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The Green Issue: Together We Can Be Greener

Re-educate: keep up on current environmental issues and projects

Repurpose: use again, extend the life of products

Refuse to buy single-use non-biodegradable products

Research: how and where you can make a positive environmental impact

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Reflect

think about

the impact on the environment

before buying

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Greening

I have found it difficult to write about environmental topics without falling into a righteous moral tone with the mindset that "of course you have to save the planet—there is no other option". However, in discussions with residents I find that not everyone shares my zeal and realized that this topic might provide a "conversation opportunity"—in the Hermeneutic sense—to converse in order to understand my own and other people's views.

Researching this month's theme, I realized that I have made poor environmental decisions. A big *mea culpa*. I have bought paper from the cheapest vendor, not one with a Forest Sustainable Initiative Certificate. To my deep chagrin, I have bought paper from Thailand and Korea... not even thinking about the added shipping costs. I see two lessons from this mistake: cheap is not always ecologically friendly, and championing the environment has to be backed up with actions, not only good intentions.

I also realized that positive environmental action requires reflection—thinking about what I do and the impact on the future. Revising my sense of time (from immediate gratification) to "how will this effect my grandchildren" requires a revised sense of time and place in the world. Reflecting on how much paper RGP uses has led us to donate to nonprofit organizations which plant trees and preserve biodiversity. Although recycling is essential, the larger issue of climate change brought about through multitudinous pollutions affects us all, sooner or later.

Despite the complexity and contentiousness of the issue of Climate Change and Global Warming, we are wading into this topic. There are three goals: to show what RGP is doing to be eco-friendly, to offer the suggestion that one need not be a Believer to act in more environmentally-friendly ways, and to offer resident views on what they do and their suggestions on what fellow-residents can do to be more environmentally friendly.

Read on!

Resident of the Month–Phylis Demchick



"I try to stay optimistic, but when it comes to ecological matters it's difficult," Phylis said. "I've been involved in environmental issues for many years, and I'm pleased to say that there have been some positive changes. But when I think about how much still needs to be done and what faces us if we don't, I am more pessimistic.

"On the plus side there are currently solar panels, electric vehicles and wind turbines to reduce our carbon imprint. Many more energy efficient ways to lead our lives have been developed. Extensive research into how we can reverse the negative impact on our planet is ongoing.

"I grew up in Philadelphia. My introduction to "nature" was in Atlantic City, NJ,. during my family's two-week vacation so I didn't get a lot of real nature in my childhood, but I have always been concerned with the environment.

"While in college I married Bob who I'm blessed to still have as my life partner. We've made our home in PA, NJ, NH and now CA, along the way raising four children. After graduating from Temple University, I worked as a dental hygienist for about 30 years. I loved working with patients, educating them on healthy dental practices. I was involved in varied dental disciplines. "We tent camped with our children for many years and I think that's where they and, by projection, our grandchildren, developed a love of nature and interest in the environment. Some have even chosen related careers.

"Although I've read that the younger generation supports environmental causes, I have not found that to be completely true. When we lived at The Gateway in the Financial District, Bob and I started a recycling program for the residents. There was push-back from many of our neighbors who didn't think climate change existed and still others who thought it impossible to reverse or even stop the process. We had experts from SF Environment come to talk. It was like preaching to the choir. Nonbelievers just didn't show up. Many tenants couldn't be bothered separating their trash and/or compost. Also, they seemed to have a renter's mentality that suggested that if they weren't paying for heat, electricity or water, why conserve? Does that mindset exist at RGP? We learned that it is difficult to convince some people of the importance of protecting our globe.

"Bob and I share an interest in and love of the outdoors and when we traveled throughout the world we marveled at the varied natural wonders. Once the children were on their own we nomaded, often staying in State and National Parks in the US, Canada and Mexico. We lived in our RV for nearly thirteen years, finally settling in SF sixteen years ago, now having been at RGP for almost two years. We love certain aspects of city life—theater, museums, music—and its surrounding areas offering so many green spaces.

