



# THE OLIVE PRESS

BY RHODA GOLDMAN PLAZA

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TEVET—SHAVAT

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This month's Olive Press theme is "Renewal".

It is January and at this time of year, the winter rains renew our water reserves, and the terrain turns green. We feel refreshed. At Rhoda Goldman Plaza, we pause to ask what renewal is to you.

Allison Rodman  
*Director of Sales & Marketing*



Comments welcome  
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## John Gardner on the Key to Self-Renewal Across Life and the Art of Making Rather Than Finding Meaning

*by Maria Popova, Marginalian 2024/05/15*

**I**n the final years of his long life, former U.S. Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare John Gardner (October 8, 1912–February 16, 2002) expanded upon his masterwork on self-renewal in the posthumously published *Living, Leading, and the American Dream* (public library), examining the deepest questions and commitments of how we become — and go on becoming — ourselves as our lives unfold, transient and tender with longing for meaning.

With an eye to the mystery of why some people and not others manage to live with vitality until the end, and to the fact that life metes out its cruelties and its mercies with an uneven hand, Gardner writes:

One must be compassionate in assessing the reasons. Perhaps life just presented them with tougher problems than they could solve. It happens. Perhaps they were pulled down by the hidden resentments and grievances that grow in adult life, sometimes so luxuriantly that, like tangled vines, they immobilize the victim. Perhaps something inflicted a major wound on their confidence or their self-esteem. You've known such people — feeling secretly defeated, maybe somewhat sour and cynical, or perhaps just vaguely dispirited.

Or perhaps they grew so comfortable that adventures no longer beckoned.

Recognizing that the challenges we face are both personal and structural, that we are products of our conditions and conditioning but also entirely responsible for ourselves, he adds:

We build our own prisons and serve as our own jailkeepers... but clearly our parents and the society at large have a hand in building our prisons. They create roles for us — and self-images — that hold us captive for a long time. The individual intent on self-renewal will have to deal with ghosts of the past — the memory of earlier failures, the remnants of childhood dramas and rebellions, the accumulated grievances and resentments that have long outlived their cause. Sometimes people cling to the ghosts with something almost approaching pleasure — but the hampering effect on growth is inescapable.

Life is an endless unfolding, and if we wish it to be, an endless process of self-discovery, an endless and unpredictable dialogue between our own potentialities and the life situations in which we find ourselves. The purpose is to grow and develop in the dimensions that distinguish humankind at its best.

**Front Cover: Photograph of redwood forest in winter**



## Tevet: A Season of Renewal and Reflection

**A**s the month of Tevet unfolds, we are reminded of the cycles of continuity and change that shape our community at Rhoda Goldman Plaza. Tevet, a meaningful month in the Jewish calendar, invites us to reflect on our commitments, embrace growth, and balance honoring traditions with welcoming new opportunities.

This year, Tevet coincides with an exciting transition for our community as we welcome Kari Jane Oxford as our new Community Director. Kari Jane brings a wealth of expertise and fresh perspectives, while continuing the legacy of care, compassion, and excellence that defines Rhoda Goldman Plaza. Her leadership marks the start of a new chapter in our journey—one grounded in the strong foundation built over the past 25 years.

Tevet encourages us to see change as renewal, a chance to recommit to our mission of fostering dignity, belonging, and joy. Under Kari Jane's guidance, we look forward to sustaining and enhancing the vibrant, inclusive community that is the heart of Rhoda Goldman Plaza.

Please join me in welcoming Kari Jane Oxford as we step into this exciting new era, united in our shared commitment to the well-being of every resident, family member, and associate.

**Photo Above: Rhoda Goldman Plaza**



Miki Lamm, MSW  
*Associate Director, Seniors at Home*

## Introducing Our New Community Director, Kari Jane Oxford

**W**e are delighted to introduce you to Kari Jane Oxford as the new Community Director at Rhoda Goldman Plaza!

She is a compassionate and visionary leader with many years experience in assisted living, home care, skilled nursing, and memory care.

