



**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](#)

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Recap of 2024 and Looking Toward 2025

2024 was a busy year for the CSS staff and housing network. CSS staff have continued to hold monthly informational zoom meetings with management and service coordinators. These meetings are a chance to hear federal updates and informational sessions on potential programs for residents, covering topics from fraud prevention to addressing social isolation. They also offer opportunities for networking and sharing solutions to building-wide challenges.

Our annual training calendar kicked off with the virtual Conference on Senior Housing in March 2024. The two-day virtual meeting began with a joint session for building staff and board members. Day one featured CSS staff presentations and updates from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) representatives. On day two, boards met to discuss issues such as liability insurance and updates on each building.

In May 2024, managers and service coordinators met in Los Angeles for a service project and two days of training. The group prepared food boxes at the Los Angeles

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Recap of 2024 and Looking Toward 2025

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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 2,600 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 public safety), updates from the Social Security Administration and social service programs, and sessions facilitated by our own CSS staff experts.

More than 60 management staff members, service coordinators and board members attended the B'nai B'rith Conference on Senior Housing in Philadelphia and visited

the Asher Rubin B'nai B'rith House in Claymont, Delaware in September. Topics included an update from HUD, victim services, congressional services and federal updates. Throughout the year, we have continued our advocacy efforts; check out the "On the Hill" section for more details.

We are sad to see Marvin Siflinger step down as chair of CSS. Siflinger will continue to stay active in the CSS network and we look forward to working with the new CSS chair Dennis Rice. Rice served many years as the co-chair of the B'nai B'rith Senior Housing Committee and serves as the president of the board at the B'nai B'rith Apartments of Deerfield Beach, FL. He will be replaced as co-chair by Bruce Menditch, former president and current board member of B'nai B'rith Homecrest House in Silver Spring, Maryland.

2025 will be yet another busy year. One of the highlights of this year will be the biennial Resident Leadership Retreat. We look forward to seeing everyone at the meetings this year!

2025 Events

- **March 24-25** **Virtual Conference on Senior Housing**
- **June 11-13** **Annual Managers and Service Coordinators Meeting**
Asheville, NC
- **Early August** **Resident Leadership Retreat**
- **September 7-9** Baltimore, MD
or September 14-16



A Note from the Former Chair

By Marvin Siflinger, Former Chair of Center for Senior Services

Hello friends,

With 2025 underway, it's a great time to update the B'nai B'rith Senior Housing Network. I hope everyone had a good holiday season and was able to spend time with family and friends. As we reflect on 2024, I am proud of the great work the B'nai B'rith Center for Senior Services (CSS) performed on behalf of our buildings. Programming for our conferences and meetings was first-rate, and our advocacy connected with a vast majority of your congressional representatives' offices.

As you know, the past few months our country's new cycles have been dominated by politics. During the fall, elected officials and their opponents were on the campaign trail nonstop. With campaigning now over, our elected officials have returned to Washington, D.C. Rest assured, CSS is monitoring all the news coming from the Capitol and our advocacy efforts have begun. Coming off the heels of the 2024 elections, President Donald Trump has been sworn into office. A new White House brings new priorities, and CSS is actively looking at how these priorities could impact Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) senior housing. Please be aware CSS will always update building staff at our monthly senior housing network Zoom meetings regarding all developments on Capitol Hill and the White House.

Changes to our federal politics don't just include the White House—a new Congress has started. A new Congress means freshman senators and representatives as well as shakeups on congressional committees. CSS is eager to introduce ourselves to new members of Congress who represent our senior housing properties and solidify existing relationships. Equally important, CSS staff will be visiting the offices of congressional committee members who are responsible for writing the HUD budget. These meetings are critical to ensure that members who write the HUD budget understand the vital role affordable housing plays in the lives of older adults.

In addition, I am happy to report that 2024 saw robust congressional visits to our HUD sponsored buildings throughout the country. Two of those visits included a member of Congress, one of which serves on the committee responsible for writing the HUD budget. Throughout 2025, we will be looking to schedule additional congressional visits, providing an opportunity for your residents to advocate on their own behalf.

Also, everyone should be aware of the Virtual Spring Training being held from March 24th to 25th. These two days of virtual training are a great opportunity for our senior housing network to learn valuable information they can bring back to their buildings. Sessions will include discussions regarding congressional updates, federal agency updates, emergency preparedness, B'nai B'rith Connect programming, board training and resident associations.

Lastly, I want to take a second to update everyone that this will be my last column as I have stepped down as chair of CSS. It has been an honor serving as chair and witnessing the evolution of our senior housing network. While I am no longer the chair, I will remain active in B'nai B'rith and look forward to seeing everyone. I know Dennis Rice will do a great job as the next CSS chair.

