



# THE OLIVE PRESS

BY RHODA GOLDMAN PLAZA

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## The Practice of Giving



## Contributing to a better world

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# RHODA GOLDMAN PLAZA

2180 Post Street  
San Francisco, CA 94115

415.345.5060; 415.345.5061 (fax)

[www.RGPlaza.org](http://www.RGPlaza.org)

RCFE #385600125

## STAFF

Emma Davis,  
*Director of Programming* 415-345-5098

Adrienne Fair,  
*Assistant Executive Director* 415-345-5077

Ira Kurtz,  
*Executive Director* 415-345-5080

Eric Luu,  
*Chief Financial Officer* 415-345-5083

Christine Leung,  
*Business Office Manager* 415-345-5073

Samson Legesse,  
*Director of Facilities* 415-345-5088

Candiece Milford,  
*Managing Director of Marketing* 415-345-5072

Chuck Maddox,  
*Executive Chef* 415-415-5086

Elizabeth Wyma-Hughes,  
*Director of Resident Services* 415-345-5085

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## The Importance of Giving

What if giving suddenly was forbidden? Became illegal? Ceased to exist? Evaporated.

Think about it..... What would that mean?

No helping friends, no freely bestowed caregiving, no assisting the elderly to cross the street, no donations to GreenPeace, Planned Parenthood, the Jewish Federation. No bat/bar mitzvah, wedding presents, baby showers, new home christenings. No carefully prepared surprise birthdays. No *mishloach manot* on Purim, no Hanukkah *gelt*. No more donations to our favorite causes.... no more JNF pushkes. No random acts of giving... Or feeding the seagulls

Our world as we know it, would crumble. Our relationships would disintegrate.

How might we feel? Powerless, bereft, helpless. We might feel we have lost our connections with others, family, our neighbors, and also with the less fortunate. Lost a sense of who we are, what we have been, what we value. Would we feel that we had lost the power to improve the world?

We often think of the big donor drives—the mailed solicitations to big causes—and wish we didn't get so many. But we would also not see the faces of starving children in Afghanistan, Africa, our hungry neighbors, the poor throughout our country, the plight of immigrants, or the effects of war in Ukraine. We would not see the human suffering behind the headlines. We also would not know what people are doing to save the world.

We take giving for granted. We shouldn't. It makes us human. Or perhaps more accurately—it is an expression of our humane-ity.

### December Birthdays

Fred Kurlander	1
Betty Sekhri	9
Connie Manghise	19
Rivka Spiegel	25

# Resident of the Month—Rose Hane

“I live in two wonderful worlds,” Rose said. “On weekends, I go to live with my daughter and during the week, I live at RGP. And within those worlds, I play bridge with my RGP neighbors; on Fridays, I go to Japantown and play bridge with my friends there. But also looking back, I have lived in many worlds, far from where I was born.



I was born in San Jose; my parents were second generation Nisei. We lived in the San Jose area, but during the war we relocated to Garland, Utah. I was about thirteen or fourteen at the time. I don't remember details of what happened then. We were lucky that we voluntarily relocated before we were forced to. All Japanese living in California were forced to move east starting in 1942, after Japan's bombing of Pearl Harbor. American Japanese were sent to “relocation centers” or internment camps throughout the West and to one site in California. My father had a friend in Utah so we moved there before people were forced into camps,” Rose said. “Leaving voluntarily helped us since we could live freely and work. People were nice to us, and we did not experience bad incidents. Because of the draft, there were few men of working age left, so my father easily found employment and earned a living there. As soon as they could, my family returned to California; but my uncle and my grandmother remained and I stayed there to finish high school.

I wanted to be a nurse so after graduating from high school, I went to work at Dr. Lee Watanabe's office. He was the first Japanese to graduate from Stanford Medical School; he was a general practitioner and surgeon

who was greatly respected and loved throughout the Japanese community. I worked there for about a year and a half, met my husband, married, and moved to New Haven, Connecticut. My husband who spoke Japanese fluently was hired to teach Japanese to military personnel who were to be stationed in Japan. My husband went on to Yale to study history and eventually received a Doctorate in Japanese History. After a year in Japan, on a Fulbright scholarship, he was hired to teach at Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois. One daughter was born in Toledo, Illinois where we lived briefly. My second daughter

was born in Galesburg; we lived there forty-five years.