For Kari Jane, her work is personal -- as many members of her immediate family have been touched by Alzheimer's disease. This connection keeps her grounded and dedicated to creating meaningful, compassionate services for older adults.



Kari Jane has a proven record of creating warm and welcoming communities. She recalls a resident council member recently telling her, "You've made this place a home, not a facility." We know she will foster an atmosphere of love and laughter, training staff to embrace memory changes and care with positivity and understanding.

Outside of work, Kari enjoys watching travel documentaries in memory of her late father, keeping his adventurous spirit alive. Proudly named after both her grandmothers, Kari Jane happily responds to either "Kari" or "Jane," but prefers "Kari Jane."

Please join us in giving a warm welcome! We are confident that her compassion, creativity, and dedication will enrich our community and enhance the lives at RGP.

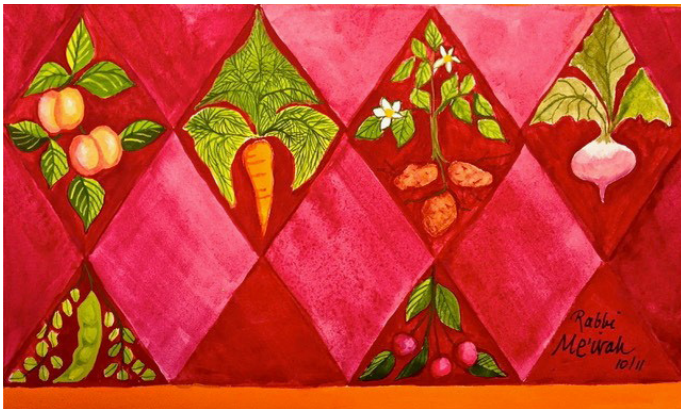


Danielle Bennett  
*Office Manager*

## From Winter's Rest to Spring's Growth: Lessons from Nature

And God said, "Let there be light in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night, and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years."

—*Genesis 1:14*



How blessed we are to have the seasons, each with its calling: **Spring** for new emergence, **Summer** for sunlit ebullience, **Fall** for ripening, and **Winter's** long nights for withdrawing, contemplation, and rest.

Rest allows growth to burst forth with new energy in the Spring. Our seasons teach us the courses of our lives: "There is a time for everything, and for everything a purpose under Heaven."

—*Ecclesiastes 3:1*

As we follow Nature's example, we might ask ourselves: What are the important things we need to think about at this time in our lives? What do we want to withdraw from, and what do we want to nurture into growth? What sort of rest will be restorative so that, when Spring comes, we are ready for what needs sprouting?

Art image above by Rabbi Me'irah Iliinsky



Rabbi Me'irah Iliinsky  
Community Rabbi, Rhoda Goldman Plaza

## Latkes and Love

For the first time since before COVID-19, YouthFirst at JFCS collaborated with RGP for a meaningful service event planned by teens in the Impact Year Program. Guided by the Jewish value of Kibbud Zkenim (honoring our elders), the teens worked for over two months to create an engaging afternoon for RGP residents.

The event, held just before Hanukkah, featured activities like chair dancing to swing music, a Dreidel game, and a collaborative art project: crafting a paper menorah with notes of gratitude. One-on-one conversations between teens and older adults created touching moments, such as a Spanish-speaking resident bonding with a teen over shared heritage and residents joyfully sharing their dance moves.

The event fostered joy, connection, and mutual respect across generations, making it a truly memorable and uplifting experience for all involved.



Sylvia with YouthFirst participants at Chanukah party



Inbal Shalev  
YouthFirst Regional Program Director, JFCS



## Say Hello to Our New Front Desk Attendant, Alayna Crespo

**W**e're excited to welcome our new Front Desk Attendant, Alayna Crespo! A San Francisco native, Alayna has a deep love for art, particularly painting and drawing. In her free time, she enjoys exploring the city's sights and taking her 4-year-old Miniature Pinscher, Henny, on long walks in the park.