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 year.

Best,
Marvin



A Note from the Chair

Dennis Rice, Chair of Center for Senior Services

As we begin the new year, now is a good time to reflect on our accomplishments from the past year.

The staff and volunteer leaders of the B'nai B'rith Center for Senior Services (CSS) have many responsibilities. Among them is the training of on-site building staff and the board members of our respective buildings. Bringing together the management team, onsite staff and boards of directors for that training is a big part of the responsibilities of the co-chairs of the Senior Housing Committee and CSS staff.

CSS hosts two Conferences on Senior Housing for staff and board members each year. The March conference, added during the pandemic, is held virtually, while the fall conference is an in-person meeting.

The 2024 in-person meeting was held during the fall, hosted by the Asher Rubin B'nai B'rith House in Claymont, Delaware.

The meeting covered many topics, including an update from Robert Iber, representing the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. As always, Mr. Iber is very informative, and we walk away with a wealth of pertinent information.

Additionally, we received federal agency updates from our own CSS experts: Janel Doughten, associate director, and Evan Carmen, legislative director for Aging Policy. They are in constant contact with our senators and house members offices on behalf of our residents; Evan has organized congressional visits to our buildings to meet with the staff and residents.

Each conference addresses timely issues. This year, one of the major issues being discussed was building liability insurance, as well as the roles of resident associations, staff and boards.

Management and board members attended breakout sessions on the first day of the conference. While staff discussed human resources challenges, scams and fraud targeting staff and residents, and eviction prevention, board members spent time discussing insurance and providing updates on their buildings. Additionally, both groups were part of a session on senate constituent services with staff from both Pennsylvania Senators' offices.

One of my favorite sessions during the board breakout is when each board member brings the group up to date on the programs that are happening in their buildings. I know I take some of these new ideas back home, whether it's grant opportunities, programming or other innovations to enhance the lives of our residents.

One of the highlights of this annual conference is visiting the B'nai Brith-sponsored apartment building. We were greeted, entertained and fed well by the residents of the Asher Rubin B'nai B'rith House. This conference is always held at one of our senior housing buildings; visiting the other buildings and learning new things is one of the reasons to hold an in-person meeting.

Additional topics during the course of the three-day meeting included presentations on building security, creating a collaborative working relationship between boards, building staff, residents and CSS staff, as well as navigating adult victim services.

It has been my privilege to have worked with Marvin Siflinger, the chair of the B'nai B'rith Center for Senior Services and Abbie Stone, my co-chair of the B'nai B'rith Senior Housing Committee. Although I am sorry to see Marvin step down as the chair of CSS, I am very excited to move into my new volunteer position as chair of CSS, as well as welcome Bruce Menditch from the board at the B'nai B'rith Homecrest House as the new co-chair of the B'nai B'rith Senior Housing Committee.

Thanks once again to the CSS staff and the volunteer chairs for a great job in educating the boards and staff of our buildings.

Dennis Rice

Chair of Center for Senior Services



ON THE HILL



*by Evan Carmen
Legislative Director for
Aging Policy*

CSS Meets With Members of Congress to Advocate for Strong FY25 HUD Senior Housing Budget

B'nai B'rith Center for Senior Services (CSS) staff during the second half of 2024, met with congressional offices to strongly advocate for the FY25 Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) senior housing program budget. Joining our efforts were our friends at the American Association of Service Coordinators (AASC). CSS championed a robust budget for senior housing and the critical need to build more units for older adults. With the federal government being funded by a short-term budget, CSS will continue to advocate for a fully funded FY25 budget for HUD senior housing.

Recently, President Donald Trump was sworn into office. We expect the White House to release its FY26 budget proposal in the coming months. CSS will review the proposed budget to see how it will impact HUD senior housing and other programs that affect older adults. In addition, CSS will be providing a Capitol Hill update at our Virtual Spring Training on March 24th and 25th.

We met with staff members from the following offices:

SENATE

Tommy Tuberville (R-Ala.)
Ron Johnson (R-Wis.)
Edward Markey (D-Mass.)
Ted Cruz (R-Tex.)
John Cornyn (R-Tex.)
Tammy Duckworth (D-Ill.)
Alex Padilla (D-Calif.)
Mark Kelly (D-Ariz.)
Rick Scott (R-Fla.)
Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.)

HOUSE

Andy Kim (D-N.J.)
Scott Perry (R-Pa.)
Glenn Grothman (R-Wis.)
Al Green (D-Tex.)
Tony Cárdenas (D-Calif.)
Grace Meng (D-N.Y.)
Sylvia Garcia (D-Tex.)
Chrissy Houlahan (D-Pa.)
Donald Norcross (D-N.J.)
Paul Tonko (D-N.Y.)
Seth Moulton (D-Mass.)

