



**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

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INTERNATIONAL**
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Evan Carmen



Included in the schedule of meetings was a workshop devoted to a new non-profit that encourages charitable giving, Random Acts of Kindness (ARK). The yellow, ark-shaped bank symbolizes ARK's "tikkun olam": giving back to the community and the world.

Center for Senior Services Hosts Community Service Project Alongside Annual Managers and Service Coordinators Meeting

The annual B'nai B'rith Center for Senior Services (CSS) Housing Network Managers and Service Coordinators meeting was held in Los Angeles, California from May 15-17.

The group prepared food boxes at the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank prior to the Housing Network meetings, continuing a tradition of community service paired with the meetings that began in 2019 when attendees volunteered at local farms in Puerto Rico planting vegetables and preparing food packages for hurricane victims. Along with other volunteers at the food bank, we packed over 2600 food boxes.

The next two days of the program featured issues of concern for older Americans and our on-site building staff. This included fraud and investment education from the Securities and Exchange Commission, emergency preparedness hosted by MySafe: LA, (which educates adults and children about fire prevention and

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Center for Senior Services Hosts Community Service Project Alongside Annual Managers and Service Coordinators Meeting

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public safety), updates from the Social Security Administration and social service programs, and sessions facilitated by our own CSS staff experts.

Particularly relevant for administrators at Jewish-sponsored residences, security enhancement was addressed in response to the rise in anti-Semitic incidents following the Oct. 7 terrorist attacks and Israel's defensive war with Hamas.

As the largest national Jewish sponsor of non-sectarian subsidized housing for the elderly in the United States, CSS is committed to educating its building administrators at residential facilities for older Americans. It is the mission of CSS and the building staff to protect and improve the quality of life for the residents in each building.



The B'nai B'rith Managers and Service Coordinators Meeting kicked off with a community service project at the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank. Joining forces with volunteers from other philanthropies, CSS Associate Director Janel Doughten (center, in green) and meeting attendees who work at B'nai B'rith sponsored senior residences around the country, packed 2,604 food boxes for people in need.





A Note from the Chair

By Marvin Siflinger, Chair of Center for Senior Services

Hello friends,

It's hard to believe it's the middle of the summer! I know in my house, the summertime is filled with family and friends and enjoying the hot weather. However, soon we will turn the page and our network should be excited for the Annual Conference on Senior Housing.

After last year's successful conference, I know our housing community is looking forward to coming together in Philadelphia to learn and share stories. Attendees will visit our sponsored building in Claymont, Delaware and participate in sessions discussing such diverse topics as boundaries with residents, building security, national B'nai B'rith programming opportunities, the Acts of Random Kindness (ARK) charity program with Rabbi Shulman and more.

The housing conference will build upon our successful Virtual Spring Training and the recently completed Managers and Service Coordinators Meeting held in Redondo Beach, California. In addition, I am pleased to report that, once again, our meeting kicked off with a service project at the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank. Along with a few other groups, our B'nai B'rith volunteers helped pack 2,604 food boxes for people in need. This exemplifies our spirit of Tikkun Olam (repairing the world.); B'nai B'rith gives back to the local community where we hold our trainings. Most of our residents are recipients of food boxes from their local food banks, so our CSS housing network understands how vital this local support is to the community.

Regarding our congressional advocacy, CSS staff met with congressional offices during the year to advocate for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) senior housing program. Specifically, we try and meet with members of Congress who represent our buildings. In addition, we are pleased that Rep. Juan Ciscomani visited the B'nai B'rith Gerd & Inge Strauss Manor on Pantano in Tucson, Arizona in June. Ciscomani toured the property and spoke with residents about issues such as healthcare, income security and affordable housing. Visits to buildings and meetings with congressional offices are a great way to show your member of Congress the valuable role HUD affordable housing plays in their district and state.

Lastly, CSS staff has advocated for the continuation of the Affordable Connectivity Program, which provided up to \$30 a month savings on internet services to households that qualify. Previously, this program provided seniors more affordable internet, which made older Americans better connected to their doctors, family, friends and finances, to name a few. While the funding for this program has ceased, rest assured CSS staff will continue to advocate for funding to help qualifying older adults better afford internet access.

As always, if your building needs assistance with any matter, please feel free to reach out to B'nai B'rith. We are always eager to help our sponsored buildings.

Hope everyone has a great rest of the year.

Best,
Marvin



Rep. Juan Ciscomani visits the B'nai B'rith Gerd & Inge Strauss Manor on Pantano in Tucson, Arizona.



A Note from the Co-Chair

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

I recently had the honor of attending the Annual Managers and Service Coordinators Conference in Redondo Beach, California. In addition to enjoying the pleasant temperatures and the easy and soothing access

to the beach, I had the opportunity to engage with a group of dedicated individuals who align their daily work with the mission and vision of B'nai B'rith International and its Center for Senior Services.