## Getting Things Done at the Front Desk

- Submit **Work Orders** regarding problems in your apartment.
- Get a **Resident Phone List** at the Front Desk.
- Schedule a **Podiatry Appointment**.
- Make **Transportation Arrangements**.
- Check for your lost or missing items. The **Lost and Found** is located at the Front Desk. Items not claimed after six months will be donated.
- Pick-up and drop-off your **Dry Cleaning**. Your dry cleaning is picked-up and delivered twice a week. Inquire at the Front Desk for details.
- Pick-up, fill-out and return **Thank You Grams**. For those who may not know, Thank You Grams are a means of expressing appreciation to employees for their assistance, kindness, and good deeds.

## Laughter, Friendship, and Renewal at RGP's Table

**A**t RGP, the dining room is more than just a place to eat; it is a space where renewal takes root. Here, residents discover new ways to connect, find purpose, and embrace their community. The dining experience is intentionally designed to foster moments of rejuvenation—socially, emotionally, and personally.

Gathering for meals is more than a routine; it's a ritual of connection. In these shared spaces, residents have the chance to engage with one another in meaningful ways. Whether reminiscing about the past, discussing mutual interests, or sharing laughter over a meal, the dining room cultivates an environment where bonds are formed and spirits are uplifted. For many, this experience serves as a remedy for isolation and a path toward new friendships.

The dining room also serves as a vibrant hub for activities that bring the community together. Special events, themed dinners, and interactions with staff create a lively atmosphere that energizes and inspires. These occasions are opportunities for residents to celebrate, connect, and participate fully in the life of the community.

By providing a space that combines nourishment with connection, the dining room becomes a cornerstone of RGP's mission to enrich lives. It's a place where renewal happens daily—through laughter, shared moments, and the simple joy of being together. This focus on renewal ensures that every resident can thrive in an environment filled with warmth, support, and the promise of brighter days ahead.



Roberto Pellegrino  
*Food and Beverage Director*



## A Door Opens—Your Next Chapter

For most 80 year olds, the thought of moving into a community may sound exhausting. The idea of starting a new chapter and making new friends sounds like a lot of work not exciting renewal!

But from my experience, watching my new residents nest in, I witness a pleasant turn towards a happy state of being. Friendships are formed, and a sense of security is present which calms the nervous system. There is expectancy about the coming Sunday Concert or getting out to see the latest museum exhibit. The quiet hours (that were once too quiet) are filled with sweet interchanges and table talk. There are fresh flowers everywhere, new art in the RGP Art Gallery, and every Friday, house-baked Challah.

Life can be good when you close a door and open the new.

## Annual Satisfaction Survey

Each year, our Annual Satisfaction Survey gathers feedback from residents, families, and employees on over 20 questions, from general satisfaction to specific services like transportation.

This year, participation exceeded 50%, ensuring a representative sample, and results showed high overall satisfaction. Of the residents 93% and 100% of families say that RGP is a “great place to live” and 100% of both groups say that they would recommend RGP.

The survey informs our ongoing efforts to enhance satisfaction and community well-being.

Thank you for participating in the 2024-25 survey—we appreciate your input!



Allison Rodman  
Director of Sales & Marketing

## Cellular Regeneration

As we start the new year, we look forward with gratefulness and resolve to make positive changes in our lives and communities. In this spirit of gratefulness and renewal, I considered (literally) the renewal happening every day in our own bodies.

There is a common conception that the human body renews itself approximately every 7 years. This is fascinating to consider, especially for our centenarian residents: there are currently 9 residents at RGP who have reached 100+ years of age. They have, in theory, regenerated most of their cells over 14 times!

The reality of regeneration is a bit more complicated. Some of our cells last a whole lifetime: neurons, nerve cells, and heart muscle. Other cells are replaced very rapidly – like neutrophils, a type of white blood cell, that only last a couple of days. Our skin cells regenerate more slowly over time – lasting about 30 days in middle age and 80+ days in older age. (1)

The body has approximately 30 trillion cells! This does not include water/fluid which makes up about 1/3 of our body mass. Erythrocytes (red blood cells) are tiny but plentiful in the body – and they make up the highest number of cells that regenerate on any given day (about 280 billion per day). (2)

I see these cellular regeneration factoids as a metaphor for our lives as we start the new year. We can dramatically renew, change, and improve – while also maintaining the core of who we are. As we improve and renew this year, we keep our core values, memories, and emotions – much like our brain and heart cells that stay with us throughout our lives.