"I love gardening. I find it thoroughly relaxing. Seeing something develop from a seed or small plant into something of beauty brings me great joy. Although I no longer own a house or have the outdoor potted plants that traveled with me during our RVing days, I continue to enjoy gardening on RGP's lovely third floor terrace along with the other volunteers. There, too, we try to be thoughtful of the earth in our small way. We reuse the spent soil and try to purchase gardening products that are nontoxic. I hope to see you out there soon in the newly revamped gardens!"

Employee of the Month-Arsenio de Lara



Arsenio has been a custodian at RGP since October 2017. He is an expert in floor care; he makes old and scuffed floors look like new. The third and fourth floors, the downstairs administration offices, beauty salon, and staff areas have been rejuvenated through his care.

Taking good care of people and animals characterizes Arsenio's work ethic. "My grandfather was the first veterinarian in the Philippines", Arsenio said, "and he influenced me a lot. I spent a lot of time with him when I was young. Later, when deciding on a job, I chose to work with animals and worked with the Peninsula Humane Society and with the SF Animal Care and Control for more than fifteen years. I liked working there, but having to euthanize dogs was too hard for me, so I quit. I also studied to become a CNA and work as a caregiver. I like working as a caregiver too because I like to see my patients get better under my care. However, the problem with CNA employment is that the salary is low. I have a large family to support, so I have had to work two jobs simultaneously."

I was born in the Philippines, but when my father found out that he was an American citizen (my grandfather was born in Hawaii, making my father an automatic American citizen) our family moved to the States. My father who was the oldest child , had ten siblings and all of them now live in the Bay Area. That is to say that I have more than a hundred cousins locally. I run into them everywhere I go. In fact, my daughter works next door at Mt. Zion and my youngest aunt lives about two blocks away.

Paulo, Housekeeping Manager explained: "I chose Arsenio to be the employee of the month because he is a great associate. When you give him a task to do, you automatically know it will be completed". Director of Facilities, Samson Legesse stated that "He is reliable, displays excellent teamwork with staff, and collaborates and cooperates with his managers."



Send Direct Humanitarian Aid to Ukraine through JFCS

With war in Ukraine, Jewish Family and Children's Services is accepting donations for direct humanitarian aid. 100% of donations go to humanitarian aid for families in Ukraine. You can help by donating now to Humanitarian Aid for Ukraine. Go to: https://donate.jfcs.org/give/393971/#!/donation/ checkout



RGP Outing Reflect

'Lands End'

Artists Foretell the End of Everything in Cliff House Show RGP Outing Lands End Exhibit March 17th at 1:00pm.



Health Notes

Adrienne Fair, MSN, RN, Assistant Executive Director

Pre-Plastics Healthcare

Despite our best efforts to recycle plastics and donate unused medications to the SIRUM non-profit, RGP Health Services generates a lot of waste¹. Pre-COVID, we discarded plenty of gloves, pill packs, trash bags, and incontinence products each day—not to mention syringes and lancets. During the COVID pandemic, we added more disposable masks to the mix as well as face shields, gowns, and other PPE.

According to Health Care Without Harm, an initiative for net-zero emissions, if the healthcare system were a country, it would be the fifth largest emitter of greenhouse gasses on the planet.^{2, 3} We are very accustomed to the convenience of disposable gloves, syringes, containers, and PPE. It is understandably complicated to recycle the plastics used in healthcare procedures. There are, thankfully, initiatives to make hospital recycling more prevalent and efficient.

Healthcare was not always such a generator of plastic waste. In a National Geographic article, Project Greenhealth president Gary Cohen surmised that plastics came into wide usage in healthcare in the 1980's along with the AIDS epidemic. He says that fear of HIV spurred the "use of singleuse devices and excessive packaging (...) because there was such deep concern of the spread."⁴

Pre-plastics, the world of healthcare was very different than today. Re-usable syringes and other medical implements



were made of metal and glass. Doctor's offices and hospitals used autoclave devices for steam-heated sterilization and disinfection. We have come to equate a single-use item with cleanliness. Indeed, it is hard to imagine a multi-use syringe today.

It is also hard to imagine providing personal care without disposable gloves. The standard today, is to use gloves for most personal care and medical care —any time there is risk of contact to bodily fluids. Gloves, however, do not replace handwashing. If you are donning and doffing gloves over dirty hands, you defeat the purpose of wearing the gloves altogether. Around the turn of the century, early latex gloves for surgery were reused and sterilized through a process using carbolic acid, developed by Joseph Lister (yes, as in Listerine)⁵.

