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BY RHODA GOLDMAN PLAZA

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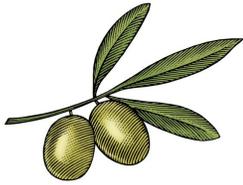
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Turning the Corner



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Turning the Corner



After three years of COVID mask requirements, as of April 3, 2023, the CDPH (California Department of Public Health) is lifting masking requirements for visitors and staff in assisted living facilities. I realize that for almost everyone else, this change is oh-so-passé, (masks? still? or COVID? I thought it was all over... etc. etc.) But for those of us who had been wearing masks at work for the past three years, this change provides the wonderful freedom to breathe freely.

“Breathing freely” to open up, to relax a little, to turn a corner. However, I admit that “turning the corner” is somewhat misleading. According to Google, it means “To begin to find success or improvement after a particularly difficult or troubling period.” I would like to refine that definition to: “despite a difficult period (i.e. COVID), we are all continuing (present progressive aspect) to do our best. And RGP is continuing to do what it has always done—successfully providing admirable assisted living care for our residents.

RGP has been emerging from COVID more-than-ready to go forward. We have been opening up incrementally as COVID restrictions have been lifted; we are already in the process of introducing a new state-of-the-art call system, initiating changes in dining services, opening up activities to musicians who were not allowed to perform during COVID, and considering other options which COVID protocols had previously prohibited. We are not starting, but continuing....

So it may be that April 3, 2023 is actually not a big deal—not a significant moment—except for those of us who have had to wear masks for the past three years. (And YES, masks have kept us safe and healthy! Yes, we will always have them on hand because they work.)

Still, breathing freely is wonderful and I personally will celebrate.

Resident of the Month—Fred Wozniak

Coming to RGP was certainly corner-turning for me. I had been living by myself relatively isolated for many years, having concluded that living alone was not such a bad idea and was quite content with it. But due to unexpected events, the prospect of living alone became not a great idea. Luckily people close to me found Rhoda Goldman which has a reputation for being a place of community and having good food. I now live in community.



I grew up in the Polish “ghetto” in Detroit. Most of the people in my neighborhood were immigrants from Poland. I spoke only Polish until the third grade when I began learning English. Like many “ghettos”, there was a strong sense of insiders and outsiders and who was considered acceptable. At that time, I was primarily interested in leaving as soon as I could. After middle school, I was recruited to play football at a Catholic school away from my neighborhood; my life took an early turn away from my immediate surroundings. Promoted first grade, to third grade, to fifth grade, I graduated from high school at sixteen. By the time I graduated, I had already started my own carpeting business. Income from my business together with money from my deceased father’s GI Bill helped pay my way through college. I attended Wayne State University in Detroit, graduating with a BS in business administration and economics.

After graduating, I worked for IBM in marketing for about ten years, then became a principal in a company called Computer Usage which consulted on systems management; our clients included Hughes Aircraft and Fireman’s Fund. One day, a former client called me up and asked me to meet him for lunch the next day. I thought he was in New York and suggested restaurants, But he said, “No. In Milan. A car

will pick you up shortly. Plane tickets have been bought. I’ll meet you tomorrow in Milan.” This was rather an unexpected turn, but interesting, and the road was going in the right direction. So I went.

I accepted a contract with Montecatini Edison S.P.A. and lived in Milan. I liked Italy very much. I liked the lifestyle, the morals, the food, especially the attitude where family comes first, work second. In 1975, I returned to the US planning

to continue my business for a year or two and then retire. But these plans fell apart when my business partner unexpectedly passed away, leaving me to run the company alone. Another corner turning which I hadn’t expected. Nevertheless, after about a year, I found a president-replacement and “retired” in 1987.

Although I wanted to retire, I was not ready to—I just needed a stress-free business to run. I remembered my college-years carpeting business; it offered a business opportunity and is actually rather uncomplicated if you remember that the fuzzy side goes up! So I started a carpet business in 1990 until I really retired in 2020.

My arrival to RGP has turned out to be much better than I could have foreseen. I have revised my views on the benefits of community and vitality in old age. I am amazed at the number of people who have led worthwhile lives and at the role that Jewish Community played. I find it very satisfying to live here.

