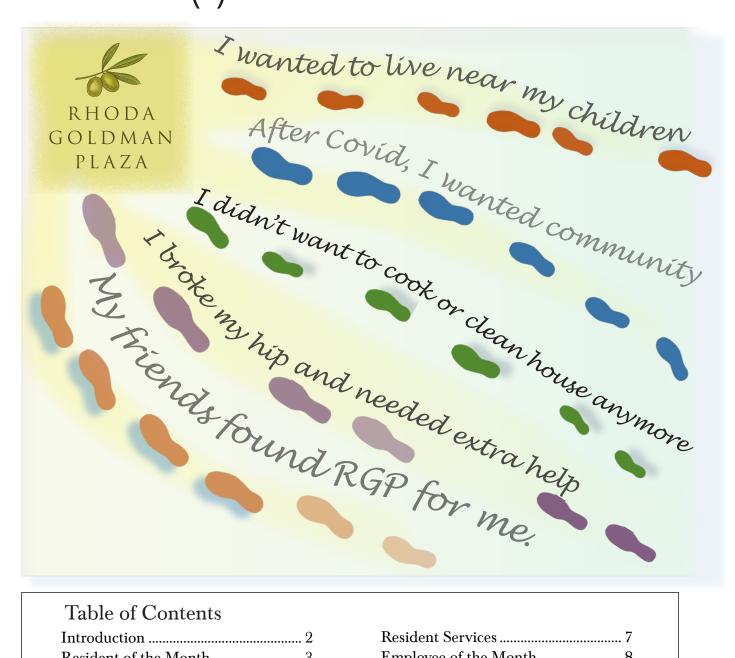


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The Road(s) to RGP



Introduction	2
Resident of the Month	3
New Dining Director	4
Health Notes	5
Marketing	6

Resident Services	7
Employee of the Month	8
Hillary Turner, Photographer	9
Resident Stories	10-11



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The Road(s) to RGP

I remember the astonishment of a first-time visitor as he sat in RGP's lobby. This was pre-Covid times, before masks and distancing... Laughter and sounds of cafe conversations spilled out into the lobby; people were sitting and chatting, staff were hanging an art show in the hallways, a musician was playing the piano in the library. It was almost like a town square on market day. The visitor asked, "Are things so lively like this all the time?" I had to admit that he had come on a particularly busy day, but RGP was often this busy. Did he expect the silence of institutional living, of nursing homes? Did he assume a medical model of senior living?

But then, "senior living" may seem like an oxymoron to the younger generation. And until a resident mentioned it, I hadn't realized the stigma of choosing to go to an "old folks home". But in a society which cherishes independence, autonomy, choice, and youth, the people who choose assisted living are hit with negative stereotypes of age—dependence, infirmity, forgetfulness, isolation—the prejudices of ageism.

Covid changed many people's attitudes and values. While currently we are in the "almostbut-not-quite-end-of-Covid", we have seen that older adults, after living alone at home for two plus years, recognize the value of community, of peers to relate to "in the flesh" (rather than on Zoom). People see themselves as independent when they live in their home, but as with most things, there is a trade-off, a downside—isolation. Wanting community has become a conscious decision reflecting the importance of engagement and connection.

While many may think "The Road to RGP" is a downhill slope, an indicator of decline, in reality many people choose assisted living to be more independent, to do things they want to do, to have community, to choose the life they want to live.

Resident of the Month–Rose Heide

"I do not need assisted living," Rose stated. "I don't need any help. I came here because I like the location. After my husband died, I didn't want to cook, or clean, or live alone. I'm not a planner, as Candiece suggestsplanners being people who make decisions in advance of needing to make changes. But I am a decision-maker. Once I make a decision, I just do it.



"After my husband died, I was talking to a friend of mine whose parents had been residents at RGP. They were happy here and she had compliments for the staff. She suggested checking out RGP. So I did and realized that it would work for me. Of course, I am a little younger than many of the residents, but I have found people to talk to. I have good friends and family nearby, and I can visit them easily. If there is an activity that interests me, I will attend, but then I have lots to do on the outside; I have the best of both worlds.

"And to complicate the picture that people might have in their mind about old people in assisted living—I am still a kid. I like life, I love kids and love to spend time with them. Playing games, going to the park... It's probably our shared sense of exploration and adventure I did a lot of volunteering at the school library and in the art room of my niece's school. Luckily the school has reopened to volunteers so I'm back twice a week. I love taking my niece's dog for a walk....

