



River Garden News



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Introducing QR Codes:

1. Open the Camera app on your phone
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Spring 2022
Volume 81

Our Mission

To provide...A wide range of quality, cost effective elder care services in residential, outpatient, and community based settings.

To create...A comfortable, caring, and dignified home for the frail elderly serving both rich and poor with excellence.

To serve...People of all faiths, while maintaining an environment supportive of Jewish identity and informed by Jewish values.

To act...As a valuable educational resource in elder care for the entire community.

Front Cover Photo:

Roma Heaven, resident, shares her Home Blessing creation. See page 11 for more details.

If you have a resident story or feedback you'd like to share, please let us know. We also welcome opportunities to meet with senior groups in the community to discuss our programs & services.

Please contact Kari Bell.
kbell@rivergarden.org or (904) 288-7855

Boards and Officers

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Harvey Schlesinger, Vice President
Marsha Pollock, Secretary
Ed Grenadier, Treasurer

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The Coves at River Garden

Denny Lafer, President
Michael Price, Vice President
Malcolm Bloom, Vice President
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Susan Cohen, Treasurer

Mary DaCorta Honored | 2022 Minnie Schreiber Award Recipient

For nearly 20 years, Mary DaCorta has tirelessly advocated for residents and helped countless families navigate the challenges of elder care as a member of the Social Services team at River Garden.

Mary's professionalism and passion for the welfare of others embody the spirit of the late Minnie Schreiber, for whom this award is named.

Congratulations, Mary —indeed your kindness is contagious! We are grateful for your dedication and heart in service to our residents and their families.



Inside Line

By Mauri Witten Mizrahi, Chief Executive Officer

2022 is our year to learn from yesterday, live for today, and hope for tomorrow.

We have learned that our residents, staff, families, and community are strong, resilient, and dedicated. We know from experience that when our primary focus is on outstanding person centered care, we are consistently recognized as a top rated senior services provider and caring community.

Today, we celebrate our talents, resourcefulness, and determination to continue renting Coves apartments and expanding our outpatient therapy program, Adult Day Program, short stay post-acute rehabilitation program and volunteer services.

None of our plans and achievements are possible without staff. We are beyond grateful to our Human Resources Department, led by Kelli Keeley, who has gone above and beyond recruiting and retaining staff. Their incredible efforts are filling the home with eager, excited, talented, exceptional people.

We are proud to share that the River Garden Foundation's 75 Acts of Caring initiative raised \$365,774. We cannot thank Allison and Ken Jacobs enough for their leadership in raising these precious funds. The Foundation had an incredible year of philanthropic support in 2021; including a new endowment, grants, art collection and of course the naming of our campus by David and Linda Stein. We look forward to highlighting these gifts and more in our Annual Report.

We have so much to look forward to.

By the time you are reading this issue of the River Garden News, we would have celebrated The Coves' 27th anniversary on February 1, 2022.

Mark your calendars and plan to attend River Garden's 76th Anniversary Day on March 27, 2022. Chairperson of the day is Coleman Brodsky.

Get excited for the River Garden Foundation 26th Annual River Garden Classic golf tournament, chaired by Tom Harris and sponsored by Hardage-Giddens along with Jody and Janne Brandenburg, at Deerwood Country Club on April 13, 2022.



We are pleased to announce for its 30th anniversary, the River Garden Foundation Gala will return on December 10, 2022. Jeannie Rogozinski, Debbie Parker, Debra Setzer, Stacie Wilf and Sue Eaglestein will be chairing an event to remember.

On June 12, 2022, The River Garden Senior Services Board, River Garden Home Board, River Garden Foundation Board, and The Coves Board will join together for an all boards retreat to create a vision for River Garden's future while honoring its traditions.

As I look back on 2021, I am grateful for the experience and knowledge we gained from living and navigating through a time of uncertainty and continuous change. I am thankful we ended the year able to celebrate holidays together and enjoy each other's company. We have learned to live with COVID-19 and are appreciative that families and community members continue to partner with us to take the best care of our residents.

As we entered 2022 and celebrated Tu B'Shevat, the New Year of the Trees, we were reminded that during the winter when the trees are seemingly dormant, beneath the surface, the sap begins to flow and prepares the trees to form new buds and blossom. Just like the trees in winter, River Garden is bustling on the inside and planning for the time when we can blossom with the community on our campus again.

I hope you enjoy this season's issue of the River Garden News. Our future is bright.