B'nai B'rith Invited to White House to Celebrate 89th Anniversary of the Social Security Act

B'nai B'rith's Legislative Director for Aging Policy Evan Carmen attended an event at the White House celebrating the 89th anniversary of the Social Security Act. During the event on Aug. 14, the Biden-Harris administration highlighted the vital role Social Security plays in the lives of seniors by providing financial resources to millions of older adults around the country. Social Security Commissioner Martin O'Malley discussed the need to increase staffing to

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help with administrative functions, such as hold times on the telephone waiting for a customer service agent.

“B’nai B’rith applauds the White House for marking the 89th anniversary of the Social Security Act,” Carmen said. “Social Security is a critical program for seniors and in 2022 helped lift over 16 million older adults out of poverty. Discussions about Social Security’s future must focus on the program’s long-term financial security without cutting benefits to recipients.”

Speakers included O’Malley; White House Domestic Policy Advisor Neera Tanden; Rep. John Larson; Special Assistant to the President for Tax Policy Brandon DeBot; Disability Policy Advisor at the U.S. Department of Transportation Kelly Buckland; National Council on Independent Living Executive Director Theo Braddy; Senior Advisor at the White House Office of Public Engagement Anna Perng; White House Fellow Dr. Bryan Smith; and various advocates for the Social Security program.

Congressional Leaders and Staff Visit B’nai B’rith-Sponsored Buildings

Rep. Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick (D-FL) visited the B’nai B’rith Apartments of Deerfield Beach, Florida, a B’nai B’rith-sponsored HUD senior housing property for low-income seniors, where she witnessed firsthand how vital affordable housing is for the wellbeing of seniors.

During her visit, Cherfilus-McCormick viewed an apartment unit, the computer room, the library, television room, arts and crafts room and community room. She also met with residents to discuss issues that impact seniors such as affordable housing, income security, nutrition assistance and health care.

“Affordable housing is a fundamental pillar of a healthy and fair society,” Cherfilus-McCormick said. “For our senior citizens, it is more than just a place to live; it is a foundation for security, independence and well-being. Access to affordable housing becomes increasingly crucial as we age, enabling seniors to live with dignity and peace of mind. The stability provided by such housing allows them to concentrate on their health, engage with their communities and maintain a high quality of life.”

In addition, B’nai B’rith was pleased to welcome Kelsey Daniels, a staff member from the Transportation Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Subcommittee on Senate Appropriations to Homecrest House in Silver Spring, Maryland. The Senate Subcommittee is responsible for writing legislation that funds HUD senior housing properties around the country.

Daniels toured the property, including apartment units, the computer room, gym, dining room and social hall. Daniels also had the opportunity to speak with residents about their experiences at Homecrest House.

“B’nai B’rith wants to thank Kelsey for taking the time to tour Homecrest House and speak with residents,” Carmen said. “Tours like this are a great way to show congressional staff members the immeasurable difference affordable housing can play in the lives of seniors. Countless seniors’ budgets are stretched thin paying for healthcare, housing and groceries. Affordable housing can play a vital role by helping to alleviate some financial stresses.”

B’nai B’rith is grateful that Legislative Director Amber Ray, from the office of then Rep. Lisa Blunt Rochester, in August, visited Asher Rubin B’nai B’rith House in Claymont, Delaware.

During her visit, Ray toured the community room, hair salon, offices and various apartment units. She also spoke with residents about the critical role HUD senior housing plays in their lives.

AROUND THE CSS NETWORK:

Piatigorsky Foundation Brings Concerts to Senior Housing Buildings in Texas and Arizona

For over two decades, B'nai B'rith has partnered with the Piatigorsky Foundation to bring classical music concerts to the Center for Senior Services (CSS) housing network.

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

This year, the winter tour included concerts at CSS buildings in Arizona and Texas.



Concert at Pasadena Interfaith Manor with musician Jack Sanders on guitar



Piatigorsky Foundation Brings Concerts to Senior Housing Buildings in Texas and Arizona

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Concert at Goldberg B'nai B'rith Towers with musician Jack Sanders on guitar



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Piatigorsky Foundation Brings Concerts to Senior Housing Buildings in Texas and Arizona

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Concert at the Gerd and Inge Strauss B'nai B'rith Manor on Patano with pianist Nicolas Shaneyfelt and tenor Kelly Burns



AROUND THE CSS NETWORK:

B'nai B'rith Launches “Mitzvah Makers” Program With Connect Leaders

The B'nai B'rith CSS teamed up with the young leaders of B'nai B'rith Connect to launch the “Mitzvah Makers” program on Dec. 15, 2024, at the Adelstein Family-Project H.O.P.E. B'nai B'rith House in the Bronx, NY.

