

HOME CARE
HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE
ISABELLA & MENORAH CENTERS FOR
REHABILITATION AND NURSING CARE
ELDERPLAN/HOMEFIRST
INSTITUTE FOR INNOVATION



MJHS Connecting with the Community!

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Inside This Issue

Explore heartwarming journeys of connection and support within MJHS. From personal stories of care and the enduring impact of planned giving to our commitment to programs within the community, and the unwavering dedication of our employees who generously contribute to our Employee Giving Campaign each year, these stories serve as a testament to how MJHS is *Leading the way to great care.*SM

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**MJHS
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MJHS Connecting With the Community!

Have you spotted our friendly faces in your community? We are always out in full force, spreading the word about all the ways we care for, support and guide New Yorkers with their evolving health needs. In a city as exciting and diverse as the Big Apple, MJHS staff and their families are proud to attend many exciting cultural celebrations, observances and community events. Look back at the past year with us!



Walking to End Alzheimer's

MJHS compassionately cares for people with Alzheimer's disease, as well as supports their family caregivers who often feel overwhelmed, are looking for guidance and need a good listener. To help honor individuals with memory loss, celebrate

their caregivers and acknowledge the commitment of our incredible staff at MJHS Home Care, MJHS Centers for Rehabilitation and Nursing Care as well as MJHS Hospice and Elderplan/HomeFirst, **we were honored to be the Presenting Sponsor of the Alzheimer's Association's 2023 Brooklyn Walk to End Alzheimer's!**



After a moving opening ceremony which included remarks from Diane Ashley, Chief Marketing and Communications Officer of MJHS, our team hit the pavement along the scenic route. Despite the cold rain, our group—which included staff who care for individuals with dementia, plus others affected by the disease—remained enthusiastic.

2023 EMPLOYEE GIVING CAMPAIGN

Every year our very own employees donate funds for the programs and services of MJHS. Thank you to our staff who not only give to us every day by caring for members of our community but also go above and beyond to donate funds to ensure we can continue caring for those in need.

Anonymous (105)

Terese Acampora

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Indiana Acosta

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📍 Welcoming Year of the Dragon in Flushing and Manhattan

A picture is worth a thousand words... this one showcases the excitement from when MJHS and Elderplan/HomeFirst returned to the Lunar New Year parade in Flushing, Queens! Waving to thousands lining the street, staff from across the system, and their families, helped welcome the Year of the Dragon.

Weeks later, lion dances, firecrackers and red lanterns set the scene for the 26th Chinatown Lunar New Year Parade. **Behind the MJHS banner, our staff—many with young ones in tow—once again walked the historic streets of Manhattan Chinatown.**

In both parades, the crowd was beyond excited to see us, thanks in part to awareness of our programs and services, our commitment to caring for Asian communities, and the Elderplan/HomeFirst RV rolling behind us, honking to fun beats!



📍 Celebrating With Pride

As champions of culturally-appropriate care, **MJHS returned to the NYC Pride March** carrying paddles featuring the Progress Pride flag, a symbol of the diversity found within the LGBTQ+ community. Under the summer sun, our contingent looked extra special as we marched down Fifth Avenue, passed the Stonewall National Monument and ended in the Village while wearing rainbow crafts made by memory care residents from MJHS Menorah Center for Rehabilitation and Nursing Care!

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MJHS Connecting With the Community! *continued*

📍 Honoring Veterans

MJHS once again stepped out onto Fifth Avenue as part of the NYC Veterans Day Parade, the largest commemoration of its kind in the country! Together, with an estimated 20,000 marchers, **we honored Veterans and helped increase awareness of our award-winning specialized programs and services for Veterans receiving hospice care!** Our group included Veterans who now work at MJHS, as well as staff who have veterans in their families!

Earlier in the year, on the 50th anniversary of the departure of the last American troops from Vietnam, we participated in the city's annual Reading of the Names of Fallen, to remember the 1,744 New Yorkers who died in the Vietnam War as well as in post-September 11 conflicts. ■



DID YOU KNOW?