Mauri



anniversary day

Sunday | 3 - 6 PM

MARCH 27, 2022

BBQ, FAMILY FUN & ANNUAL MEETING

One of the challenges faced in fundraising during the past two years has been the inability to host large in-person fundraising events, such as the River Garden Foundation Gala. Professionals and volunteers had to be innovative in their approach to raising the much needed funds these events typically yield.

We are fortunate that the **75 Acts of Caring** initiative was a success and raised **\$365,774**. Chairs Allison and Ken Jacobs, along with a group of dedicated committee members, developed a wonderful concept that honored River Garden's 75th anniversary and highlighted its legacy of exceptional care.

From the response to this campaign, it is evident that our community cares deeply about River Garden and is committed to supporting the highest quality of life for all seniors we serve.

We want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all of our sponsors, donors, committee members, community partners, and outstanding chairs, Allison and Ken. Your "act of caring" will help sustain River Garden's enduring legacy of excellence for years to come.



Christina Levine, CFRE
clevine@rivergarden.org



Ken and Allison Jacobs admire an Eldergrow garden, one of the 'Acts of Caring' that beautifies the Home on a daily basis.

CHAMPION Berman Family Foundation • Cindy & Daniel Edelman • Sloat Family • Linda & David Stein

ADVOCATE DuBow Family Foundation • Brenda & Eugene Wolchok

ROCK Janne and Jody Brandenburg - Hardage-Giddens Funeral Homes & Cemeteries
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Carol & Ted Thomas • Robin & Josh Zuckerman

What Will You Do With Your Unspent Retirement Savings?

If you are like most people, you will designate family members as beneficiaries of your retirement accounts. The problem with doing this is that much of your savings will never go to your loved ones. Your retirement assets actually make a better gift to charity.

Perhaps the easiest way to make a gift of your retirement assets through your estate is with a beneficiary designation. You will need to complete a beneficiary designation form provided by your plan administrator. The benefit is twofold. If you designate River Garden, we will benefit from the full value of your gift because your retirement assets will not be taxed and your gift will enable us to continue our legacy of excellence for years to come.

Contact Christina Levine at clevine@rivergarden.org or (904) 886-8430 to learn more.

WE ARE GRATEFUL TO OUR

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List as of 10/26/2021

*Of Blessed Memory

It is a tradition of giving and sharing that enables River Garden to maintain the highest standards of quality care, and serve the entire community with excellence. To assure that philanthropy merits the respect and trust of the general public, and that donors and prospective donors can have full confidence in our not-for-profit organization, River Garden is pleased to honor a Donor Bill of Rights. You can find it on our website: <https://www.rivergarden.org/river-garden-foundation/donor-bill-of-rights/>



River Garden is a beneficiary agency of the Jewish Federation and Foundation of Northeast Florida

Two Community Grants Support River Garden Library

by Christina Levine

The Linda DuBow Beautification Fund and THE PLAYERS Championship Red Coats each recently awarded River Garden with a grant to fund the renovation of the Sylvia and Harry Nestler Library. Located on the first floor of River Garden Hebrew Home, the library is in need of a renovation to beautify the space and improve the functionality which will better serve the residents.

Libraries are an essential resource for seniors and one of the greatest pleasures River Garden residents have is reading. Additionally, scientific studies have found many benefits of reading for older adults. These include everything from reducing stress and enhancing sleep to improving memory circuits, sharpening decision-making and possibly even delaying the onset of dementia.

Funding from the grants will enhance the library with upgrades that include improved shelving, signage, lighting, furnishings and technology. Also, rolling library carts will be purchased to transport books throughout the Home to residents who are unable to come to the library.

“It warms my heart to think of how pleased Linda DuBow, of blessed memory, would be about this project. We are grateful for the incredible support from the DuBow family and the Red Coats of THE PLAYERS. Their long standing partnership and friendship means the world to us,” shared Mauri Mizrahi, CEO.



River Garden 2022 Resident Council officers are grateful to hear the news about library enhancements and are excited to see the improvements.
(L) Resident Council Vice President, Emma Collings (seated) with Secretary, Roma Heaven. (R) Judith Reiz, Resident Council Treasurer

**BIRDIES FOR
CHARITY**



**The Players
Championship
Mar 10–13, 2022**

Birdies for Charity is a free fundraising program for the River Garden Foundation and we invite the community to participate. In short, the individual who guesses the exact number of birdies (or closest thereto) during the TPC will be awarded a grand prize of \$10,000 by THE PLAYERS. In the event of a tie, a winner will be determined by who most accurately guesses the total number of balls hit into the water at No. 17. Complete information about the program is on their website:

<https://pgatourcharities.org/index.cfm?action=campaigns.donate&campaignID=20>



New Aviary

Thanks to our social worker, Kristen Hartley, and her husband for building and donating a new aviary for the front lobby. The River Garden birds are really enjoying their new, upsized real estate. Plus, the birds love the aviary's new amenities, like the exterior splash bath. Be sure to check it out on your next visit.