"I grew up in San Mateo and went to high school there. I remember that a few weeks after I graduated, my father and I had a

discussion about the future: what were my plans? He did not have expectations for me to fulfill and asked me honestly, what did I want to do? Get a job? Go to school? Although I was never a student, I decided to go to San Jose State and became a teacher. Looking back I am surprised and yet not surprised that my father gave me the complete freedom to make this decision. But then, we were raised to be independent and our parents

were also quite independent people. I taught third and fourth-grade for five to six years in Los Altos. I met my future husband while I was teaching; after we married, we traveled. Now that I am retired, I have decided that my job in life is to make people laugh, to bring humor into people's lives. We all could do with a lot more laughter.....

"If there was one element that has been constant throughout my life, it is travel. I remember that when I was a child, I was envious of my friends who got to go to Disneyland and Lake Tahoe on vacation. Our summer vacations were spent in Switzerland and France visiting relatives; from an early age, I was used to traveling. Of course, speaking German and a little French made traveling in Europe relatively easy. I learned to pack the essentials and not worry about the rest. I traveled a lot by myself; if there was something I wanted to see, I went. While I was teaching, I took a year off to spend time in Europe ostensibly to teach in Germany, but ended up teaching English in Paris. My husband was an avid traveler and fisherman, so we traveled to Norway, Sweden, Iceland, and Antarctica, South America-Peru, Argentina- Canada, Alaska, China, South Africa, Zambia, Russia, Poland France, Japan..... We particularly liked Australia and New Zealand. What we enjoyed the most about traveling was the food.

"I don't have any sayings or words of wisdom except to say 'enjoy yourself and be kind."

Michel Rossano, Director of Food and Beverage

"I don't jump out of planes anymore," Michel said. "I used to skydive with my brother who was a paratrooper. The first time, I was terrified, but got to enjoy the adrenaline rush. Now? No way!

"But facing challenges has been part of my career. When I moved from corporate work on the East Coast to a healthcare (hospital) setting on the West Coast, I faced many new situations. Never having worked in healthcare, I had no idea that there were so many regulations; I had to learn quickly so I jumped in with both feet. Anyone and everyone who could be a source of information I mined for knowledge. Nutrition, an important aspect of health care settings was a new subject area. It

was important to find out what people need and to make sure they get it. So I studied for a certificate in nutrition. It was a steep learning curve, as they say, but I was up for it.

"My mantra is 'It's just food'— to maintain a sense of proportion. But food is also everything! Food is emotions, memories, and expectations. So, although my specialty is to provide a five-star dining experience, not just food, I also have to remember it's just food.

"Coming to RGP, I feel like I have come to where I belong. My journey has brought me to a place where I have the space to create, room to grow, to innovate. My vision for RGP is to create an outstanding dining experience, to give the residents the food they want, and offer nutritionally sound menus. I plan on bringing new dining choices to a kosher menu. While we will continue with fresh salads, fresh greens, we will also have a more varied menu with theme days—a Ballpark lunch, for example as well as food from different cultures. I want to introduce more choice in the menu, for example salads, there will be a choice of dressing, residents can specify the size of the entrée portion. I want to give residents what they want—it's their home. We will also serve wine at dinner—nightly.

"I would like to acknowledge Servant Leader as my management philosophy— "A servant-leader focuses primarily on the growth and well-being of people and the



communities to which they belong. While traditional leadership generally involves the accumulation and exercise of power ... The servant-leader shares power, puts the needs of others first and helps people develop and perform as highly as possible." (https://www. greenleaf.org/ what-is-servant-

leadership/). This approach differs from Ira's Theory Y of management, but there are points of similarity and we both want employees to develop and do their best. Servant leadership means understanding the people you work with, bringing out their best, developing mentoring skills, and learning to lead as a servant, not as a top-down boss.

One of my hobbies is eating at Michelin rated 5-star restaurants (rarely, however, due to the expense). I enjoy seeing how others have created a unique dining experience; it's really an art, an aesthetic experience."

Michel's professional education includes Certified Dietary Manager (CDM), a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, and a Lean Six Sigma Yellow Belt. Professional experience includes management positions at The World Bank, Lucent Technologies, the University of Baltimore, Morrison Healthcare, True North Partners, and Sodexo Healthcare.

"I look forward to the creative challenges and I'm glad to be here," Michel added.