MJHS Home Care and MJHS Hospice have repeatedly **earned a Platinum Credential from SAGECare**, which is the highest level possible from the country's largest and oldest organization devoted to improving the lives of LGBTQ+ older adults

MJHS Hospice has repeatedly **earned Level 5 status in the national We Honor Veterans program** that was developed jointly between the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization



Community Fairs and Beyond



New York City weather can be unpredictable, but don't worry, rain or shine, our team makes it to community events to share our information about resources. Getting a little wet never dampens our excitement about ***Leading the way to great care.***SM

Got a question? We're here to help! Elderplan, MJHS Hospice and Palliative Care, and MJHS Isabella Center for Rehabilitation and Nursing Care, were proud sponsors of the Older Adults Conference. The event was organized by the Acacia Network and its affiliate, the Institute for Puerto Rican/Hispanic Elderly, and took place at Alfred J. Lerner Hall in Upper Manhattan. Throughout the day, our team met with older adults to share how we can help guide and support them along their health journey.



It was a beautiful day with even better company! Staff from our hospice and palliative care teams, as well as Elderplan/HomeFirst, attended the Golden Years Senior Expo hosted by the Boro Park Jewish Community Council to share information about our programs with community members.

Welcome to Elderplan/HomeFirst! Throughout the Medicare Annual Election Period (Open Enrollment), and all year round for dual Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries, we're always ready to talk about our affordable health plan options to address the health and well-being of older adults and adults of all ages with disabilities.



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Igor G. Goldberg
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Memory Care Creative Arts Program Wins Jewish Programming Award

Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy has urged Americans to focus on the public health crisis of loneliness, isolation and lack of connection. Fortunately for our residents and their families, MJHS Menorah Center for Rehabilitation and Nursing Care has a long track record of providing effective, groundbreaking programs that are centered on “social connection,” which Dr. Murthy calls “medicine hiding in plain sight.”

In recognition of our memory care team’s tireless efforts to address the range of emotions—and even nocturnal rhythms—experienced by our residents, AJAS (Association of Jewish Aging Services) awarded MJHS Menorah Center the 2024 Jewish Programming Award. Congratulations to Kendra Ray, PhD, director of our memory care program at MJHS Menorah Center, and her incredible team for the wonderful acknowledgement. Here are five unique activities that happen each week at MJHS Menorah Center:

MJHS Menorah Center’s 80-bed memory care wing was established in 2018, thanks to a generous grant from The Sephardic Foundation on Aging. The funding also helps cover the cost of training and continued education for our clinical memory care staff. Additional support comes from Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) for our person-centered, trauma-informed creative arts therapy for Holocaust Survivors living with dementia.



Intergenerational Therapeutic Art Session with a Virtual Twist

Our art specialist develops and guides individual virtual art therapy sessions with residents and their loved ones. The twist is that we mail families the art supplies in advance, so everyone can use the same paints, for example. Last year, we curated an exhibit timed to coincide with Holocaust Remembrance Day. It featured residents’ stories of survival, and drawings that depict love, fear, freedom, sorrow, resilience and hope.

2023 EMPLOYEE GIVING
CAMPAIGN

“We customize dynamic programming, so our verbal and nonverbal residents can stay connected with different generations of family, even if they live far away. Watching everyone create—whether music, art, or instant memories—on camera or in person is a heartwarming and inspiring experience.”

—Dr. Kendra Ray

Dementia Program Director

MJHS Menorah Center for Rehabilitation and Nursing Care

“Club M”: Evening and Weekend Trauma-Informed Music Therapy



Some of our residents living with dementia are restless in the evening or are night owls. Enter “Club M” for Menorah. During some evening shifts, we provide music therapy in residents’ rooms, for small groups, and even via telehealth, so loved ones can sing or hum good night to each other.

Stress and Trauma Management Through Mindfulness

People who live with the distresses of a traumatic event often need help developing coping skills to combat unexpected triggers that lead to feelings of loneliness or depression. Dementia often reduces filters that suppress emotions and the ability to decipher between the past and present.

This is why MJHS Menorah Center residents receive guided meditation and are taught deep breathing exercises to manage their stressors.



We also offer a weekly in-person mindfulness activity and a virtual session once a month. Families and friends of residents are invited to participate in both.

Digging It: Sowing Seeds and Memories

There are countless studies about the healing power of nature. With support from our staff, memory care residents maintain balcony gardens when the weather is warm and indoor gardens during the fall and winter months. As seeds are sown and plants are watered, residents often reminisce. Some recall sharing their harvest. Others remember food insecurity, so our team spends a significant amount of time earning trust and reassuring anxious residents that they won’t go hungry again. What’s clear is that all residents find peace and joy in the garden.