About ten or eleven years ago, wanting to make a worthwhile contribution to the lives of others, I started volunteering as a chef at the Presbyterian Church on Sacramento Street and more recently at Serenity Knolls in Forest Knolls. Because I am a good cook, I wanted to share my talent for cooking—to give people really exceptional meals. My son was also inspired to volunteer at the age of twelve and began cooking with me. But let me tell you, never get into a bake-off with young sons; they are fearlessly innovative!



Roberto Pellegrino
Director Food Services

Turning the Corner—Director as Driver

Managing dining services is a lot like driving—the manager needs to know where he is going and how to get there. But turning a corner in the dining time-frame involves many small changes—planning menus, ordering ingredients, training staff—which require time. While some changes occur according to organizational capabilities, other changes depend on the seasons. As spring begins, we will be turning a seasonal corner; we will have many more fresh fruits and vegetables and our menus will reflect this abundance.

I've been here about two months and have begun “turning the corner” in developing a café menu. We have new options—healthy and yummy snacks, pizza, now panini. The staple chocolate has returned. We are developing a more balanced menu with a choice of heavier and lighter food. We have a printed menu.

In the dining room, the goal is improvement in the consistency and quality of food and its presentation. We have found a fresh kosher meat source which provides a better source of protein. We have solutions to dry turkey sandwiches. Having come from ten years in senior living dining, I have sense of what residents like and dislike. I do not believe that a multitude of ingredients or complicated cooking procedures necessarily make food taste better. We plan to provide consistently upscale, healthy, and delicious kosher meals.

Kashrut has changed my way of programming myself and menu choices. To me, it's a new way of thinking about what can be paired when designing plates and dishes. When I say “designing” as a chef, I mean using ingredients,

matching them and seeing how the meal looks on a plate. With kashrut, I have to omit certain ingredients (i.e. no meat and dairy together). And because there are limited amounts of kosher products, putting together and designing a kosher meal is work in progress

Continuing the metaphor of turning the corner, I am in the process of developing dining services where the entire department knows its goal—working for the residents and what they want. In other words, cohesive oversight of the “front and back of the house” so servers and chefs work together. In my thirty years in food services, I've learned that directors are important to provide a role model of the expected work ethic, leaders who define priorities and develop the right processes to carry them out. Also, good communication is essential. Looking ahead I anticipate good food served with fresh and quality ingredients; meals served by timely, friendly, competent staff working as a team.

I would like to emphasize that residents should feel free to talk to me. As the saying goes “the buck stops here.” I am looking forward to getting to know residents better and to continue discussing what they want.

Looking down the road; what's the future? If the tasting activities continue, I think they will focus more on new recipes. We are on a mission to find the best bagels we can, probably a New York style bagel. And I hope that residents will take ownership of the food—that we will work together to serve the kind of food that residents like.

We are not turning a sharp corner, but rather a slow curve. Coming out of the curve, we will pick up speed, and prepare for the next one.



Health Notes

Adrienne Fair, MSN, RN,
Assistant Executive Director

The View Ahead as We Turn the Corner

The COVID-19 pandemic put RGP and all Assisted Living communities to the test. We were expected to do a LOT with very LITTLE. By a lot, I mean: keeping a viral pandemic at bay, frequent COVID testing, caring for residents in Memory Care who did not understand COVID precautions, keeping up with the daily changing regulations which in turn need to be explained to staff/families/residents, and incessant reporting to the DSS (Department of Social Services) and DPH (Department of Public Health). By a little, I mean: short supply of personal protection equipment (particularly at the start of the pandemic), the need for more staff to meet increasing care needs and isolate positive cases, contact-tracing, testing needs, staff who themselves are contracting COVID and need time-off to recover, and quite frankly not enough hours in the day to finish our ever-growing to-do list.

