Jennifer Leffler, service coordinator at B'nai B'rith Apartments in Allentown, PA and B'nai B'rith Associate Director of CSS Janel Doughten, were part of the Elder Justice Collaboration in Faith Communities Webinar with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB). This is part of a series of webinars on elder justice produced by the CFPB.

Faith-based organizations have a unique role in helping to combat elder financial exploitation. As trusted institutions, they can share consumer protection information in ways that are grounded in the values of their faith communities and connect people to local services when they need help. In this webinar, Leffler and Doughten participated in a discussion about how faith communities collaborate with other elder justice organizations to combat elder financial exploitation and the issues of isolation, abuse, and neglect of older people in congregations.

Speakers included:

- Deborah Royster, Office for Older Americans, CFPB
- Lisa Schifferle, Office for Older Americans, CFPB
- Jenefer Duane, Office for Older Americans, CFPB
- Paul Greenwood, Retired Deputy District Attorney, San Diego County
- Janel Doughten, B'nai B'rith International
- Jennifer Leffler, Service Coordinator, B'nai B'rith Apartments, Allentown, PA
- Rev. Laura Queen, Church Pension Group of the Episcopal Church
- Sean Scheller, Church Pension Group of the Episcopal Church

The webinar is designed for:

- Professionals in faith-based organizations
- Elder justice professionals, including law enforcement, legal aids, adult protective services, agencies on aging
- Financial institutions

The webinar was recorded and is available to view at
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HBdQ3tlap7o>

Ready, Set, Go!

By Evan Carmen

It's presidential primary season and voting has begun. If you are a political junkie like me, primary nights mean staying up late watching cable news with pundits breaking down results and polling from various counties across the country, getting in-depth analyses of how swing states and counties have voted over the past 20 years and listening to victory and concession speeches that inevitably sound familiar to the stump speeches you heard the candidates deliver weeks prior. Once the dust settles, the Republican Party will nominate a candidate to run against President Joe Biden in the fall. And then, it's a mad dash to November.

Between now and Nov. 5, candidates will weigh in on every issue imaginable, including those that impact seniors. For example, candidates have already begun to share their positions on Social Security and Medicare, outlining their vision to ensure the long-term viability of these important programs. Candidates have called for raising the retirement age for workers to be eligible for Social Security. Other candidates will call for increasing revenue from wealthier Americans to ensure Social Security's longevity. While these ideas will be debated, only increasing revenue the government brings in will guarantee that seniors receive their earned benefits at the appropriate age. Increasing the retirement age could force older Americans to work longer, which would be particularly unfair to seniors who work labor-intensive jobs.

On election day in November, voters will decide who leads our country in the White House and Congress. The president will have the bully pulpit to create a national dialogue around

pressing issues that impact the health care and income security for older Americans. The president will have forums like the State of the Union address, press conferences and speeches to clarify policy and set an agenda. Consequently, it's important that candidates running for the highest office in the land lay out a clear plan for Social Security and Medicare. Younger voters should also familiarize themselves with the candidates' policies because these programs will impact their future as well.

However, it's not just the White House which drives the agenda. Congress has the power of the purse and is responsible for writing the federal budget. This gives members of Congress the first crack at determining funding levels for government programs like Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) senior housing. As the largest national Jewish sponsor of subsidized housing in the United States, B'nai B'rith understands the important role affordable housing plays in the lives of older adults. Election Day will have a big impact in deciding who leads the committee responsible for writing the budget and whether HUD senior housing allocations will provide additional money to build more housing.

About 40 million seniors voted in the last presidential election. Seniors will have a big say in the direction of our country post-election day. As President Barack Obama said, "Elections have consequences." Conversations surrounding senior programs will only increase, and the next election will help decide the directions of those discussions.

2024 EVENTS

- March 10:** Virtual Senior Housing Committee Meeting (Board members)
- March 11:** Virtual Conference on Senior Housing (Board and staff members)
- May 15-17:** Managers/Service Coordinators Training Tentative TBD
- September 8-10:** Conference on Senior Housing Philadelphia, PA

Resident Associations: How Staff and Members of the Boards of Directors Can Be Supportive

By Janel Doughten, Associate Director, B'nai B'rith Center for Senior Services

What is a Resident Association? It is a group of concerned citizens who are elected to represent the housing community in which the residents live. The Council is the voice in the community. It strives to make the housing community a better place to live by actively seeking to influence decisions that directly affect the residents it serves.

To do this effectively, it acts as a liaison between management and residents, as well as between residents and the community. Another important part of every Resident Association's effort should be devoted to programming or activities.

The Resident Association can also serve as the volunteer base for building activities in partnership with the staff and boards of directors, such as assisting with a building food bank, running a convenience store or setting up and staffing building activities. The Resident Association can take charge of volunteer recruitment, alleviating staff from the need to oversee this aspect and allowing them more time for other responsibilities.