Food and Life Lessons

Passing favorite recipes from one generation to another is a time-honored tradition. So is showing how to prepare a cultural dish. We created a weekly intergenerational cooking group where favorite or traditional recipes are shared with community college students. Dishes are prepared and enjoyed within an hour. ■

Jason A. Gondo
Karen M. Goode Harper
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Nataliya Gorelko
Irina Gornak
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Qiong Yan Li
Jean Liang Tham
Dina Liberman
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Cui M. Lin
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Wanru Lin
Yan F. Lin

Creating Connections Through Planned Giving



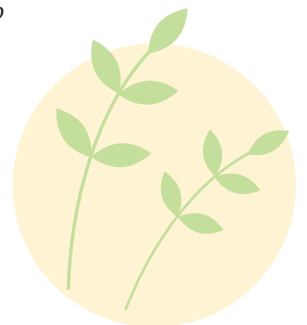
Finding Support in MJHS

Both of Robert's siblings received care with MJHS. In 2007, Robert's brother fell ill and was advised to seek hospice care. His primary care doctor suggested MJHS. **While the transition to hospice care was emotional for Robert, he immediately felt supported.** Whether he had a question for the helpline in the middle of the night or needed extra assistance or guidance, MJHS was always available to answer any questions, directing him to the appropriate person or department. Three years after his brother passed away, Robert's sister was admitted to MJHS's Hospice program. Again, Robert experienced the same professional, high-level care, something he knew he could count on and expect. Whether it was the weekly visits from the Rabbi or daily check-ins from his sister's nurse and social worker, Robert once again knew MJHS would provide any support needed.



Building a Deeper Connection

Following his sister's passing, Robert continued his deep connection to the MJHS community. **He keeps in touch with the Rabbi who cared for his sister, attends events and functions, volunteered with hospice by making telephone support calls, and makes annual *Yahrzeit* contributions in memory of his siblings.** He also decided to include MJHS in his will. In Robert's own words, his involvement and philanthropic support are a "*way to pay it forward.*" He is so appreciative of his sibling's care and support that he "*wanted to be able to provide the same support to other families in need*" by including MJHS in his will. Making the planned giving gift was as meaningful to Robert as much as it was appreciated by MJHS.



2023 EMPLOYEE GIVING CAMPAIGN

Planned Giving: Creating a Lasting Legacy for Future Generations

Planned Giving is a unique opportunity for donors to create a lasting legacy for their chosen charitable organization. **At MJHS, donors like Robert become part of the Sustainers Society, pledging support to ensure compassionate care for future generations.**

Membership in this society includes invitations to special events and recognition in select MJHS publications and newsletters.

In Robert's own words, his involvement and philanthropic support are a "way to pay it forward." He is so appreciative of his sibling's care and support that "he wanted to be able to provide the same support to other families in need" by including MJHS in his will.



The Ongoing Impact of Donor Support

At MJHS, many of our programs and services, such as music and art therapy, Veteran support, compassionate care, recreational programs, and charity care, require ongoing donor support. As a Planned Giving Donor, you can earmark your donation to the program or service that is most meaningful to you.

Robert is a longtime planned giving donor, a member of the Sustainer's Society and a committed MJHS partner.

Get Involved: Making a Difference Through Planned Giving

If you are interested in making a Planned Gift to the MJHS Foundation or learning more, please reach out to Chinwe Egonu at cegonu@mjhs.org. ■

** Name and identifying information have been changed to protect patient privacy.*



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Yong Na Lin
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MJHS Isabella Center for Rehabilitation and Nursing Care Stays Ahead of Trends With

Innovative Workforce Training Program

You've probably heard about the staffing shortages being experienced across the health care industry. And since you're a MJHS supporter, it won't come as a surprise to hear we're staying ahead of the trends by implementing innovative workforce training solutions that will flourish for years to come.

As it becomes increasingly difficult for health care providers to fill positions, such as Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs), for instance, MJHS is planning ahead with a program that aligns with our mission and enhances our deep ties to the community. We're pleased to share about the success of the SkillSpring Young Adult Program pilot at MJHS Isabella Center for Rehabilitation and Nursing Care!