During that time, I became interested, more than interested—fascinated with—opera and would take the train to Chicago to attend weekend performances. The opera—its music, costumes, drama—transported me to “another world”. I loved the incredible performances of singers like Pavarotti. With my daughter, we even took a two week tour of European opera houses; it was such a wonderful experience!

I also began to cook seriously, eventually teaching classes in Oriental cooking at the local junior college. Of course, back then, and in the Midwest, it was difficult to get the right ingredients (no tofu), so I had to bring many ingredients from Chicago. My classes were quite popular and people developed a real taste for Oriental cooking. I remember that two recently divorced husbands who had taken my classes told me that their wives had taken the recipes in the divorce; they requested copies of their favorites for themselves.

After my husband died, I went to Japan. Although I had been there before, I wanted to spend more time there to attend Kabuki and Noh theater and learn Japanese. I didn't realize that going to a place so different helps reduce sorrow. There is nothing to remind you of the past and you are very busy trying to learn your way around and see things. I realized that it was the best thing I could have done and highly recommend spending time in a foreign country after losing your spouse.



# RGP RESIDENTS' THOUGHTS ON GIVING

## Tzedakah

RGP Residents

At this time of year our mailboxes are flooded with donation requests from all kinds of worthy charities. Most of us feel that we should give what we can and feel a little guilty for not giving more. All of the major religions preach that charity is a virtue to be practiced by the faithful. The Hebrew word "tzedakah" often translated as "charity" really describes an act of justice, the practice of righteousness. While generosity is optional, justice is not.



For practicing Jews, tzedakah is a religious obligation. Even the poorest traditional families would maintain a "pushke," a small, slotted box, in which family members would put whatever coins they could spare, to be picked up periodically by

the community's charities for distribution to the needy. In this tradition it is also important to preserve the dignity of the recipient. There is supposed to have been an empty room in the Temple which was set aside for anonymously to give and receive money so that no one would know who was giving and who was receiving a donation. Maimonides described eight levels of giving, of which the highest was to help someone become financially independent and the next highest was to give so that both the donor and the recipient remain anonymous.

In giving what we can to those in need we do our small part in more justly re-distributing nature's bounty.

## Mary Swope

Giving is a belief instilled in me from my upbringing. My family believed if you cared about something, you supported it. Simple. Direct.

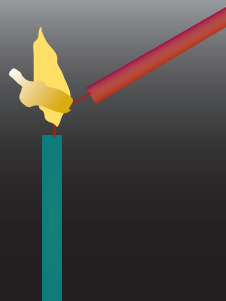
The two causes I support are civil rights and the environment by giving to the Southern Poverty Law Center and to the Natural Resources Defense Council.

## RGP Resident

It is important to me where the money I donate goes. I do not respond to blanket solicitations since it seems to me so much money goes to administrative costs. Neither do I donate to disaster relief since so little real assistance gets to the survivors, the money goes to the country's top leaders; three years later the people's situation has not improved. However, I do donate to the Red Cross and Doctors Without Borders.

When I donate, I look to see that it directly affects organizations that I have been involved with. For example, I have donated to professional theaters and to the Birthright Israel program. The theater donations support professional theater productions, giving professional actors a chance to use their talents and provides an opportunity for them to perhaps develop their career. I contribute to be a part of making things better helping people fulfill their potential. I am a strong believer in volunteering; I also volunteered. And it was important to me that the volunteering produces results and to do good. I don't believe in volunteering just to keep busy.

Lighting the first  
Hanukkah candle  
December 18  
at 4:14



## Childhood Hunger

To me, Thanksgiving is a word divided into two: THANKS for my terrifically, wonderfully, sweet family: my daughter, son-in-law, three grandchildren, and three great grandchildren, each of whom mean the world to me. GIVING is what I do with pen and checkbook to make donations to charities that feed children, not only locally but world wide because it gives me a sense of providing access to their education and to their life changes.

Our future is in the hands of children, yes, but first they must have food, their sustenance of life. Education and food go hand in hand whether they live in El Salvador or in San Francisco. How can a child reach his/her potential if they don't know where/when they get food?

Some kids are old enough to go to school where they get vouchers for lunches and healthy snacks but what about their younger brothers and sisters at home?

Instead of making them feel like failures, I want to give them a taste of success by providing them with food. Imagine looking into their eyes, seeing smiles on their faces and then yours, too! That's my thanks, my heart, for giving.