The conference commenced with a meaningful visit to the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank. Alongside a local volunteer group, we helped to assemble more than 2,600 food boxes. This act of service exemplifies B'nai B'rith's longstanding commitment to humanitarian aid and providing assistance whenever and wherever it is needed. Many participants expressed how rewarding it was to assemble the food kits, as they are typically distributed to residents in their communities. This experience provided a tangible opportunity to make a difference.

Last summer, we finally held the long-postponed Resident Leadership Retreat at the esteemed Camp Perlman, in Starlight, PA. It was wonderful to be with the residents, learning about the joys and challenges they face living in affordable housing communities sponsored by B'nai B'rith. Janel and Evan skillfully incorporated experiences and insights from the retreat, empowering attendees with new communication skills and fostering awareness of inclusion, diversity and equity. These resources serve to enhance the leadership within their communities and strengthen relationships with their peers and in-house management.

The topics covered in May's conference directly reflected many of the lessons learned at the retreat, particularly regarding boundaries and flexibility. We had the chance to share with the managers and services coordinators the importance of establishing boundaries while also practicing flexibility, especially in environments where the workplace is also the residents' home. Rabbi Schulman, representing ARK Charity Project, joined us via Zoom for a session on reimagining how older adults living in B'nai B'rith sponsored communities can participate in activities that empower their willingness and desire to make a difference in their own communities through charitable giving. The heartwarming ARK (Acts of Random Kindness) program was successfully implemented through the dedication of Kerri Zurcher, a property manager at Amos Towers in Scranton, PA. The program will be launched at additional buildings during the upcoming B'nai B'rith Conference on Senior Housing in September.

Our intention at CSS is to ensure that conference attendees not only learn and contribute, but also gain and share resources and innovative ideas. This collective effort integrates new insights into each community, fostering an environment where we remain current and open to creating homes and workplaces that enhance the wellbeing and quality of life for everyone.

We look forward to seeing you at the Annual Conference on Senior Housing in Philadelphia in September. Have a fun summer!

Best,
Abbie



Abbie Stone (center) pictured with residents and Janel Doughten, Associate Director, CSS at Camp Perlman during the Resident Leadership Retreat held August 2023.



ON THE HILL



*by Evan Carmen
Legislative Director for
Aging Policy*

CSS Meets With Members of Congress to Advocate for FY25 Budget and the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)

Throughout the first half of 2024, B'nai B'rith Center for Senior Services (CSS) staff met with members of Congress to advocate for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) senior housing program. As always, the American Association of Service Coordinators (AASC) joined our advocacy efforts. We emphasized the importance of fully funding HUD senior housing properties and allocating funds for new construction and hiring additional service coordinators.

In addition, we advocated for the continuation of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), which provided qualifying households with up to a \$30 monthly internet discount. According to CNN, approximately 20% of participants were 65 and older. This program has significantly benefitted older Americans by enhancing their access to financial resources, healthcare services, improving communication with family and friends, and combating social isolation. We are disappointed the program has ended and will continue to advocate for affordable internet for older adults.

We met with staff members from the following offices:

SENATE

John Fetterman (D-Pa.)
Dick Durbin (D-Ill.)
Chris Coons (D-Del.)
Krysten Sinema (I-Ariz.)
Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.)
Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.)
John Boozman (R-Ark.)
Marco Rubio (R-Fla.)
Bob Menendez (D-N.J.)
Katie Britt (R-Ala.)
Chris Murphy (D-Conn.)
Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.)
Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.)
Bob Casey (D-Pa.)
Tom Carper (D-Del.)
Senate Appropriations Committee

HOUSE

Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick (D-Fla.)
Lisa Blunt Rochester (D-Del.)
Jamie Raskin (D-Md.)
Mario Diaz-Balart (R-Fla.)
Steve Womack (R-Ark.)
John Rutherford (R-Fla.)
Pete Aguilar (D-Calif.)
Mike Quigley (D-Ill.)
Juan Ciscomani (R-Ariz.)
David Valadao (R-Calif.)
Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-N.J.)
Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.)
Matt Cartwright (D-Pa.)
Katherine Clark (D-Mass.)
House Appropriations Committee

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ON THE HILL

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Evan Carmen Attends Older Americans Month Event at the White House

Legislative Director for Aging Policy Evan Carmen of B'nai B'rith's Center for Senior Services (CSS) attended an event at the White House honoring Older Americans Month.

The Biden-Harris administration reaffirmed its support for seniors by outlining policies the White House believes will strengthen health care and retirement security. "I want to thank the White House for hosting an event honoring Older Americans Month," Carmen said. "Advocacy for seniors is a priority at CSS. We appreciate the administration highlighting the importance of ensuring that seniors can age with dignity."