At RGP, our care staff was exceptionally dedicated. Staff did not quit out of fear of contracting the virus, but came to work, to provide the best care possible to RGP residents—including when residents were positive for COVID. We only used temporary staffing for a handful of shifts in the past three years—we instead maintained full coverage of shifts through overtime by RGP caregivers who know our residents well. The fact that we maintained our staffing throughout the pandemic is no small feat and is almost unheard-of in Assisted Living or Skilled Nursing Facilities. Charge nurses and managers took the time to procure the proper PPE and fit-testing for hands-on caregivers and supervised training and education on preventing the spread of COVID and the benefits of vaccination. We achieved a 100% vaccination rate very early once vaccinations became available. RGP administrators were able to support staff coming to work through additional transportation benefits, hazard pay, and hotel stays when household-members contracted the virus.

Assisted Living Communities are licensed by the DSS and are considered to be a social (not medical) model. Prior to the pandemic, we reported emergency events to the DSS of California and maintained our license with the DSS as a residential community. The pandemic brought new reporting requirements—we were required to report COVID cases to the DPH and to the DSS. Both the DPH and DSS required detailed reporting in their own specific formats—and required daily updates and extensive testing during an outbreak. On top of this, they often gave conflicting advice regarding best practices and regulations for isolation, quarantine, visitor protocol, communal dining, and activities. As you probably remember, there was also a lot of conflicting information being provided on the news and social media, which in turn confused and undermined the best efforts of the DPH and DSS to provide clear guidance.

Turning the corner, what does the future hold for RGP as a community? We are a home to more than 140 residents (and counting). As much as we are following regulations and reporting to the DPH and DSS, we want to maintain a homelike environment. It is definitely a balancing act to respect resident autonomy and freedom while also striving to maintain our community's overall well-being and safety. I think that, through increased collaboration with the Department of Public Health, we will ultimately maintain better community health and better avoid the spread of infectious diseases. I think it is important to see this increased supervision as a tool for our success. We have been through a very challenging pandemic, and with our new skills, we are better equipped to manage the next disease outbreak, or, ideally, avoid it altogether.

Matzoh Memories

Linda Bernstein, Pharm.D., M.J.S.
4th Year Rabbinical Student
Intern of the Cantors Assembly
Academy for Jewish Religion California
Spiritual Care Intern, Rhoda Goldman Plaza

And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough that they had taken out of Egypt... since they had been driven out of Egypt and could not delay... Exodus 12:39

These “unleavened cakes”... Matzot... what are they? The bread of affliction, a symbol of freedom, rapid redemption, humility, or all the above?

I always savored the first bite of matzoh at seder for it meant that all the preparation had been done, not by me, mind you, but by my dear mother. Ilse, or Omi as my children endearingly called her, worked tirelessly for weeks to ready our home for the seder and the Passover week, all in strict accordance with the Jewish dietary laws of kashrut.

No detail was ignored. It was my mother’s big holiday to be sure as we all were treated to her five-course meal of chopped liver, matzoh ball soup, beet salad, roast beef, and an unlimited array of yummy desserts including sweet matzoh kugel (noodle casserole) and dreamy wine cream. She lovingly made these dishes by hand from the German recipes she carried with her when she escaped the Nazis and came to this country alone on a boat in 1939, at the age of 19. Both my parents relished the freedom they had in the United States after escaping Germany. They were warm, hospitable, and shared their table with others who needed a seder to join.

Getting back to my original question... what is matzoh?

Matzoh is a metaphor for life itself. It was baked in a hurry... reflective of how our lives go by so quickly, how plans can be interrupted and how sometimes there is no chance for “leavening” of our desires and wishes. We must learn to deal with life’s ups and downs and be willing to shift direction at a moment’s notice.

Secondly, matzoh is brittle. It is easily broken and loses its shape. Life can be brittle at times, and when personal or societal tragedies happen, we lose our foundation and can find ourselves without form or direction.

Third, matzoh often leaves behind a trail of crumbs. We know when someone has eaten matzoh by looking at their plate, tablecloth, chair, or the floor beneath them. Our actions in life often leave behind crumbs of evidence that we have been there, for good and bad, thus comprising our legacy. If we follow the mitzvot (God’s commandments) and dedicate ourselves to a life of maasim tovim (good deeds), the crumbs we leave behind serve as seeds to blossom into even more blessings.