Health Notes



Adrienne Fair, MSN, RN, Assistant Executive Director

A Proactive Approach to Assisted Living

Imagine you have fallen and sustained a fracture (heaven forbid!). You are treated at the hospital and then transferred to a Skilled Nursing Facility for rehabilitation. You spend most of your time in a hospital bed, getting up once a day for a half-hour of physical therapy. The case manager at the facility tells you that it is unsafe to return home alone and they give you a list of home care agencies and assisted living communities. The whole situation is very stressful. If you're lucky, you have friends or family members who can help you make decisions. This scenario is fairly common: residents move to assisted living communities in reaction to a life-changing medical event.

There are, however, many residents who come to RGP proactively, long before they have a serious health concern. These residents come to RGP for the lovely dining experience and the interesting activities. They take advantage of the ADA bathrooms, elevators, and van transportation which allow them to be more independent and prevent a fall. Their new social circles and community involvement increase physical activity and prevent isolation—which improves both their physical and mental health.

At least one-third of RGP residents have an immediate family member working in healthcare and/or they themselves worked in healthcare. My anecdotal observation is that these residents are more likely to move to RGP before a precipitating event impels them to do so. Maybe they better understand that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Louise Aaronson, UCSF Geriatrician and author of *Elderhood* notes that the "greatest hardship" of older adults living at home is not their challenges to being active, but their isolation: "They are starved for engagement, touch, conversation, and connection."¹ Adult children and other family members and friends do not necessarily have a lot of hours in the day to devote to caregiving and socializing with their homebound adult. Assisted Living can really bolster a great deal of positive connections and autonomy for residents.

RGP is an RCFE ("Residential Care Facility for the Elderly"), licensed by the California Department of Social Services. Yes, we have nurses here on site every day and we can help with personal care and chronic health conditions, but we are not, however, a nursing home. I teach San Francisco State University nursing clinicals in a nursing home for 8-hour shifts and can attest to how different it is from RGP. Nursing home residents need a high degree of daily hands-on care and spend most (if not all) of the day in a hospital bed, 3 patients to a room. Activities are very limited and consist mostly of bingo, coloring, and an occasional karaoke singer. Believe me, it barely resembles life at RGP.

Sometimes, RGP life feels like a cruise that doesn't leave port. There are fabulous intellectually stimulating activities, a topnotch dining experience, shabbat services, and optional group excursions. Like on the Love Boat, there are also plot twists, intrigue,



and romance. If we are indeed a non-seafaring cruise ship, I guess that make me the ship's medical officer. At your service!

¹ Aaronson, Louise (2019). Elderhood: redefining aging, transforming medicine, reimagining life. Farmington Hills, Michigan: Thorndike Press.



Candiece Milford, Managing Director of Marketing

The Well-Travelled Path to My Door

The "roads" that lead to my door come from many directions: in the form of referrals from friends through word of mouth (51%), professional referrals such as JFCS, physicians and other medical or financial professionals (19%), our website (15%), residents (10%) and "other" (5%).

Referrals result from people who are looking for solutions to problems such as living situations which have become untenable. We also acknowledge that ninety-nine percent of potential residents do not want to leave their homes — the repository of the familiar, and our predictable and safe lives. Moving? Unthinkable.

Moving means change, and we know how emotionally challenging that can be. Yet we all had to drastically change our lives when Covid hit, so the truth is that we know not only that we can do it, but we survived it. Change can be a positive action, even though some residual sense of loss may remain.

The planners of the world are those who recognize that change is part of life, has occurred, or will occur and who take steps to mitigate the adverse effects. They benefit most from making the decision to act because they are in control and we all know how much we want to be in control of our lives. However, the idea that living at home indicates that one is in control is simply a myth. Likewise, it is also a myth that people lose their independence when they move into a community.

Thus, the moment of truth for "independent" people, is the realization that "going it alone" is no longer tenable. I hear too many stories of people who rely on friends to bring them groceries because their building has no elevator and others who experienced cognitive decline because they didn't reach out to others to stimulate their minds and maintain their social skills. And what happens when that friend can't help anymore – then what? A paradigm shift requires that we forego the myth and valuation of our understanding of independence to accept that we are also social beings. Those who find the path to our door understand that in a true community such as at RGP, the myth of independence fails. Living in community, people will remain sharper longer by taking classes and engaging in lifelong learning courses, have a myriad of opportunities to stay fit, and most of all, enjoy the company of a diverse group of interesting people.