It would be unrealistic to return to a world of autoclaved syringes and reusable surgical gloves. I do think, however, that our modern-day healthcare habits have a lot of room for improvement. I look forward to innovations and improvements in medical care that bring us towards a net-zero emissions future.

- ² Ngo, Hope (2020). How do you fix healthcare's medical waste problem? www.bbc.com/future/article/20200813-the-hidden-harm-of-medical-plastic-waste-and-pollution
- ³ Healthcare Without Harm: Leading the global movement for environmentally responsible healthcare. noharm.org
- ⁴ Gibbens, Sarah (2019). Can medical care exist without plastic? www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/can-medical-careexist-without-plastic
- ⁵ Bardon, Mark (2018). The history of surgical gloves. www. pastmedicalhistory.co.uk/the-history-of-surgical-gloves/

¹ SIRUM: Saving Medicine, Saving Lives. www.sirum.org



Elizabeth Wyma-Hughes Director of Resident Services

Ecologically Friendly Choices

I am delighted when a resident asks me questions about how they can make more ecologically friendly choices. This issue of the Olive Press has enumerated many of the ways that RGP as an organization works behind the scenes to lessen our environmental impact, but that is not to say that residents are without ways to make a difference as well.

Residents can and should separate recycling for housekeeping to pick up each day when garbage is taken. We've also included larger compost and waste in restrooms on the residential floors so residents have a space to dispose of compost from their apartments.

Many residents get bombarded with junk mail and charity solicitations. While it is good to recycle these items, an even

better alternative is to contact the organization and ask to be removed from their mailing list. This can take a bit of tenacity, but will ultimately eliminate the wasted paper and transportation cost. Folks can ask to receive digital subscriptions to most of these organizations if they still want the information but want less paper waste. In fact, you can receive the Olive Press via email (you can email Katheryn at katherynak@rgplaza.org to make this change).

However, in the Resident Services department, the place that I see the most waste is usually during moveouts. It is amazing how much can be accumulated in an apartment, and it is often overwhelming for loved ones assisting with moves. Usually, move-outs happen after a resident has passed away and loved ones have the least bandwidth to be able to thoughtfully coordinate a move. More often than not, the fog of grief and the daunting task of organizing a move leads to a large number of items going to the landfill.

What are residents to do about this? Get organized now! First, go through the extra papers in your apartment and recycle or shred what isn't needed. Residents can now bring down one bag of papers for shredding every six months and Katheryn will make sure they are disposed of properly. Consider organizing and labeling important documents so your loved ones know what they're sorting when the time comes. Folks can pare down their wardrobe by donating clothes in good condition to JFCS. Put clean, folded clothes in a bag with a note for JFCS and RGP staff can pick up the donation from your apartment. Unused housewares in good condition are usually accepted by Goodwill (just three blocks from RGP). Extra books can be donated to Goodwill or brought to the "Little Free Libraries" in our neighborhood.

It is also important to have conversations about the items that are meaningful to you. When your loved ones are overwhelmed with the move, this will help them identify what is worth hanging on to and what they can donate without feeling badly. Having these conversations and getting organized can help to make a hard situation a little bit less difficult for the people you care about. Having a plan for and paring down your belongings also allows you to have a final say in your ecological impact.





Candiece Milford, *Managing Director of Marketing*

Sustainable Marketing

Over the course of my almost six year tenure at RGP, we have intentionally migrated away from print communications to a more digital approach. The use of paper for print ads, brochures and direct mailings that used to be "de rigeur", translates into de-forestation and impacts our natural environment. Recent supply chain issues in the manufacturing of paper have also cut into the availability and efficacy of using paper as well.

All that said, I find that older people still enjoy the feel of holding something in their hands to read, and I'm not talking about cellphones. I'm mean a book, a magazine, or a brochure. Beyond what we are reading, holding the object is comforting, a part of the way we grew up that feels familiar. Digital has no "touch" and while it is readily personalized, we all know a computer plugged in our names. In truth, it is not personal at all. Direct mail lists are for sale, based on legally available public record information in many categories one can filter to include income, age, zip code, etc. People sometimes wonder, "how did you get my address?" Well, this is how.