Finally, matzoh is moldable. We can smash it, soak it, fry it, bake it, cover it with butter and jam and do countless other creative maneuvers to make it more palatable, savory, or sweet. We can turn it into stuffing, balls, cakes, and cookies. Just look on today’s grocery shelves, where there are plain, whole wheat, egg, organic, rye, gluten free, shmurah (guarded and hand-crafted), chocolate covered and rosemary and garlic matzoh varieties, just to name a few.

In life, we must also be malleable and work to optimize what we have. We can take our life gifts, and they are gifts, and over time, and create a unique path that incorporates our own basic ingredients but also mixes in and takes advantage of other components that can enrich our lives and those of others.

Just as our ancestors who were slaves had to hurry and make unleavened cakes as they escaped their state of bondage, matzoh reminds us that we are all blessed to live a life without the shackles of slavery and one in which we have the freedom to live life fully, make the best of what we have and do so with integrity. We all must continue to fight for freedom for those who do not have it.

Thanks Mom, for life lessons and the beautiful matzoh memories.

Adapted from Linda’s article published in the J-Jewish News of Northern California.

Passover

THE EXODUS —THE BIBLICAL EXAMPLE OF TURNING THE CORNER

We were slaves in Egypt.....now we are free....

PASSOVER—THE FIRST STEPS INTO FREEDOM

The Exodus Story from the Haggadah

“We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and the L-rd, our G-d, took us out from there with a strong hand and with an outstretched arm. If the Holy One, blessed be He, had not taken our fathers out of Egypt, then we, our children and our children’s children would have remained enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt. Even if all of us were wise, all of us understanding, all of us knowing the Torah, we would still be obligated to discuss the exodus from Egypt; and everyone who discusses the exodus from Egypt at length is praiseworthy.”



Matzah Unleavened bread

Chazeret (Bitter Herbs)
Horseradish. The bitterness of slavery.

Karpas (Parsley)
This vegetable alludes to the backbreaking work of the Jews as slaves

Haroseth
A mixture of apples, pears, nuts, and wine, symbolizing the mortar and brick made by the Jews when they toiled for Pharaoh.



Saltwater
The tears the Jews shed during their slavery in Egypt.

Beitzah (Egg). A hard-boiled egg is a symbol of growth, fertility, the beginning of a new life.

Zeroa (Shank-bone)
Represents the lamb, the paschal sacrifice, on the eve of the exodus from Egypt.

Maror. Bitter herbs .Made of fresh grated horseradish, and romaine lettuce (or endives).A reminder of the bitterness of the slavery of our forefathers in Egypt.



Four cups of wine





Emma Davis
Director of Programming and Counseling

I Can See Your Face!

Recently, someone asked me what activities look like now compared to pre-pandemic. Pre-pandemic was three years ago (how is this possible?!), so I went back and looked at an activity calendar from February 2020 and guess what? We have the same amount, if not more, activities in April of 2023 than we did in February 2020! The specific activities may be a little different as the interests of our community have evolved, but RGP residents are as active and involved as ever. With the changing of the mask mandate, we can really feel like we will have come full circle.

During COVID, due to DPH regulations, we could not offer musical performances with either woodwind or brass instruments during COVID. Now, we can join the rest of the world and have performances with musicians who don't have to wear masks, and can play clarinets, trumpets, and saxophones galore!



I Can See Your Face!

April 3rd is a particularly relevant day for our Memory Care residents. With masks off, we will be able to communicate so much better! Communication through facial expressions is vital for those struggling with brain change such as dementia. For the hard of hearing, masks have inhibited the ability to lip read. Although masking was an essential part of keeping our Memory Care community safe, I am greatly looking forward to hearing “I can see your face!” on April 3rd!



John Rothmann will return to RGP (via Zoom) in April!

John Rothmann is a politics/foreign policy consultant specializing on the US, Middle East and the USSR. He is a frequent lecturer on American Politics and has been called “a scholar of modern Republicanism” while being acknowledged “for his unique insights, and in particular for rare and crucial materials.”