Maxene Kotin

## The Practice of Giving

by EA

Sometimes a gift is wrapped up in fancy paper and ribbons  
Sometimes a gift is a smile or a hug  
Or a bowl of soup or tinkling coins  
But always it is to remind the receiver that there  
Is someone somewhere who remembers you.

## The Practice of Giving

Thoughts from John Dellar

"Giving" falls into many categories. TIME. Giving Time to those in need- family, friends, neighbors, and community. This may occur at homes, at shelters, schools, and places of worship. DONATING. Making monetary donations to charities, non-profits, and others in need. FREE OR PRO BONO ADVICE for individuals or organizations who are unable to afford these services.

From my dinner conversations with many RGP residents I have learned that there are many of us who have been "giving" through the years. And some who continue, especially as care givers to family and friends.

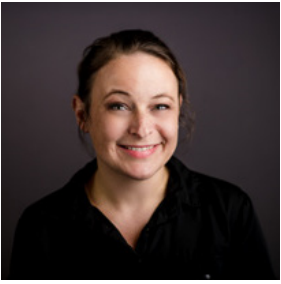
In my family, "Giving" has always been instilled in our lives. Most of us were not able as children or young adults to participate in this practice. It usually started when our education was completed, and our careers were established. Yet today, my young grandchildren are being asked by their parents to share a portion of their allowances for needy causes.

My wife, Jobyna, who resides on the Memory Care started volunteering with an adult reading program. Then after she retired, she spent years in the SF public schools as a teacher's aide with at-risk children. And later aiding challenged adults. I found time to volunteer and wrote small checks through my working years. On retirement, I volunteered with a homeless shelter feeding program, and feeding the homeless in Winter with the San Francisco Interfaith Society. And I still give free counseling to small businesses with SCORE (Service Corp of Retired Executives).

The Practice of Giving returns to all of us the feeling of kindness, caring, belonging, and a sense of purpose.

### Correction

Simona accepts Beauty Salon appointments only on Fridays.



## Health Notes

Adrienne Fair, MSN, RN,  
*Assistant Executive Director*

### Giving Care

We have a wonderful team of caregivers at RGP. Some of the health services staff have worked at RGP since we opened in 2000. We really have impressive longevity among our care staff and they can be proud of the care they provide. I see the caregivers assisting with physical care needs while also maintaining conversation, kindness, and personal rapport. There is an art to providing hands-on care. There is caring in caregiving!

Emma Davis, MFT brought in a fantastic guest instructor for care staff last month who presented *Positive Approach to Care*. This care approach is based on Teepa Snow's Dementia care theory, and it is also a solid framework for care of any kind. The theory emphasizes the importance of relationships based on authenticity, empowerment, compassion, and curiosity. (<https://teepasnow.com>)

Beyond Health Services, I see emotional and social care all throughout the RGP community. The front desk is always available to fix problems and lend an ear to residents. And of course, dining and activities staff are integral to resident life. Beyond the physical aspects of food and exercise, the social benefits of group activities allows for social connection and emotional wellbeing. I'm so inspired whenever I see residents exuberantly dancing to Klezmer music or Roryography—what a joy.

At RGP, we also offer inspiring and compassionate care and support for resident spirituality. In addition to weekly Shabbat services, RGP residents can visit individually with Rabbi Me'irah and other visiting Rabbis. On the day I'm writing this, I chatted with board-member Rabbi Beth Singer who was visiting from Congregation Emanu-El. We are currently

hosting a thoughtful *Sacred Conversations* series with Rabbi Me'irah and Reverend Joy Yee. Our pastoral care intern Linda Bernstein also provides one-on-one support to residents.

Not all care comes from RGP staff or outside providers. I also see a great deal of interpersonal caregiving among residents themselves. I see residents dining together, checking on each other, and forming lovely friendships and social circles. At our new resident socials, a common comment is how welcoming everyone is, how easy it is to meet new people, and feel part of the community.

In short, RGP is a community that is centered around providing many kinds of care—physical, social, emotional, interpersonal, and spiritual. In addition, we strive to foster a caring organizational culture. We honor and support the hard work of our staff—and we strive to maintain a supportive, caring community. Giving care and respect creates the world we want to live in. The combined efforts of RGP community members create a warm inclusive environment. We share a vision of a kind, respectful, and attentive atmosphere and each of us “gives” to make that happen. We are giving through our caring actions—going beyond what is simply required.