Six years ago as we were completely re-branding RGP, we also ran quite a few print ads in neighborhood newspapers. Not only have most of the neighborhood newspapers folded (so to speak), but it is quite expensive to run ads in some of these papers. So we migrated to digital advertising through social media, buying keywords to enhance being found on Google and other search engines. We also send out other e-communications such as very short videos in other social media channels, and e-blasts with targeted messaging (we can also buy e-mail addresses). We can't overlook our flowers in this marketing discussion either! Some of the most unique flowers are supplied by organic, sustainable flower farms in Sonoma County. I choose flowers on the basis of their "lasting" qualities, but unfortunately, many of these flowers are not vigorous enough to last a week. So I am forced to purchase flowers grown outside the Bay Area, even from other countries which must be flown in. They come from fields in Mexico and Southern California, tulips often from fields north of Seattle, and the giant roses from the mountains of Ecuador rendering them less "green friendly". Lastly, you will appreciate that the resilient flowers can be reused one or more times, so in essence, they can be recycled.

Finally, the truly "organic" marketing strategy, which is also the most cost effective, is simply one you cannot buy: word of mouth. The stellar reputation we have earned within the Jewish, medical and larger community remains our strongest referral source that we earn every day, never resting on our laurels.



Environmental Choices at RGP

Dining: Reduce

Reducing the use of paperware might be the best environmental choice, because finding truly recyclable products is much more challenging than advertising would have you believe. It is very difficult to find truly recyclable, biodegradable compostable containers. The plastic flatware, although it is claimed to be recyclable takes many years to decompose. Recycling paper and even aluminum cans, is difficult because the ink used on the labeling makes the material impossible to recycle. Glass, the ideal recyclable material glass takes so much energy to recycle (to melt and reform) that it is questionable what is being saved. "Because it is very hard to choose the least polluting material and products, we have come to the conclusion that the best we can do is to refuse to use onetime use products (straws), to choose truly compostable products, and best of all, to reduce consumption," dining staff related. We have tried to eliminate products manufactured with bleach. There are some unbleached paper napkins and food containers.

COVID upended dining services and forced the extensive use food containers. However, an effort was made to choose recyclable materials.

Health regulations also affect how Dining can serve food, so using individual packets of sugar, salt, and condiments is unavoidable.

March Birthdays

Larry Lipkind Steve Caldwell Henni Kuflik Nancy Kaplan Kenneth Baker Herbert Scholder	1 2 6 15 20 25
Herbert Scholder	25

Kitchen: Green Sourcing

Environmental decisions are made long before food gets to the table. They are reflected in the menu, the produce suppliers, the types of chemicals used for cleaning, and kitchen procedures. "The chemicals are the greenest, most environmentally friendly products that still clean and sanitize," Kelly stated.

Residents comment on food waste and wonder about composting, when in fact preventing waste is built into kitchen processes and planning. However, "residents can prevent food being wasted by ordering what they think they can eat", Kelly explained. "If they are still hungry, they can order more, even after dessert". Residents may not be aware that this is an option and, as a result, order too much. It's better to order less to reduce food waste. In any case, all uneaten food is composted."

The menu contains many salads and soups, often fish, and many baked in-house breads, desserts, breakfast muffins and croissants. Producing these menu items in-house significantly reduces energy costs.

"The kitchen produces very little waste, other than unrecyclable twist ties, plastic wrap, and Styrofoam used in packaging; we waste very little," Kelly said.

"I order from suppliers who source their fruit and vegetables locally. Of course since the meat is kosher and there are no local suppliers, we have to rely on Mid-West and New York sources. Fish, as much as possible is locally sourced. But in order to provide a varied menu, we do buy fish from farther away. In all cases we try to reduce the number of deliveries and choose local produce.

Our dishwasher uses high water temperatures and pressure and is programmed to use rinse-water for the next wash cycle. Staff is encouraged to reuse containers whenever possible to save on water. Staff have been trained to be efficient at every step of meal production and to think about the number of utensils, pots, and pans they use during their shift.