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in The Management Agent Handbook (4381.5), "Management agents that operate HUD-insured and HUD-assisted multifamily properties play a key role in helping HUD provide quality affordable housing. A principal focus of the Management Agent Handbook is the development of an effective partnership among owners, their management agents, residents and resident associations, and HUD staff to provide quality affordable housing.



Janel and Barbara, the new President of the Residents Association at B'nai B'rith Covenant House of Tucson

Residents and Resident Associations can be invaluable allies for owners/agents and should be given the opportunity to voice their views and concerns in key decisions regarding the project. Toward this end, HUD encourages owners/agents to go beyond the minimum requirements for resident involvement 'and take the following steps:

- work to enhance communication between residents and both on-site and senior management;
- facilitate resident access to management;
- ensure that proper consideration is given to resident input; and
- emphasize the importance of promptly resolving problems affecting residents."

HUD expects management to work with the Resident Association as the voice in the community for all residents to solve community problems

and have input in the community overall. Management staff should make available the community room for meetings and activities, as well as regularly meet with the officers of the Resident Association to ensure community issues are being addressed, and to acknowledge the association's role in representing residents. The board of directors, as owner, can appoint a board liaison to the Resident Association to make sure that needs are being met and assist with fundraising for activities.

Additionally, in HUD's Service Coordinators in Multifamily Housing Program Resource Guide, service coordinators are seen as, "Advisors who can assist residents with building support networks and consult with tenant organizations and resident management. Service coordinators may provide assistance and information to resident councils as requested by the

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Resident Associations: How Staff and Members of the Boards of Directors Can Be Supportive

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council. If the property does not have an established resident council and residents express a desire to establish one at the property, the service coordinator may provide information on HUD regulations (CFR 24 part 245) regarding the establishment of a council, information on electing officers, conducting council meetings, and resources available in the community.

The service coordinator is prohibited from establishing the resident council, holding an elected position on the council, and regularly attending council meetings. The service coordinator can participate in council meetings only at the invitation of the resident council."

HUD expects the service coordinator to act in an advisory role to the Resident

Association. A board of directors' liaison can also assist in the advisory capacity along with the service coordinator.

Another way to support the Resident Association is to encourage leadership training and ongoing support through the Center for Senior Services programs. We encourage leadership to

attend B'nai B'rith's biennial Resident Leadership Retreat and follow-up virtual sessions. Additionally, we are available to conduct individual Resident Association building workshops that are typically held virtually but occasionally in person as well.

For more information on CSS workshops, contact Janel Doughten
jdoughten@bnaibrith.org

RESOURCES:

The Management Agent Handbook (4381.5)

https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/administration/hudclips/handbooks/hsg/4381.5

HUD's Service Coordinators in Multifamily Housing Program Resource Guide

<https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Service-Coordinators-in-Multifamily-Housing-Program-Resource-Guide.pdf> (pages 8 and 11)

Center for Senior Services Conducts In-Person Resident Leadership Retreat at Perlman Camp

By Cheryl Kempler, Editor and Writer for B'nai B'rith IMPACT and Contributing Editor and Staff Writer for B'nai B'rith Magazine

For the first time since the pandemic, B'nai B'rith Center for Senior Services (CSS) staff and volunteers traveled to Perlman Camp in Lake Como, Pa., to welcome 30 older adults living in subsidized senior communities around the country to its annual Resident Leadership Retreat, held from August 2-8.

The retreat was held every other year until the COVID-19 outbreak in 2020. For two years, in 2021 and 2022 CSS produced two-day online workshop sessions for residents who would have attended the retreat. As originally planned, the in-person leadership retreat will now be scheduled bi-annually.

Leading the various sessions and workshops focusing on topics ranging from communications and advocacy to celebrating diversity were Janel Doughten, associate director of B'nai B'rith Center for Senior Services, Evan Carmen, CSS legislative director for Aging Policy and Abbie Stone, co-chair, B'nai B'rith Senior Housing Committee. Those who attended also had time to experience interfaith get-togethers with Perlman summer campers, celebrate the rituals of Sabbath at a Friday night dinner, go for a swim or just enjoy the natural beauty of sunset over the Poconos. A highlight of the week was



Group photo from the 2023 Resident Leadership Retreat

the talent show, which took place on the night before departure.

Doughten commented: "Our group quickly bonded and supported each other. From a programming perspective, this year's retreat was our strongest yet."

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Center for Senior Services Conducts In-Person Resident Leadership Retreat at Perlman Camp

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Participants boarding the bus to Perlman Camp



Participants enjoying the Perlman Camp grounds



Residents participating in leadership activities at the retreat