Covid was a "game-changer". Today we refer to pre and post Covid in most conversations with prospective residents and their families. Over time during Covid, some people experienced profound isolation living at home, and for a species wired for socialization, this is a killer. Literally. I don't mean to be dramatic, but the fact is that people who suffered through this pandemic at home had to either learn to redirect their interactions, or lose them.

The issue of moving from one's current home to a new one requires a boldness in decisionmaking. . . of trying to answer to the question of "what do I need in order to live my best life?"

Although some people wait and wait and wait until they have a health crisis, moving into a community when one has the physical and cognitive abilities to enjoy it transforms change into a positive action that is enriching, and dare I say . . . even fun?!



Elizabeth Wyma-Hughes Director of Resident Services

The Road to RGP

Over the past year, I've noticed a shift in the reasons that new residents give for deciding to make their move to assisted living. The desire to be a part of a community has become a primary motivator for many new residents. In years past, becoming a part of a community wasn't usually the top priority though it was often seen as a fringe benefit. More often people were moving to be closer to family, downsize from a home that wasn't manageable anymore, and generally get a little more help with tasks like housekeeping, cooking, and transportation. Perhaps it shouldn't be surprising that after two years of pandemic living, folks are more aware than before just how important it is to have strong social ties and are taking steps to ensure that.

The assisted living model is relatively new. When assisted living communities began operating in the 1980s, they were established using a social model in stark contrast to the medical model offered in nursing homes. This distinction remains critically important to the ethos of assisted living and is reflected in the ways that we are regulated. According to the California Health and Safety Code, "Residential care facilities for the elderly, which are not primarily medically oriented, represent a humane approach to meeting the housing, social and service needs of older persons, and can provide a homelike environment for older persons with a variety of care needs."

This desire to connect and be among peers makes a world of difference for a new resident's transition into RGP. We've noticed that folks who seem especially eager to jump into classes, outings, and committees are quicker to get to know other residents and staff. This enthusiasm of our new residents has been particularly fun for the Resident Services team.

Personally, one of my favorite parts of orientation with new residents is doing a brief interview in the first couple of days and writing up a short bio about the new resident that is distributed in the community. New residents are usually somewhat intimidated by this prospect (especially in the haze of a recent move in) but the bio is an excellent opportunity to introduce them to residents and staff. It is wonderful to see how these connections help newbies find common ground and similar interests with their new neighbors. This is often the first step in helping residents connect with others in the community.

COVID restrictions dramatically changed all of our routines but were particularly devastating to the lives of seniors who were at the highest risk. They endured more severe COVID lockdown precautions and also curtailed family gatherings. We have learned a lot, but a common realization has been that we need each other far more than we realized. I find myself lucky that throughout the pandemic I've been able to come to work each day and maintain the in-person connection (albeit through a mask) with my colleagues and our residents at a time when so many were completely disconnected from their support systems. If any good can come of this time, I hope that it is a permanent shifting of priorities that foster connection and help make us all more empathetic to each other. New residents proactively choosing to be part of our community certainly feels like a step in that direction.

Employee of the Month—Aurora Caguiat



"Aurora is an extremely dedicated member of activitiesshe is hardworking and eager to help others. I am lucky to have her as part of my team!" Emma writes. "She cares so much about the residents and her coworkers. She is also

very creative! She is always coming up with new craft projects for residents to try and interesting new group topics."

Aurora Caguiat, Assistant Activities Coordinator, has worked at RGP since March 2020. Before being hired as Activity Coordinator, she worked as a private caregiver with Sage Eldercare Solutions for a RGP resident. "Although I did not have experience working one-on-one, I agreed to try. I took care of a wonderful resident for a year and a half. It was a wonderful job since we were very compatible; I could encourage her to get out and participate in activities, and she gave really wise and wonderful advice. When she passed away, I was very sad. At the memorial service Adrienne asked me to apply here and gave me an application. I enjoy working with Terrace residents; I love leading arts and crafts projects with them; part of the fun is finding resources to make their projects more interesting. I find objects on the street and collect such interesting objects like corks and pine cones. Whatever works!