Maintenance Reduce Electricity

Samson Legesse, Director of Facilities, explained the engineering side of the building, and recommends ways of reducing energy costs.

- To save heating costs, be sure the windows are closed when the room heater is working.
- Although it is recommended to unplug electrical fixtures when not in use, Samson stated that for older people, bending over to take out electrical cords is not a safe practice. Better to leave electrical fixtures plugged in.
- Lights in public bathrooms and in laundry rooms are on a motion sensor and should turn off and on automatically.
- All of the light fixtures in the common areas use LED light bulbs which use less energy.
- Samson recommended that residents switch to LED lights for their personal use.
- The HVAC system cools and heats all common areas and hallways. It is equipped with a smart thermostat to reduce unnecessary energy use.
- Saving water has always been important but even more so this year. Water-saving appliances are installed in the public restrooms—touchless sensor faucets designed to save water. All the toilets use what is called "pressure assist" a method of flushing to save water.
- Residents can save energy by running full loads of laundry and using cold water to wash clothes.
- The most effective way to save energy is to do preventive maintenance on all the equipment; Samson reports that it is done regularly and is up to date.

Recycling

Residents can recycle all batteries at the Front Desk.

Housekeeping

The Recycle Department

Since many residents are unclear about RGP's recycling

processes, they probably don't realize that every member of the Housekeeping staff works every day to ensure that all residential waste is disposed of the right way. Each day when residents' trash is collected, Housekeeping separates it into three categories: the recyclable items (for instance newspapers, cardboard, plastics), the compost items (food and plain paper products like tissues and paper towels that readily decompose), and items that do not disintegrate and have to be transported to the landfill. (Some residents actually separate their own items, collecting their newspapers in a separate bag or putting their food waste in handy green compost bags and containers in their kitchens.)

Whatever is not separated in residents' rooms is recycled in the Housekeeping Room. Although residents do not actually see Housekeeping's recycling process, they can be sure it is done diligently. S. F. Recology checks our recycling bins on the street, and the City fines businesses for incorrect recycling-\$500 per violation.

Housekeeping is also careful about the many chemical products used to disinfect and clean; all of them are EPA approved. The staff is trained on their correct use and certified to do this work. Also, cleaning supplies and paper towels in the restrooms are sustainably sourced, and washing machine soap is biodegradable. Housekeeping strives to add zero impurities to the environment.

Conversations: Global Environmental Issues and Tikkun Olam

Bick Simpson suggested the recent Book Club choice Under a White Sky: The Nature of the Future, by Elizabeth Kolbert. Bick outlined some of the book's topics-carbon emissions whether in the form of carbon dioxide (CO_{2}) or methane (CH_{4}) , which lead to global warming. She mentioned large-scale efforts to remove carbon dioxide from the air and to reduce the production and use of methane. The increase of carbon emissions leads to global warming with the result that Antarctic glaciers melt, break off, and cause the sea level to rise. An effective way to reduce methane is to eat a vegetarian diet; Bick commended RGP's low redmeat diet as a step in the right direction. However, she stated that it is important that people make an effort to understand how serious the problem is and to vote for people who support environmental causes and legislation.

Tikkun Olam

Rose Heide brought up the idea of Tikkun Olam repairing the world. (For those who are not familiar with this idea, Tikkun Olam is is a Jewish belief— "the conviction that it is the responsibility of human beings to act in such a way as to fix a broken world"¹ Everyone is responsible to heal, repair, make the world right.) Deciding to act by recycling, saving water and electricity, buying green products can become an act of faith.

Tikkun Olam, a far older idea than climate change, reframed care of the world as a spritual issue. It is hoped that people will engage in the many ways Life can be improved whether or not they believe the world is coming to an end, or conversely, that nothing needs to be done.

Rose suggested that residents can do a lot to recycle, to save water and electricity. Do what you can to repair the world. Residents should be able to recycle food easily (see page 5).

Resident's Suggestions

Recycle, Reuse, Reduce, Replace

Checklist for Residents

 Use a drinking water container and get delicious water from the drinking fountains on the first and second floors. So far, we have saved more than 50,000 disposable plastic water bottles.