Created by The New Jewish Home, the SkillSpring Young Adult Program helps jumpstart health care careers for unemployed young adults by offering

free three-month occupational training and mentorship. With onsite classroom instruction, and supervised practical experiences within the MJHS Isabella Center, participants join our supportive community of patients, residents, families and staff from day one. To help overcome barriers to joining the program, extra help is available, as needed, including assistance with uniforms, public transportation, meals and stipends.

We were so proud to be part of the graduation event and cheer on 14 members of our cohort as they crossed the stage. David Wagner, president and CEO of MJHS Health System,

"With staffing shortages widely impacting health care in general, this transformational program addresses a significant need while opening the door to a career path for young adults who might otherwise not have this opportunity."

— **Loyola Princivil-Barnett**
 Chief Operating Officer

MJHS Centers for Rehabilitation and Nursing Care

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Raquel Mae S. Sanchez
Elizabeth P. Santiago
Jeremy Santiago
Ulugbek Sayfullaev
Leslie D. Scafuto
Winifred S. Schein
Krystal Schoener
Elizabeth Scholz
Linda Schur Scalett
Lana Schwartz



Big smiles from graduates of the SkillSpring Young Adult Program, including from members of the MJHS Isabella Center cohort.

“Through SkillSpring, we will continue working toward uplifting our community and providing the best care possible for our residents. This transformative program aligns with our mission and meets critical needs by providing a career path for young adults who lack access to similar opportunities.”

— **David Wagner**

President and CEO, MJHS Health System

Loyola Princivil-Barnett, chief operating officer of the MJHS Centers for Rehabilitation and Nursing Care and Laura Niland, vice president of government affairs, also took great pride to share about the effectiveness of the program at a legislative breakfast hosted by The New Jewish Home after our new CNAs started their new roles. Around a table with

State Senator Cordell Cleare, Council Member Shaun Abreu, representatives from the office of Assembly Member Yudelka Tapia, the Mayor, and the Governor, SkillSpring participants, Residents’ Council Presidents and other providers, we advocated for more funding for innovative solutions like SkillSpring Young Adult Program. ■



State Senator Cordell Cleare (left), David Wagner, president and CEO of MJHS Health System (middle) and Loyola Princivil-Barnett, chief operating officer of the MJHS Centers for Rehabilitation and Nursing Care (right).



Jessica Garcia-Robinson (right), assistant administrator at MJHS Isabella Center, spoke at the SkillSpring Young Adult Program graduation event, sharing our organization’s congratulations and highlighting the important role of CNAs. She was joined on stage by other special guests, including State Senator Cordell Cleare, City Council Member Shaun Abreu and Deputy Manhattan Borough President Keisha Sutton-James.

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HomeFirst MLTC

Keeps My Daughter Safe at Home

“I recently heard that some people are questioning the value of Managed Long-Term Care health plans (MLTCs) and the quality of the care they provide to their members. I’m not someone who typically writes notes, but I’m writing today because they couldn’t be more wrong. HomeFirst, our MLTC, ensures that my daughter and I get the exceptional care, support, and guidance we need. Without them, we would both be lost. She would have to be institutionalized—which would be devastating to an alert 55 year-old.”

People with disabilities are far too often treated like second class citizens. Fact is, they’re frequently mistreated. That’s not the case when it comes to the care my daughter receives from our MLTC health plan. Our team at HomeFirst is a lifesaver. You have no idea what a relief it is to have them behind us.

Fifteen years ago, when her son was three, my daughter (Stacy) was diagnosed with stage 4 breast cancer that affected her cerebellum. Today, at age 55, she is confined to a wheelchair, has trouble communicating, and requires assistance with everything—toileting, dressing and eating. She also has mental health challenges and is understandably angry about her situation.



2023 EMPLOYEE GIVING
CAMPAIGN

I can't find the words to express our gratitude to the whole HomeFirst team. This is an extraordinary program filled with people who lead with not just expertise but also heart.

— Nancy P

Ten years ago, we joined HomeFirst. For most of the last ten years, we have had the same extraordinary care manager. Mona is simply magnificent. She has helped me with every little thing, and I've always been able to reach her. She listens—which is so important—and arranges the physical therapy and occupational therapy that is essential to Stacy's well-being.