White House administration official speakers included Neera Tanden, assistant to the president and domestic policy advisor; John Laadt, senior advisor, White House Office of Public Engagement; Assistant Secretary Lisa Gomez, U.S. Department of Labor; Dora Hughes, M.D., M.P.H., acting chief medical officer and acting director of the Center for Clinical Standards and Quality (CCSQ) for the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services; Stephen Benjamin, assistant to the president, senior advisor to the president and director of public engagement; Rhea Fernandes, special assistant to the president for gender policy; and Tom Perez, assistant to the president and director of intergovernmental affairs.

Rep. Juan Ciscomani Visits B'nai B'rith Gerd and Inge Strauss Manor in Tucson, Arizona

Rep. Juan Ciscomani recently visited a B'nai B'rith senior housing building, where he engaged with residents and gained firsthand insights about the importance of affordable housing programs for seniors.

Ciscomani toured various facilities within the housing complex, including apartment units, the community room, fitness room, and computer room. He also met with residents to discuss issues that impact seniors such as affordable housing, income security, nutrition assistance and health care.

"It was great to join B'nai B'rith for a visit to Strauss Manor," Ciscomani said. "I am grateful for the work they do to provide our seniors with safe, affordable housing as well as other programs that give their residents the ability to live their golden years comfortably."

Conversations with B'nai B'rith Podcast

As technology has advanced, so has its use in the financial exploitation of seniors. Each year, more and more older adults are targeted by a range of increasingly sophisticated scams, victimized by fraud or theft of money and valuable personal information. Steve Weisman, Bentley University professor, lawyer and one of America's leading experts in identity theft, scams and cybersecurity, spoke with B'nai B'rith CEO Dan Mariaschin about how scams and fraud are perpetuated against older Americans and what people can do to lower their risk of falling victim to these malevolent actors. [Watch](#) the interview here.

They also discuss the role of AI in fraud detection and prevention, highlighting the importance of technological innovations in combating financial exploitation of seniors.

In addition, 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 litigation regarding the IRA. [Watch](#) the interview here.

Piatigorsky Foundation: Bringing Music to the B'nai B'rith CSS Housing Network

For over two decades, B'nai B'rith has partnered with the Piatigorsky Foundation to bring classical music concerts to the CSS housing network. This year, the winter/spring tour included concerts at CSS buildings in Arizona, Florida, Maryland, Pennsylvania and Texas.

Founded in 1990 by cellist Evan Drachman, the Piatigorsky Foundation honors his grandfather, Gregor Piatigorsky, the renowned Russian cellist. Mr. Piatigorsky believed that music is not a luxury for an elite few, but a necessity of life for all.

Originally from Ukraine, Mr. Piatigorsky escaped to Poland and eventually settled in Germany and France in the 1930s, where he established himself as a world-traveling solo musician. He and his family fled France ahead of the Nazi invasion, finding refuge in the United States. He later joined the faculty of the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia in 1949, followed by the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and the University of Southern California (USC), where he dedicated much of his time to teaching and performing chamber music.

The mission of the Piatigorsky Foundation is dedicated to integrating live classical music into everyday life for communities throughout the United States.

The Piatigorsky Foundation's program goals:

- Enrich community life by bringing extraordinary musical talent to underserved audiences
- Create a broader base for the art form by developing new audiences
- Offer meaningful performance opportunities for established and emerging artists
- Make live classical music an integral part of everyday life for communities across the United States

We look forward to continuing this partnership in the years to come. If you would like to treat the residents at your housing facility to a concert, please let us know and we will try to arrange a program.



Piatigorsky Foundation concert at the B'nai B'rith Apartments I/II/III of Deerfield Beach in Florida. Courtesy of James Lynch.



AI Making Scams More Believable: We Need To Stay Ahead of the Curve

By Evan Carmen (originally published February 7th, 2024)

“When it comes to frauds and scams targeting seniors, I am here to tell you that things aren’t as bad as you think—unfortunately, they are far worse. According to the Federal Trade Commission’s (FTC) Consumer Sentinel report for 2022, older Americans reported more than \$1.6 billion in losses to frauds and scams. This number is undoubtedly lower than the actual figure because many seniors, for a variety of reasons, including embarrassment or shame, fail to report the scams perpetrated against them. FTC estimates that in 2022 the actual amount lost by seniors to scams could be as high as \$48.4 billion. And now with Artificial Intelligence (AI), the scams are getting worse.

AI has become a sophisticated weapon that can be deployed by even the most unsophisticated scammers.”