Candiece Milford,  
*Managing Director of Marketing*

## The Practice of Giving Through Listening

Have you ever felt insulted when someone with whom you are speaking, takes a phone call or fiddles with their cell phone? Or conversely, how treasured you feel when someone with whom you are speaking looks directly into your eyes and gives you their undivided attention. You know the soul-satisfying feeling that you are being seen and acknowledged in that very moment. And this is when you understand why the art of listening is so very important.

In my job, listening is critical. When a new person visits our community, we first meet in my office to clarify how we can serve the person or their family member. I essentially have a blank canvas that, during our conversation, slowly fills with color and outlines so that I can make sense of what is going on in the life of the intended resident. I consciously attempt to keep an openness and receptiveness that silently gives a sense of safety and permission for the person to speak. I can viscerally feel people relax. I let my intuition (real information based on life experience) do its work as well, as after sixty-nine years I do have a bit of it accumulated!

A part of listening, sometimes the most telling, is the non-verbal communication. I “hear” it through their eyes, their hands, their bodies—eyes averted or direct eye contact, fidgety or quiet hands, tense or relaxed posture—these gestures fill out the story of their spoken words. Further, when I hear the things left unsaid, I sometimes offer that “un-saidness” to them. For example, recently a person sitting with their adult children in my office, exuded quiet resistance to the idea of moving. I said “I understand how very difficult it is to consider a

move when you’ve lived in your home for sixty years. It’s like taking a perfectly potted plant, contentedly rooted in its pot and replanting it. It takes awhile to adjust, but in time the plant shows a more invigorated growth.” Really. I said that.

For me, listening is not like a mirror reflecting back what someone is saying. It is opening my heart to that person and their circumstances so that they slowly build a quiet sense of ease that allows their truth to be told. This can take an emotional toll on the listener that, on occasion, even after seventeen years in this business, touches me to the core.

The other day, a person new to the community appeared lost so I asked if I could help. Answering affirmatively, they wanted to talk so we went to my office. It turns out that this person was deeply grieving the recent loss of a spouse among other issues. There are no words in this case that can console a heart full of sorrow, so we sat while the tears poured out. That was the kind of listening that was appropriate in this case.

We can also miss so much understanding of another person when we unconsciously post our own agenda through which we filter what we hear. So try to clear your mind as you listen, be truly present at every opportunity until it turns into a habit. Or, take that small piece of “fluff” out of your ears!



If the person you are talking to doesn't appear to be listening, be patient. It may simply be that he has a small piece of fluff in his ear.





Emma Davis  
*Director of Programming and Counseling*

## Growing Gratitude through Programming

Giving and gratitude are often two sides of the same coin. When one is grateful for the things in their own life, they are more likely to be generous—generous with their time, money, support, etc. In an effort to encourage the spirit of giving, it is important to inspire an atmosphere of gratitude.

Every year when November rolls around, I try to think of ways to encourage and grow gratitude in our community through thoughtful programming.

I ask, “What can I do as a staff member to encourage residents and coworkers to mindfully consider what they are thankful for this year?”

### 30 Days of Gratitude on Channel 994

Each day in the month of November, a new prompt shows on the RGP TV channel (994) inviting the viewer to consider “what are you grateful for today”? Topics range from being grateful for a new friend to a good laugh to a favorite food to afternoon naps. It's easy to take some things for granted, such as clean water, but the daily gratitude prompt reminds us to slow down for a moment and appreciate what we have. While the prompts may generate conversation in the community, it is also meant to inspire a moment of personal introspection to reflect on the things, people, places, experiences that are important to them.

### Growing Gratitude Tree

This year I set up a small cardboard tree on the second floor outside the dining room inviting residents to write down something they are thankful for on a leaf and pin it to a gratitude tree. Since the tree was put up, news leaves have appeared with everything from “RGP” to “I'm glad my friend is feeling better” to “Love, Peace, Joy.” Each leaf of gratitude grows the tree and reminds us that gratitude can be meaningful even when it is anonymous.

### Thankful Video 2022

This was my pet project. The week of Thanksgiving, I went around to residents and asked them if they would be willing to let me record a short video of them saying something they are thankful for. The residents who participated did so voluntarily. Before starting the recording, I ask “What are you are thankful for? It can be anything from something small like chocolate to something big like world peace”. The result is a wonderful compilation of gratefulness across the community from people of all walks of life.