B'nai B'rith Connect is B'nai B'rith's young professionals network, representing the next generation of leaders. As budding philanthropists, Connect leaders also roll up their sleeves and volunteer at the community level, delivering care and support as part of B'nai B'rith's community action and humanitarian aid efforts.

Connect volunteers and members of the building's residents association packed emergency preparedness kits, personally delivered them to each unit in the building, and shared meaningful moments over pizza and a lively game of bingo. Members of the Adelstein family, including board President Marty Adelstein, were in attendance. B'nai B'rith extends a sincere thank you to the staff and residents association at Project H.O.P.E., B'nai B'rith Connect, and CSS staff for their hard work putting this event together!

If you would like to host an event at your community with B'nai B'rith Connect, please contact Janel Doughnten, jdoughten@bnaibrith.org.



Residents and B'nai B'rith Connect members stuffing and distributing emergency preparedness bags



Becoming an Olympic Athlete: Age is Just a Number

By Evan Carmen (Originally Published Sept. 12, 2024)

Over the past couple of months, my house has been dominated by one thing: the Olympics and Paralympic Games. My wife has been glued to the television watching gymnastics, swimming and para swimming. Joining my wife was my three-year-old daughter, who I think became Simone Biles' newest fan! Whether it was the all-around competition, the uneven bars, the pommel horse, or the swimming pool, my wife met events with enthusiasm and concentration. I was frequently told, "No talking, the Olympics are on!" I can't say I haven't shared a similar sentiment when watching my favorite sporting events.

While I spent most of my evenings watching the Yankees, I did follow the games online. One of the articles that caught my attention was regarding older adult athletes. While most participants are younger, there are a few sports that have a fair number of older people.

On team USA, Steffen Peters was a 59-year-old equestrian participating in his sixth Olympics after previously winning a silver medal and two bronze medals. Team Australia boasted Mary Hanna, who at age 69 was participating in her seventh Olympic Games for equestrian dressage. While Hanna served as an alternate, her determination and commitment to be part of another Olympics deserves applause. "I've been doing this for so long now," Hanna told Equestrian Life. "Riding's one of those amazing sports where you can do it no matter what your age is, or your gender. It's a fantastic sport like that. So as long as I feel fit enough to ride a horse, I'll keep going. Because it's what I love to do, it's my life. It's everything to me."

Juan Antonio Jimenez Cobo of Spain competed in this year's games at 65 as an equestrian. Cobo originally participated in the 2000 summer games and won a silver medal in 2004. This was Cobo's first Olympics in 20 years.

In addition, table tennis produced heartwarming stories involving older Olympians. For example, Zeng Zhiying, 58, from Chile, participated in her first Olympics and has been given the nickname "table tennis Grandma," despite not having grandchildren. Originally from China, she turned pro at the age of 12. Unfortunately, four years later she left the

national team because her game was negatively impacted by a paddle rule change. Later, she took a job in Chile, coaching youth table tennis. During the pandemic, Zeng started playing again for exercise. Once quarantine ended, she competed in various tournaments, including the 2023 Pan American Games, and qualified for the Olympics.

Coincidentally, Ni Xia Lian, a former Chinese teammate of Zeng participated in the Olympics, representing Luxembourg. Ni left China for Germany to study and eventually moved to Luxembourg. At 61, she became the oldest table tennis player in the Olympics to win a match. During opening ceremonies, Ni had the honor of carrying Luxembourg's flag. While neither Zeng nor Ni won a medal, their presence as competitors at the games is something to be admired.

While these athletes have achieved tremendous feats, the record for oldest athlete in Summer Olympics history goes to Oscar Swahn from Sweden, who in 1920, at age 72, won the silver medal in target shooting. The oldest female athlete in Summer Olympics history was Lorna Johnstone from Great Britain, who in 1972, at age 70, competed in team equestrian events.

The Paralympic Games also has a history of older athletes competing. Libby Kosmala from Australia won 13 medals, including 9 gold, while participating in 12 Paralympic Games. While Kosmala won most of her medals in shooting, in 1972 she captured a bronze in swimming. At age 74, in 2016, she participated in her final Paralympics. At this year's games 69-year-old Heidemarie Dresing represented Germany in the para equestrian event. Originally riding horses as a child, she started para dressage at age 52 after she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. She made her Paralympic debut in 2020 in Tokyo at 66 years old.

I guess the old cliché "You're as young as you feel," applies to older adults competing in the Olympics. Older adults competing against people almost half their age can be daunting, however, many older competitors have demonstrated that there is no substitute for experience.