In November, Steve Weisman, senior lecturer at Bentley University, said this before the Senate Special Committee on Aging. The purpose of this hearing was to discuss how Artificial Intelligence (AI) is being used in furtherance of scams against older adults. AI technology makes the scam more believable to the person being targeted by mimicking “human-like behavior,” often through speech and/or writing. AI can manifest itself through chatbots (online virtual assistants), voice cloning technology and deepfakes (AI generated videos). Through voice cloning technology, AI replicates a target’s loved-one’s voice, which has made emergency scams more realistic.

In Sugarland, Texas, news station



Gerd & Inge Strauss B'nai B'rith Manor on Pantano, Tucson, AZ, Residents working with Austin Garland, the Network Center Coordinator.



ABC KTRK reported on a scam perpetrated against an 82-year-old man named Jerry (last name purposefully not reported). The report states Jerry received a call from what he thought was the San Antonio Police Department, indicating his son-in-law was in jail for causing a car accident. On the call, Jerry thought his son-in-law got on the phone to explain the situation. Unfortunately, Jerry fell victim to voice cloning technology because he paid money to get his son-in-law out of jail. Jerry’s son-in-law was never in jail, and Jerry and his wife were swindled out of \$17,000. To make matters worse, the couple lives in a costly assisted living facility. According to Jerry, this scam will force him to find a job to supplement the money they lost.

Equally concerning is how easily this type of technology can be administered. Scammers can get a few seconds of a person’s audio recording (often from the internet) and clone their voices

for fraudulent purposes. These AI techniques allow for the use of more personalized emails, phone calls and chatbots in furtherance of the scam.

Despite the level of sophistication associated with these scams, people can practice good habits to decrease the likelihood of being victimized. Advice from the Senate Special Committee on Aging includes:

1. Do not share sensitive information via phone, email, text, or social media.
2. Do not transfer or send money to unknown locations.
3. Consider designating a “safe word” for your family that is only shared with family members and close contacts.
4. Do not provide any personal or sensitive information to an online chatbot.
5. Report potential scams to the authorities and the companies involved.

AI Making Scams More Believable: We Need To Stay Ahead of the Curve

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Goldberg B'nai B'rith Towers, Houston, TX residents being assisted by children from the Clemence Youth Foundation.

Thankfully, government agencies and elected representatives are taking notice.

At the Senate Special Committee on Aging hearing in November, “Modern Scams: How Scammers Are Using Artificial Intelligence & How We Can Fight Back,” senators heard testimony from witnesses who had been victimized by scammers, and from experts in the field. Each witness brought a unique perspective on how to address the issue. Chairman Bob Casey (D-PA) indicated a federal response is required to combat this problem. After the hearing, Senators Casey, Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn), John Fetterman (D-PA) and Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) sent a letter to the FTC requesting more information regarding the use of AI in furtherance of scams. Also, the committee runs a Fraud Hotline (1-855-303-9470) which provides resources for older adults and their family members to report scams and suspicious activity.

In addition, the private sector is responding to the problem. An article published by the Financial Times,

financial scams,” details how companies like iProov and Catch are developing AI technologies to combat scammers. Catch’s product weeds out email scams and advises its client on how to proceed. “The cash that [older adults] tend to lose is a lot more valuable to them— on average the cheque size they lose is higher and if they’re retired, they don’t have the time to make that money back,” co-founder of Catch Uri Pearl told the Financial Times.

“Shock, relief and anger—one emotion followed the other. I said to Brett that there was no doubt in my mind that it was his voice on the phone—it was the exact cadence with which he speaks. I sat motionless in my car just trying to process these events. How did they get my son’s voice? The only conclusion I can come up



Resident from Goldberg B'nai B'rith Towers, Houston, TX using a PC in the building’s computer Center.

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AI Making Scams More Believable: We Need To Stay Ahead of the Curve

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with is that they used artificial intelligence, or AI, to clone his voice.” This is what Gary Schildhorn told the Special Committee on Aging at the November hearing about how he felt after he realized that he almost paid a scammer \$90,000, despite the fact his son wasn’t in jail.

Often, it feels like scammers are always one step ahead of the authorities. However, through a proactive approach with the government and private sector, hopefully older Americans can be in a better position to stay ahead of these bad actors.

Residents from Pasadena Interfaith Manor, Pasadena, TX using the PC in the building’s computer Center.



Summer Weather Alert!

Below are handouts and resources on extreme heat and other summer weather-related events. Many of these resources can be printed out in various languages.

EXTREME HEAT RESOURCES

Ready.gov: <https://www.ready.gov/heat>

Heat.gov: <https://www.heat.gov/>

National Weather Service: <https://www.weather.gov/safety/heat>

Red Cross: <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/extreme-heat-safety.html>

OTHER WEATHER-RELATED SAFETY RESOURCES

Ready.gov: <https://www.ready.gov/be-informed>

National Weather Service: <https://www.weather.gov/safety/>

Red Cross: <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies.html>