Space Age Program

Steve Chapman has performed for residents of River Garden and members of The Coves for over 16 years. Everyone loves his special programs and music. Most recently, he shared his 'Space Age Program' celebrating the 60th anniversary of John Glenn's orbital flight.



Actively Enrolling For Adult Day

The River Garden Adult Day program is open and accepting new clients! If you know a caregiver who might benefit from exploring what our Adult Day program could offer them and their loved one, please give us a call to schedule a visit. There is a variety of activities and social opportunities in a supportive atmosphere. Hours of operation allow caregivers to continue working, obtain much needed respite, and attend to appointments of their own with the security of knowing their loved one is enjoying time with a group of peers in a secure environment. (904) 288-7858



TEEN VOLUNTEERS

Now is the time to apply for the 2022 Summer Teen Volunteer Program. Spots fill up fast, so act now! Send an email to volunteers@rivergarden.org to make your first contact.

Vaccinations and orientations are required. Questions? **Feel free to call 904-886-8429.**



Stimulating Our Minds

The world around us is like a magnificent library, filled with fascinating people and wonderful information. Taking an interest in the outside world and others helps River Garden residents and members learn new facts and gain new perspective. We appreciate members of the community enhancing our mental well-being.



Alan Mizrahi



Rabbi Cohen



Life Enrichment Director, Lisa Poremba, hosts a challenging Trivial Pursuit game to stir long-term memory.

Guest speakers, like Alan Mizrahi, Asst. State Attorney, and Dr. Edwin Safer bring stories and experience to audiences at The Coves.

Alan is the Director of Homicide for the 4th Judicial District which serves Duval, Clay and Nassau counties.

His presentation about protecting the innocent and convicting the guilty was fascinating.

Ed is a retired FSCJ professor and avid historian. He shared "Ancient Worlds of the Mediterranean".

The Kollel launched a new weekly parsha class at The Coves. Every week, residents discuss ideas related to the weekly Torah portion, led by one of the teachers from the Kollel.



Ed Safer



Curiosity ignites when Liat Walker delivers the Buddy Boxes from the students at Martin J. Gottlieb Day School.

A Story To Be Told. A Story That Must Be Heard

By Leslie Held

Manfred Katz, a Holocaust survivor, was invited to take part in a documentary about the Shoah through his personal account. The creator of “Names Not Numbers” is Tova Rosenberg who offers students around the country an extraordinary experience to record and preserve history through interviews with those who survived the Holocaust.

Coordinating with Instructor, Breindy Lazor, at the Torah Academy, eight students from 8th grade through high school participated in this months long project. Firstly, the students studied the Holocaust during their Modern Jewish History class then researched the background of the interviewee in order to craft the questions to be asked.

At the end of January, the filmmaker flew into Jacksonville and was introduced to Mr. Katz. Seated comfortably in his Coves apartment, he prepared to be interviewed on the computer by the selected students who were not able to be on the campus in person due to the virus. The questions covered “Before, During and After” the war. With the footage that was recorded, the students will begin the process of editing the documentary. Mr. Katz as well as River Garden will receive a finished copy to view and the Torah Academy will share it at some future date with the Jacksonville community. “Names Not Numbers” is a truly meaningful learning opportunity for another generation of young people who are able to hear firsthand survivor’s testimonies.

Upon coming to America, Mr. Katz was joyfully reunited with family living here, married his beloved wife, Libbie had a beautiful family and their joy increased with their own beautiful family including grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Mr. Katz will have celebrated another birthday by the time this goes to print.



Manfred Katz



(L-R) Residents David Millstone, Judy Kay, Judith Reiz, Charles Darabos

We had a full crowd in the Chapel to create Home blessings. With assorted wallpaper pages, each selected what suited their taste and the end product was really lovely and everyone had a great time.

**Let no sadness to come through this gate. Let no trouble come to this dwelling.
Let no fear come through this door. Let no conflict be in this place.
Let this home be filled with the blessing of joy and peace.**

Creative Celebrations

We appreciate our Jewish Life team, especially Director of Jewish Life Leslie Held, for finding new ways to enjoy holiday traditions.