2022 RGP Thankful Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h05H3DxfR78>

### Thanks to Residents Thanking Employees

It is also important to act upon our gratitude. Residents contributed to the **Employee Appreciation Fund** as a way of thanking employees.

Management adds its own thank you by sponsoring **Employee Appreciation Week** (Dec 4th through Dec 10th). During the week, there will be special treats for staff, a raffle with fabulous prizes, and special spirit themes for each day of the week. Staff also receive their check from the Employee Appreciation Fund. It is a time to celebrate and thank all the staff who work so hard every day.





Elizabeth Wyma-Hughes  
*Director of Resident Services*

## Giving a Warm Welcome

Giving does not always involve money. But it does involve generosity. Giving is also about developing relationships with generosity and warmth.

One of the richest displays of generosity I see at RGP is the warm welcome that our community gives to new residents. I consistently get feedback from new folks about how kind and welcoming residents are and what a difference that welcome makes to their early days at RGP. Our more established residents go out of their way to help new residents find their footing.

The generous welcome we give our new residents is truly appreciated by new folks, but it speaks to something larger about our community. Namely, the desire for RGP to be a community. The time and caring that residents put into helping each other, particularly during their early days settling in, is not something that can be manufactured by staff. Small acts of kindness and care happen organically, through invitations to join your table when someone is looking for a seat in the dining room, reminding people about the resources available like Channel 994 or the monthly calendar, or just lending a compassionate ear about how the challenges that come with such a major transition.

While some of this is part of a formal welcome by the members of the Hospitality Committee, who will reach out early to say hello and bring a small welcome gift. There is also so much done in the spontaneous interactions in activities, while sharing a meal in the Dining Room, or while waiting for the elevator.

One does not need to be an active member of the Hospitality Committee (volunteers are always welcome!) to be a friendly face for a new resident. A good place to start is by getting to know a new neighbor. You know the tell-tale signs of a move in on your floor, special flooring laid down to protect the carpet, box after box coming from the service elevator, and perhaps a slightly harried family member or two unpacking myriad boxes. Or, you'll also see a person you don't recognize waiting for the elevator or looking for the laundry room. Take that opportunity to introduce yourself and welcome your new neighbor.

Residents can also sign up to receive new resident notifications which include a picture and a brief write-up about new folks. It is always amazing to see the connections that can be made through information provided in these notifications. Sometimes the connections are based on shared interests or studies, other times people will find that they actually grew up quite close to each other or worked at the same place, revitalizing long forgotten connections. Either way, it helps to break the ice and serves as a conversation starter.

When incoming folks feel overwhelmed by the number of new people they are meeting, I remind them that every resident at RGP has been in their position before. This shared experience lends itself to the culture of giving that our residents have steadfastly cultivated and makes RGP such a special place to live and work.

## Employee of the Month—

Mary Grace Verceles, Medtech



I started working here at RGP in 2012, first as a CNA; now I am a med-tech. Before I came here, I worked with Adrienne as a med-tech at Vintage Golden Gate on 19th Ave.

I was born in

Manila, the Philippines, attended high school, and graduated from Our Lady of Fatima University with a BS in Nursing. However, before I completed the practicum required for graduation, I had to immigrate to the US. Due to immigration requirements, I had to arrive here before I was twenty-one, so I could not get a nursing diploma although I had completed all the coursework.

When I arrived in SF, I went to school to complete a CNA certificate. I finished the certificate in about six months; worked, and applied to RGP in 2012.

What do you like about working at RGP?

This community is well-managed, cohesive, and a happy place to work. They give great pay and benefits to employees. I love working on the PM shift because we work together as a team.

What have you learned while working at RGP?

I've learned to be more consistent with my job.  
I've learned to be patient, and learned to be a team player.

What have you learned from co-workers and residents?

I've learned to work with diversity.

What advice you would give to a new employee?

Just do your job. Love your job. And be compassionate in doing what you are doing.

What are your hobbies?

I love traveling, cooking, and watching movies.

## RESIDENTS' THOUGHTS ON GIVING, CONT.

### Renée Perlman

I had a great thought. Our state of California has a surplus of money which was distributed to those who filed income tax in 2021. Nice idea. But we also have a problem of homelessness. And it takes the amounts of money that only a state would have to solve the problem. It would be money well spent. It is charitable and humane to address homeless in general.

When I become aware of the great need, I feel overwhelmed. In fact, we are all overwhelmed by requests from different charities. "We can't cover the waterfront," (i.e. one person can't do enough to change anything), but we have to zero in on which charity we want to support.