- Give away clothing you don't use/ need. Clothing in usable condition can be donated next door at JFCS or at Goodwill, Salvation Army, and Community Thrift. Books can be donated to Goodwill and Friends of the SF Public Library.
- 3. Turn off the lights when you are out of the apartment.
- 4. Wash full loads of laundry with cold water.
- 5. At meals, order no more than what you can eat. If you are still hungry, you can order more.
- 6. Be sure to turn off the water when brushing teeth.
- 7. Buy eco-friendly products. Check the label, the source, environmental certification.

Environment-friendly Suggestions from RGP Residents

<u>Jack and Toba Herman</u>

1. Suggest having friendly conversations with fellow residents about the importance of protecting the environment.

Paulette Aroesty

1. Use the black button on the shower head to reduce the flow of water when you are washing your hair.



<u>Rose Heide</u>

1. Save the plastic ware during COVID and give them to your family to use on picnics.

2. Has two waste cans in her room; one for compost, one for paper.

3. Suggests using smaller bags in the cafe and allowing residents to choose what is available (not everyone wants to eat it all).

4. Write reminders to reduce, recycle, reuse on menus to increase awareness and recycling.

5. Make a clear (illustrated) list of what are compostable/recyclable items and give it to residents.

5. Think **Tikkun Olam**—repairing the world as a way of life, paying attention to what you do in order to use less, to recycle, to consider your impact on the environment.

Mary Swope Repurposes



1. Advocates Reusing creatively. Mary's Marinkimono is a re-

invented piece of clothing from Marin General.

2. Wants to have three containers so she can sort her waste, compost, and paper.

Carl Kerwick

As someone living at RGP, I would like to advocate the three R's and to encourage the organization as a whole to make changes to more sustainable and maintainable practices. Ensuring the vendors that are being used (laundry services, cleaning solutions, food vendors, etc.) have practices in place that help with meeting best practices regarding helping our planet heal.

On the other hand, as seniors we need to be advocates for the planet with our children and grandchildren by asking the questions regarding what they are doing to change their buying habits, their actions and understanding of how to help heal and protect the planet. Seniors need to ask the questions to set the examples.

Our teaching days are not over. We may not be able to implement large-scale changes ourselves, but we can ask our leaders to do it. We can elect leaders who are clear in their understanding of the issues and support the necessary difficult choices to ensure there is a planet for the next generations. Let's not leave a messy table, room, house, community, country, and planet Earth for someone else to try and cleanup in order to survive.

Whether you believe the science about climate change or not, something is changing drought— destructive weather, less useable land, and fewer plants, animals, sea life, etc.

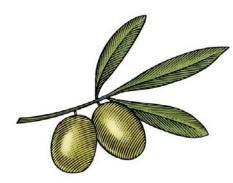
Len Sperry

1. Diligently recycles. He donates unused paper tablets to the office and even takes the extra step of covering over his name so everyone can use them. He is a dedicated recycler—he has two recyclling containers; one for bottles and cans in one and paper in the other.

Carl Kerwick and Jeanne Halpern

Replanting

1. Suggested planting the third floor Terrace with native plant species to conserve water.



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Founded by Jewish Family and Children's Services and Mount Zion Health Fund

Rhoda Goldman Plaza

The appeal of Rhoda Goldman Plaza is undeniable. Older adults and their families prefer our unsurpassed assisted living and memory care community enriched by culture and tradition.

Residents enjoy superb, "made-from-scratch" cuisine that is always well reviewed by our most vocal critics; our residents! While our dining selections please the appetite, accommodations showcase spacious, private apartments designed to maximize space and comfort. In fact, we're re-defining your life as Living Well With Assistance — we believe our community is every bit as good as a five-star hotel. And, professionally trained, courteous staff promotes your health and well-being with choices of activity programs both on and off-site. Our Terrace Memory program provides specialized memory care to residents through therapeutic activities that enhance physical, mental, and emotional health. Both privacy and companionship are afforded on our selfcontained Terrace.

Living Well With Assistance is more than a promise, but a way of life for our like-minded residents and staff who share the vision of our upscale community.

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Founded by Jewish Family and Children's Services and Mt. Zion Health Fund in 2000, Rhoda Goldman Plaza (RGP) was established as a non-profit assisted living facility to provide a better and more secure life for older adults.