When I was young in the Philippines, I grew up with my grandmother and was "grandmother's girl." From the time I was young, I loved working with this age group. Both my sister and I are social workers. My sister is older and when I was in school, I used to tag along after her while she visited clients and became interested in doing community development work. So when I went to the Philippine Christian University, I graduated with a BA in social work and received a Board certification in social work. After graduating, I worked with World Vision-Philippines with families

May Birthdays

Ellis Schuman	0
Ellis Schuman	2
Sandra Rosenbaum	4
Brenda Brody	6
Rose Hane	18
Mark Garrett	20
Mary Swope	20
Morris Spector	23
Joan Silverstein	23
Hedy Krasnobrod	29
Mike Brassington	31
Patty Farber	31

We Are Not Invisible photography show resident opening with Hillary Turner, the photographer will be held on June 6th.

and children on income generating projects and projects for out-of-school youth. There was also a program to reconnect families when the father left to work in the US. I enjoyed helping people live better and happier lives."

In 2008, Aurora joined her husband and daughter in the USA and started working as a caregiver and later as an activity coordinator at an Assisted Living facility in Redwood City. After working there for eleven years, Aurora was encouraged to try something new. She began working as a caregiver and through that job became a highly appreciated member of the RGP family. Thank you, Aurora.

Hillary Turner

The theme of this show is *We Are Not Invisible*. This title reflects my feelings about what happens to us when we reach a certain age. While invisibility certainly can have its positive aspects, in general what it means for too many people equates with isolation, loneliness, a sense of not being part of the general life flow. It can mean the difference



Photo: Michael Krasnobrod

of walking into a clothing store and no one rushing up to help you find clothing. It can mean so many diverse and detrimental things!

I'm hoping to show through these photographs that some seniors can still create their own visibility and relevance.

Professional photography entered Hillary's life in an unexpected manner. Living in South America after having graduated from Cal Berkeley, she somehow ended up apprenticing with a Chilean photographer. He was a very lazy photographer, which proved to be of great benefit. She worked by trial and error and somehow figured it out as she went along. There was no internet in the early 1970's—no Google, no YouTube. She liked to learn this way and soon found herself passionate about an entirely new career choice.

Hillary always shot personal, fine arts photos during these years and has recently started using film again. She shot this personal work in conjunction with a decades long career in commercial photography. She still has a great love for film and film cameras. She has learned how to combine both types of work and truly hopes this show reflects this ability.

I am grateful for the opportunity Rhoda Goldman Plaza has offered me with this show. I hope it might be viewed with some of the positivity that went into creating it.

Seniors are not invisible—we just need to look. Seniors are not silent—we need to listen...

Resident Stories—Their Road(s) to RGP

"How do people get here?" is a different question than why do people come here. As Candiece wrote in her article that prospective residents find their way to RGP "through word of mouth (friends, people-who-know-people, etc.) , professional referrals such as JFCS, physicians and other medical or financial professionals, RGP's website. residents, and others.

Why do people decide to look for assisted living? There are many reasons, not all of them directly attributable to old age. The decision-making process looks like a flow chart with decisions at every juncture. Starting with "Do I want to stay home?" Usually a "yes". But a second question,"In reality what does that mean?" Continuing cooking, cleaning, worries about handling bills, property taxes, car insurance.... while easy at eighty years of age, may become more troublesome at eighty-five or ninety. Younger people whose health is not great and who worry about how strong they will be in five years also consider assisted living. Some realize that it is preferable to move while they are in relatively good health rather than waiting, and being unable to make a move.

Some residents during conversations at meals have said "My children forced me to come here." Others whose children were not involved tell other stories. One resident said that after her operation, she needed extra help. About that time, her dog had died, and she realized that she did not want to live alone any longer. With her brother's assistance—he found RGP and arranged the move—she arrived here—glad that she was in a place that suited her.

Resident Stories-Their Road(s) to RGP

A resident related that she and her partner had decided to move into some kind of assisted living before he passed away. She said that where she lived was quite hilly-going out for even a short walk meant climbing a large hill. Looking for a more walkable area she considered The Sequoias. She had been volunteering at JFCS with Holocaust survivors, but was not aware that RGP offered assisted living until one of the Holocaust survivors who had recently moved into RGP, told her about her new home next door. She applied to the Sequoias and RGP. There was no space available at the time, so she joined the wait list, waited a year. She was offered an apartment at the Sequoias (which was too hot) and returned to RGP to try her luck. Luckily a room was available, one she liked very much, and moved in.