How does one decide what to donate to?

What a person feels is the most worthy.

What experiences the person has and what he has seen and feels needs to be helped.

For me, I choose to donate to the hearing impaired because I know how important it is. And as our population has aged, more people are becoming victims of hearing disability. Another area of giving is Jewish philanthropy, in particular helping Ukraine because many of us have come from Ukraine or from that part of Europe. I would certainly donate to humanitarian needs in the Ukraine War. Each person has to make decisions for themselves based on their life.

### Thank you for your donations!



We filled one barrel. Lets fill another one! Donate to the **JFCS Food Bank** to make sure that our neighbors have enough food this holiday season.

# Lighting the Spark of Chanukah

by Linda Bernstein, Pharm.D., M.J.S., Pastoral Care Intern at Rhoda Goldman Plaza

Chanukah, the festival of lights, commemorates the rededication of the Temple by the Macabees after it was defiled by our enemies. Chanukah is just a few months after the High Holy Days, when we reflect on ways to do better in the coming year. How can we use Chanukah to rededicate ourselves to that goal? How can we light the spark within us, to lift our spirits and those around us? The customs of Chanukah can be our guide.

Create a festive table. My dear Mother used to decorate the dining room table for Chanukah. She had a large round platter which she filled it with dreidels of all sizes and designs, walnuts, dried fruit, and of course Chanukah gelt, yummy milk chocolate coins. Menorahs stood tall on the table, with colorful candles waiting to be lit. You can create a festive mindset by doing things that bring you joy to get into the Chanukah spirit.



Light the Chanukah candles. Each night we light another candle on the menorah to signify the miracle of the eight days during which the temple menorah oil burned, even though there was only enough oil for one night. The fact that we light an additional light each

night tells us that change in our lives happens gradually and that's OK. Maybe today you can start by attending one event or class, and gradually you might find another and another that spark your interest.



Eating latkes, the traditional potato pancake. What can the lowly potato teach us? A raw potato, by itself, is not very exciting, let alone flavorful. But if you take the time to grade it, fry it, add

some apple sauce, and sour cream... you've got

a tasty dish! Similarly, none of us are a single latke on a plate. Try to engage with others as you may find it very rewarding. Recontact family and friends, go on an outing or come to Friday services. Putting in the effort to reach out to others will add some applesauce to your life and help light the sweet spark of community within you.

Sing the Chanukah blessings and songs. The beautiful Chanukah blessings and joyful music of the holiday create a festive atmosphere and trigger joyous memories of the menorah's glowing lights. If you don't know the words, hum along to lift your spirits and light your spiritual spark. Please come to my Chanukah/Broadway concert on December 8 (See Events Calendar for details). Get ready to sing or hum along to your favorites!

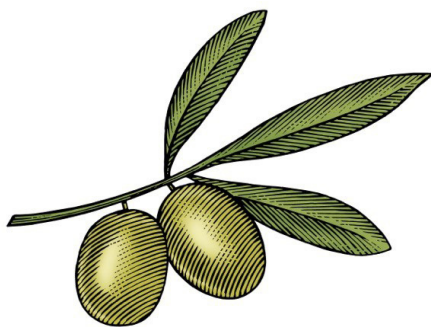
Exchange gifts. When we think of Chanukah, particularly in more recent times, we think of gift giving and receiving. Find a worthy cause or organization to donate to in honor of the holiday. Sometimes a gift of your time to volunteer for a community event and help light the spark in others can be the most treasured gift of all.

Play dreidel. Playing dreidel is a game for all ages and lots of fun. The four sides of the spinning dreidel, each with a letter on it, are the acronym for the Hebrew words, "Nes Gadol Hayah Sham", a great miracle happened there. Like the spinning dreidel, we live our lives, and don't always know where it will land us, but that's the fun of it.

Hang on for the ride!

Wishing you a Happy and Healthy Chanukah! May the joys of the Chanukah celebration help light the spark within you, your family, and friends, today and every day.





RHODA GOLDMAN PLAZA  
2180 Post Street  
San Francisco, CA 94115

415.345.5060  
415.345.5061 (fax)

[www.RGPlaza.org](http://www.RGPlaza.org)  
RCFE #385600125

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

# RHODA GOLDMAN PLAZA

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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.

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 self-contained 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.

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.*