Because Stacy has trouble communicating, I've always worked directly with Mona. She is my lifeline. Allison, another one of our HomeFirst team members, is always there to help with our recertifications. And then there's Diana. She's our angel.

My daughter, grandson and I live in a two-family home in Brooklyn. While we once had a working stairlift, since it stopped functioning, Stacy has been trapped on the second floor of our home. The only time she was willing and able to go out was for doctor appointments. HomeFirst would arrange an ambulette with two men who could carry her down the steps. Stacy had become a prisoner in our home. As you might expect, this only worsened her mental health issues. She became very depressed and her anger about her condition only worsened.

Diana, who's in charge of authorizations, felt our pain and understood the profound impact—both physical and emotional—the absence of a stairlift was having on our lives. She was a miracle worker. Diana didn't just do the paperwork to validate our eligibility for the lift, she personally took the time to get involved and advocate for us. She had the existing lift evaluated and advised us that it could

Elderplan/HomeFirst is playing an active role in industry advocacy efforts to fight reduced funding/scope of Managed Long-Term Care plans. We are proud that one of our members agreed to let us share her story to support this important effort.

not be repaired. She worked with us to ensure the old lift was properly removed and found us a qualified provider. As the pieces started to come together, one day Diana said, "I hope to have a special Christmas present for Stacy."

I can't believe it. She made it happen. Thanks to Diana and the team, HomeFirst purchased and arranged for the installation of a new stairlift before Christmas. No longer trapped in her apartment,

Stacy was able to come down to my apartment on the first floor to celebrate the holiday with family and friends. Her depression lifted. As a mom, I'm happy to say that Stacy and I have already gone shopping together with the support of her home health aide. And, most exciting, she and I were able to go out to a restaurant to celebrate her son's 18th birthday with him in January.

I can't find the words to express our gratitude to the whole HomeFirst team. This is an extraordinary program filled with people who lead with not just expertise but also heart. I'm getting older and I still work. I simply couldn't care for my daughter at home without them. I sometimes wonder what would happen to Stacy if I'm not here anymore. I take comfort in knowing that HomeFirst will continue to look out for her well-being. We would be lost without them.

I beg you. Please do not make any changes to the MLTC program or Stacy's plan. You would once again be treating disabled members of your community as second-class citizens. ■

— Nancy P

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To donate to MJHS Health System, visit mjhsfoundation.org or scan the QR Code.



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The 1907 Founders Society joins together our most dedicated philanthropic partners to help further the mission of MJHS. With a minimum annual contribution of \$1,000,* members receive invitations to special events and programs with opportunity to meet MJHS Executives, recognition on the Foundation website and in the *MJHS in Focus Newsletter* and more. For information on how to join, please email Jessica Laufer, jlaufer@mjhs.org.

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The Sustainers Society recognizes and honors staff as well as all individuals who have committed to providing support for MJHS through a planned gift. By joining others who have taken this step, you can take satisfaction from knowing that you are part of an important legacy. For information on how to join, please email Chinwe Egonu, cegonu@mjhs.org.

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ANNUAL GOLF CLASSIC

In 2023, we returned to Fresh Meadows Country Club for an Un-Fore-gettable Day.

Our community joined together and raised \$781,550 to support the extraordinary health care services MJHS provides, such as music and creative arts therapy, pastoral care, bereavement support, specialized dementia care and more.

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Thank you to our donors who supported this special event.

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Upcoming Events

SAVE THE DATES!

Each year, MJHS Foundation hosts events to support the mission of MJHS Health System. Not only do these events help us raise funds towards our mission, but they provide an opportunity to get together, thank our supporters and show them first-hand the difference their involvement makes—and have a little fun.

Golf Classic at Golf Meadow Country Club June 24

The Golf Classic is dedicated to **raising funds for the underfunded programs and services of MJHS Health System.**

Wine Tasting Fall Event September 18

Our Wine Tasting event is dedicated to raising funds to support the **Golden Family STAR program, which provides additional home health aide hours to families in need.**

Hospice Goes to Broadway Winter Event Dates and show will be announced on our website

Hospice Goes to Broadway is dedicated to **raising awareness and funds for the end-of-life programs MJHS Hospice provides** to those in need.



If you are interested in being part of one of our events, contact the Foundation at **(212) 356-5300** or email us at **events@mjhoundation.org** or visit **mjhoundation.org/mjhs-events**.