Another resident who lived in Marin for forty years needed to find a place for himself and his wife. Their daughter lived on the East Coast and was not able to offer much advice. Being avid opera and symphony goers, they wanted to be able to get to the opera and symphony without having to cross the bridge; they chose to live in San Francisco. Once they moved in, they found a couple they had known for years in Tiburon who had moved into RGP.

A recent new resident moved from Southern California. She was living alone after her husband died. However, she was busy, had friends, drove a car, and traveled. One of her sons lived in Marin and since 2015, they had discussed her moving northward. "I was busy, I belonged to different organizations and felt, at that time, that I did not need to make any changes. But COVID came and emphasized my aloneness and reminded me that I was getting older. In February 2020 I put in an application to RGP and the Redwoods; but there were no openings at that point. At the end of June 2020,

I fell; I was at home and broke seven ribs. I realized that if something serious happened, I would not have much support even though my son came down to help me for awhile. After five months of physical therapy, I had returned to driving and was pretty well recovered. But it became obvious to me that because of the fall, I was more nervous about falling and not as agile as I previously had been.

"On top of that, my condo where I had lived for thirty-eight years needed some repair work and I did not feel up to taking on this project.

"In 2019, when I was visiting my son, my daughter-in-law took me to different senior living places. We visited three or four, but by the time we thought about coming to RGP, I was tired and never went to see it.

"Nevertheless, Candiece was absolutely wonderful. She is one of the reasons I decided on RGP... All through this time she was in contact. She sent me the newsletter, sent notes and indicated by her correspondence that I was still interested.

"By the end of 2021, I said to her 'You know, I am not getting any younger... What do you have available?' I chose RGP despite having alternatives. I realized that after my fall, I was not up to independent living and that assisted living would be the best for me. I chose RGP for two main reasons: Candiece was the only one who kept in touch

Resident Stories-Their Road(s) to RGP

me during the three years I was on the wait list and second, I wanted a Jewish atmosphere. I have lived my life in a Jewish atmosphere and environment and knew it was important to me.

"I realized that finally, it was time and also it was entirely my decision. But moving out of my condo, getting rid of everything, downsizing from 1800 square feet to 800 sq. feet was a huge task. I was drowning in paper and the many things I had accumulated. But luck was with me and being a resourceful person, I found ways of getting rid of furniture, even mattresses. The broker who sold me the condo bought it back which made it so much easier than having to deal with buyers.

"I would have to say that moving is not for sissies. At the time, I thought "This is what I have to do. I don't have a choice. I have to do it. And then got busy doing it. My son wasn't able to help me very much so I proceeded, making phone calls and decisions as I went along. I made the decisions about what furniture to bring and what to get rid of. Luckily I found people who were willing to buy my furniture and pictures, even though I had heard that no one was taking donations, let alone buying furniture.

"Without knowing what to expect, I arrived to RGP and moved into my apartment. It is quite nice. It has all worked out well. I was expecting a positive outcome, although I didn't know what it might be.

"The process of deciding, choosing a place, and moving is not for the faint hearted. I had choices—either I could collapse or I could step up to the plate and get it done.

"Here I am.

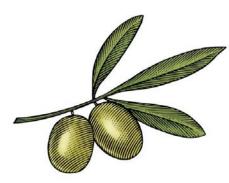


"In the beginning, when I came to San Francisco, I lived at the Emanu-El Residence Club on Page Street. It was a congregant program—a place for young Jewish women to live while they looked for jobs and became settled in the City. Of course, there were certain regulations and restrictions and a three-year residence limit. I was there for six years. I liked it very much and liked the notion of sisterhood. I felt safe there as a single woman without family in a new city.

> "This notion of the benefits of congregant life was reinforced when I was working as a social worker and involved in Adath Israel's nutrition lunch program. People came together to eat. I worked there for eight years and felt I had a hundred relatives for lunch every day. The program worked for people—they could feel the positive bonds of community and appreciate how sitting down with others to a meal relieved the isolation that many of them felt

"One the reasons initiating the move to RGP was that I didn't want to cook anymore. We were looking for a Jewish facility that provided activities, meals and companionship for both of us.

"We realized that congregant housing is not for everyone, but those who had been in the army, or like me, lived in the Residence Club, or had other experiences of living in community appreciated the benefits of "family" and community. So for us, RGP expresses what we experienced and appreciated early in life, and thanks to Anita Friedman's leadership, a place for the Jewish elderly became a reality at RGP."



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

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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.

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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.

Visit Rhoda Goldman Plaza today by calling 415.345.5072.

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.