Lighting of the Hanukkah Each Night



Steve Meisel

Tu B'Shevat Seders in the Home and at The Coves



(L-R) Laura Platzer and Leslie Held



(L-R) Marilyn Stein, June Weinstein, Janice Knack, Harley Knack



27th Anniversary of The Coves



(L-R) members Linda & Bobby Rubens, Sara Dunkin, Lottie Smith, Sharon Kesler, Celia Bialik, Louise Leve



(L-R) members Betty Meltzer, Sandi Driben, Anne Baur, Sheldon Gendzier



(L-R) members Ernest & Betty Barnes, Lanny Zimmerman, Marti Martin



Alberta Marks

Congratulations to Alberta Marks! She has been enjoying life at The Coves for 14 years.



For 100 years, our mission has been to help residents live at River Garden with dignity. Membership is a top priority and we urge all of our annual members to renew their membership. We also welcome new members.



JOIN OR RENEW ONLINE

<https://rivergardenauxiliary.square.site/home>



Membership Q? Contact Carol D'Onofrio at (904) 519-0924 or (904) 705-1849

Other Q? Contact Mimi Kaufman at (904) 626-2472 or Ellen Rubens at (904) 651-6607



Your chance to win \$2000!



TICKETS AVAILABLE ONLINE

<https://rivergardenauxiliary.square.site/home>

Are you looking for a fun way to support River Garden? Try Tombola!

In connection with the upcoming 76th Anniversary Day, the River Garden Auxiliary will conduct its well-loved TOMBOLA drawing. **Tickets are \$50/each or \$100/three.** The prizes are great and the odds of winning are, too.

The TOMBOLA drawing will be held at approximately 5:30 PM on March 27, 2022, directly following the River Garden Annual Meeting. All proceeds go directly to River Garden Hebrew Home.

Q? Contact Betty Abisch at (904) 683-2222 or Fran Leibowitz at (904) 268-4351



Love to Shop?

Our Anniversary Day Vintage Sale is back!

There will be a spectacular selection of jewelry, accessories, decorative items, children's items, apparel, housewares and more.

All proceeds go directly to River Garden Hebrew Home.

Q? Randee Steinberg at (904) 534-2180

Staff Shout Outs!

Meet Our HR Team: Kelli Keeley, Director of Human Resources, Belline Bonaparte, Generalist, and Jessica Walsh, Clerical Assistant

The ability of Human Resources to hire the right people is just the beginning. Every day brings a unique set of challenges and the need for solutions so that the staff at River Garden has the necessary support to do their jobs well. These ladies do a superb job taking care of us!

Kelli is a 25-year veteran of River Garden!

It is hard to believe I have been blessed to spend a quarter of a century working at the best long-term care agency in the world with the best staff in the world. River Garden is not just a Home or a building to me. River Garden is family! - Kelli Keeley



I like being here at River Garden because the people are outstanding. They are very caring to the residents and make them feel at home. My team members are very welcoming and friendly. River Garden always strives to provide top quality service and care to every team member, resident and their families. - Belline Bonaparte



River Garden is the first place I have worked in Jacksonville that actually stands by their motto; genuine authenticity like that is difficult to find. It feels good to work somewhere that values the same things I do. - Jessica Walsh

Meet Our IT Team: Chris Griffith, CISO, and Jay Porter, IT Help Desk Support

One of the reasons River Garden is successful is because we have two experienced IT professionals keeping our systems working well. Chris and Jay handle all of our networks, cyber security efforts, assist with data management and drive new technology implementation. Not only are these two smart, they are funny, too!



Celebrating 25+ Years



Lori Donley, 37 years, is now the longest-tenured staff member.



Patty DiGregorio has been with River Garden 26 years.



Sheri Samuels is the newest member to the '25+ Club'.



Winterfest Holiday Week



COWORKERS | SMILES | FRIENDS



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11401 Old St. Augustine Road
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(904) 260-1818
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WE PROUDLY WELCOME BACK TITLE SPONSOR

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LIFE WELL CELEBRATED

April 13, 2022
Deerwood Country Club

river garden classic

APRIL 13, 2022

REGISTER TODAY!

[HTTPS://WWW.RIVERGARDEN.ORG/RIVER-GARDEN-FOUNDATION/GOLF-CLASSIC/](https://www.rivergarden.org/river-garden-foundation/golf-classic/)



Q? CONTACT MICHELLE (904) 886-8431

MBRANLY@RIVERGARDEN.ORG

Please remember River Garden and the Jacksonville Jewish Community in your Estate and Legacy Giving