(1) Sender, R., & Milo, R. (2021). The distribution of cellular turnover in the human body. *Nature Medicine*, 27(1), 45–48.

(2) Fischetti, M., & Christiansen, J. (2021). A new you in 80 days. *Scientific American*, 324(4), 76.



Adrienne Fair, MSN, RN  
Director of Health Services





## Wish them a Happy Birthday!

### January Birthdays

#### *Residents*

1	Manfred W.	16	Maureen A.
2	Young K.	16	Milton P.
6	Marsha G.	22	Maxene K.
8	Kathleen F.	22	Ruth J.
13	Susan B.	27	Stanley S.
14	Jeanne H.	31	Jane A.

#### *Staff*

1	Aida T.	17	Janet C.
2	Karla P.	20	Yah H.
3	Aung K.	21	Kebede B.
5	Jennylet R.	21	Gumer L.
7	Tallulah G.	25	Yue Mei Z.
9	Roxana C.	30	Alisha G.
12	Christine M.	30	RV V.
16	Chito O.		

## Joanna Neupane, Housekeeping Supervisor

We are happy to welcome Joanna Neupane as our new Housekeeping Supervisor. Joanna brings a wealth of experience, resilience, and a positive outlook on life that inspires everyone around her.

Originally from the Philippines, Joanna is the eldest of five siblings and moved to the United States in 1995. Family has always been a cornerstone of her life, and she shares a particularly close bond with her nephew Roman, who lovingly sends her daily reminders to have a great day.

Joanna's professional background spans 15 years in the hospitality industry, having worked at the Marriott and Hilton. She decided to make a career change when she felt called to follow in her mother's footsteps, who had worked at RGP as a private caregiver. Feeling inspired, she imagined herself working at RGP, and contributing to the well-being of others. She has since been thrilled to be part of the team, describing her housekeeping staff as hardworking and dedicated. She has already implemented positive changes, such as updating staff uniforms, and is excited about the future.

Joanna dreams of one day opening her own restaurant, combining her love for cooking with her passion for food. In her free time, she enjoys playing volleyball, biking around the city, hiking, and singing karaoke.



Danielle Bennett  
*Office Manager*



## EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION



Nancy, Christine, Lovely and Rubie taking flight on Super Hero Day



Amor and Marites at Employee Appreciation Party



Group photo with Teodoro, Luisa, and Calvin



Ellie and Soledad dressed to impress



Amor, Sol and Nicole, Superhero Day



Leah, Leonora, Emma, Sam, Emma D., and Sol strike a pose for the camera



Gift card winner, Marilyn



## EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION



Health Services staff at Employee Appreciation Party



Isabel and Judith, Twin Day



Yan Yan, Sam and Rosalie, Pink Day



Staff suit up as heroes, ready to save the day on Super Hero Day



Staff gather together for a picture-perfect moment



Judith and Jeanne, Twin Day

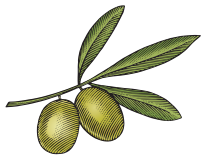


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A DIVISION OF JEWISH FAMILY  
AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

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PLAZA



## RGP Art Gallery

### Coast to Coast, artist Caroline Blum

From delicate petals to the textured bark of ancient trees, Caroline's art blurs the boundaries between familiar and the surreal.  
Drawings using ink, watercolor, colored pencil, acrylic and collage on graph paper.

Ongoing Exhibit Open to the Public | January 12–March 26, 2025

Artist Reception | Sunday, January 12 | 2:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m. | Food & Drinks

Artist Talk | Tuesday, January 14 | 10:30 a.m.

RSVP for Artist Reception & Artist Talk: [AllisonR@rgplaza.org](mailto:AllisonR@rgplaza.org) | Tel: 415-345-5072