For Passover

Asaf Ophir, Israeli clarinetist, will perform for both Passover Seders on April 5th and 6th.



April 23

Dave Rocha Jazz band (trumpet, piano & bass) will be performing on Sunday, April 23rd at 2 pm.



Candiece Milford,
Managing Director of Marketing

Turning the Corner

Although most of us look back at the last three years of the worldwide COVID outbreak with disbelief, exhaustion, and sadness, I would like to talk about some of the elements that made RGP weather it so well. At Rhoda Goldman Plaza (RGP), one of the most constructive results was how our staff and managers all came together—literally in twenty-four hours—and pulled off the impossible. Meals were delivered to apartments and all departments adjusted their schedules to carry on in the chaos of COVID. We have become an even stronger team that works together nimbly and more cohesively. But we had the foundation already in place before COVID “arrived”.

Because of COVID people were afraid to consider assisted living or even visit and occupancy declined. However, at RGP, while our occupancy fell, it always was far higher than the local and national norms. In September 2022, the national occupancy rate was 76% while ours was 84%. As of this writing, the rebound has continued such that we are currently at 99%. (We can never be at a true 100% because of the two guest rooms and Ira’s apartment!)

How can there be such a difference between our stand-alone community and national chain occupancy? Here, we have had the ability to create a unique culture and organization based on twenty-three years of experience. We practice our non-profit mission to provide a safe environment with high quality care for our aging elders and re-invest our profit into programming and staffing. We don’t have to “up-chain” decisions to a far-off corporate office; we simply walk into our Executive

Director’s office and talk. Our Board is comprised of local professionals from JFCS, Mt. Zion, and from the public. I, as Marketing Director, attend the meeting to report “from the front lines”, what is transpiring. Communication is clear and direct which allows us to make timely decisions.

All this creates an organizational culture which fosters loyalty; loyalty is earned, not bought. You can’t buy occupancy; you earn it through those golden word-of-mouth referrals over time. Yes, giant corporations can buy keywords that dominate search web search engines. Yet, although many communities rely on expensive referral agencies, we do not. We are a one-of-a-kind jewel of a community whose reputation brings a second generation—children of previous residents—to our door. Curiously, in the seven years that I have been here, this first quarter has brought in more multi-generational inquiries than in the past. By this I mean, the sons/daughters of previous residents are now inquiring for themselves or their parents in greater numbers than before. We earned those referrals; we didn’t buy them.

And speaking of loyalty, we again break the mold when it comes to staff retention . . . even during the height of COVID. Our Board of Directors supported us in giving special attention and perks to care staff to let them know how much they are valued. Strong leadership by our Director of Health Service Adrienne Fair, also kept her staff united such that we had very few caregivers leave. This is unheard of as the lack of caregivers is a looming crisis for the aging Boomers. Here at RGP, we are blessed with staff who love to work here and stay, giving a higher resident satisfaction than in other communities with revolving doors.

As they say . . . going from, strength to strength.



Elizabeth Wyma-Hughes
Director of Resident Services

CarePredict—The New Pendant System

I have been hard at work preparing RGP for the new CarePredict system, due to be introduced at the beginning of April. Since the system runs on Wi-Fi, we have installed extra signal-boosting devices throughout the building. I have been working with Adrienne and Sam in training Health Services, Dorie to train Front Desk staff, and other managers (100+ staff). I am very excited about this new system since it will allow staff to provide better care for our residents.

One of the key features this new systems offers is the ability to have two-way communication between residents and caregivers (when the pendant has been pressed). Staff who have responded to the resident's call on the app will be able to speak with them before arriving. Another benefit is location tracking. Because of the pendant's locating function, health services staff can find residents quickly. The new pendant itself is findable—any "lost" pendants can easily be found so long as they are within the building.

A third exciting benefit of CarePredict is that it alerts staff when a fall occurs and measures changes in residents' walking pattern.

The system will have different equipment and pendants which should be worn on the resident's dominant wrist. In the CarePredict system, health care staff will be connected via cell phones which constitute the new communication system. An added feature is that health services staff can communicate to each other by text messages. For example, if a staff member cannot answer a call, she/he can text other staff that she is unavailable.

When a resident presses the button (three seconds) he/she will get a message: "Your request of assistance has been submitted." A health services staff will see the request on their phone. When a staff member takes the call, the resident will hear a message that "someone is

responding to your request." This in real time feedback is another big improvement from our current system where residents often wonder if the request has gone through and don't know when care staff have received it. Realistically, the new system will not change response times, but the resident will get real-time assurance that staff will respond to the call.

The new system will not require learning new processes:

CarePredict functions much like the old pendant system except that, in case of emergency, the resident can speak directly with staff. Pendant batteries will be checked every day. Another added

benefit is that the pendant can announce the day and time with a one-second press on the button! The pendant is water resistant; however, washing with soapy water in the shower is not recommended. Residents are advised to take off their pendant when they are in the shower and place it on a (to be provided) hook nearby. Like the old pendant, residents are encouraged to wear the pendant at all times.

For the time-being, Maintenance and housekeeping staff will continue to use radios. Residents will continue to call the front desk for questions or non-health related issues.

During the end of March and beginning of April, the system will be installed and tested and residents will be shown how to use these new pendants. It has been a long process to get us here, but I am thrilled to be taking this next step!



Employee of the Month—Maria Meza



“I have been working at RGP for five years, first in the dining room and now in the cafe. As residents may remember, three years ago in March, covid brought big changes to RGP. One day we were serving meals

in the dining room, the next day and for many months afterward, we delivered meal boxes to residents. We prepared meals for more than one hundred residents three times a day and had to set up a special procedures to prepare food boxes for residents with special diets. At first we were worried about COVID and how everything would turn out, but we wanted to help. Knowing that we were the ones responsible for getting food to residents, we did our best. Eventually, as you know, things did work out. But at the beginning, we were all very stressed.

I like it better, now that life is more or less back to normal. It’s better now for me and also for the residents. Now they can choose what they want to eat. Before, they had no choice—only what we put on the tray. I’m so glad we are back to normal.

Before coming to RGP, I worked in an assisted living facility in Millbrae as a housekeeper and kitchen aide. One day the cook didn’t come to work; I volunteered to help in the kitchen and started cooking. I was cooking three meals a day there, beginning work at 6:30am and finishing at 3:00pm. Commuting to Millbrae took two hours.....my days were very long; I wanted to work in the City. I heard about an opening at RGP, sent my application, and was hired!

My prior work experience for many years was with children. When my son was in fourth grade I started working at his school as a classroom volunteer. I helped the teacher and later I worked full time as a liaison and as a

Spanish translator. We lived in the Mission but my children were bussed to school in Chinatown every morning.

My husband, my daughter, and I came to San Francisco forty-five years ago; our son was born here. We, like everyone else have seen a lot of changes in the city....

I like to cook; my favorite food is enchiladas, chili rellenos, rice, and refried beans. I used to knit and crochet, and I continue to sew. I like my job and co-workers. I enjoy working in the café and appreciate our new Food Services Director.”

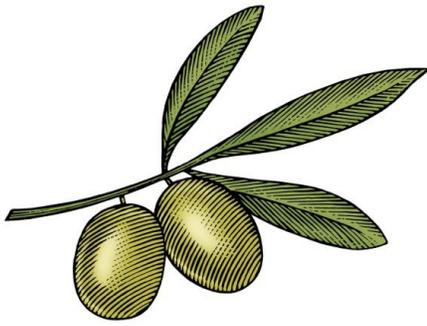
April Birthdays

Priscilla Schlesinger	8
Carol John	14
Mo Steinbruner	16
Anita Weber	19
Bernice Rabin	19
Sarah Shilgi	20
Jack Herman	21
Toni Buckley	22
Evelyn Adler	30

2023 Federal Tax Deadline Tuesday, April 18, 2023

Year End Tax Letter

RGP prepares a year-end tax letter outlining Health Services proportion of RGP’s operating expenses; this information may be requested by tax preparers or accountants. If you would like to receive this letter, please contact Christine Leung (ChristineL@rgplaza.org) or Eric Luu (EricL@rgplaza.org).



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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 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.