

“New Frontiers in Dementia Care” symposium offers insights on research and caregiving

More than 200 physicians, eldercare and Alzheimer’s care professionals, and family caregivers convened at the Hebrew Home’s recent New Frontiers in Dementia Care symposium to discuss the latest in Alzheimer’s research, treatment options and caregiving strategies. The event, part of the Hebrew Home’s centennial year programming, was co-sponsored by Suburban Hospital, a member of Johns Hopkins Medicine.

Warren R. Slavin, President/CEO of Charles E. Smith Life Communities, noted the symposium was “a unique opportunity to examine the future of eldercare, connect and share best practices with experts, and learn about the growing prevalence of dementia, and its impact on the baby boomer generation.”

Alzheimer’s is the seventh leading cause of death in the nation. It affects more than five million individuals, and Americans are spending more than $172 billion to care for loved ones with Alzheimer’s. One thing is clear about this costly disease: today, the answers and solutions cannot be found in a pill. Continued research on Alzheimer’s is essential to understanding the illness and delaying its onset. As the best treatments are being explored, professional and family caregivers remain at the frontline of defense.

Drs. Andrew Rosenzweig and Richard O’Brien field questions at the ‘Research Horizon’ panel.

Ann Morrison of Johns Hopkins led a panel on “Strategies for Caregivers” at the “New Frontiers in Dementia Care” symposium co-sponsored by the Hebrew Home and Suburban Hospital, a member of Johns Hopkins Medicine.

Important insights gleaned from the symposium:
• The government research budget for Alzheimer’s is $500 million a year while the research budget for cancer is $6 billion, reported Dr. Marilyn Albert, professor of neurology/director, Division of Cognitive Neuroscience, Johns Hopkins Medicine.
• According to Dr. Richard O’Brien, M.D., Ph.D., chairman, Department of Neurology, Johns Hopkins Bayview Center, dementia may not be preventable, but vascular disease and stroke are, and this can help eliminate the chance of developing dementia.

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Strategies for caregivers

Caregivers of Alzheimer’s patients walk a long, painful, and often lonely road. They have been thrust into a role not theirs by choice and one for which they possess no preparation, training or knowledge.

Experts at a recent symposium on dementia care sponsored by the Hebrew Home of Greater Washington with Suburban Hospital, a member of Johns Hopkins Medicine, suggested strategies for coping, including:

- Recognize that no issue can be solved in one pass. Try to reduce undesirable behavior bit by bit.
- Keep things in perspective. “The stressful problem of today will not be the same problem tomorrow. As the disease progresses, the problems will typically worsen,” says Ann Morrison, outreach coordinator for Johns Hopkins’ Alzheimer’s Disease Research Center.
- Gather your team together if you are a home caregiver, says Shelly Webb, founder of The Intentional Caregiver. Attend support groups; tap into online resources; find respite care. Having a parent with dementia can stress the caregiver’s marriage and health.
- Physical environment, including lighting, can affect behavior. Make it safe and more effective in promoting calm behavior. Advice from an occupational therapist may be valuable.

Dr. Damien Doyle, medical director, Charles E. Smith Life Communities, moderated the research panel at the recent symposium.

- Create consistent routines, but be open to providing new experiences for the patient that might be beneficial.
- Try to decipher – and then avoid – triggers which arouse outbursts. Dementia patients have limited ways of responding, and when the result is an aggressive flare-up, use distractions such as turning on the TV or serving a snack.
- If changes in medication are being considered, change only one drug at a time.
- Consider whether depression may be a factor. It often goes unrecognized and untreated when coupled with dementia.
- Pastoral support can be an important component. “Faith can help, but faith can also be questioned,” notes Rabbi James Michaels of the Hebrew Home. “Life review is important at this stage, but some memories may revive feelings of guilt or regret.”
- If a loved one refuses to have an aide, hire a “housekeeper” or a “gardener.”

Initiatives

The “stew of dementia defies neat categories and pie charts,” says Dr. Damien Doyle, vice president of medical affairs/medical director at Charles E. Smith Life Communities. There are always “shades of gray” and frequently “the coexistence of co-morbid conditions.”

“The reality is that the current treatments do very little,” acknowledges Dr. Doyle. “They can be of limited benefit, but the answer to our problems does not lie in the form of a pill, certainly not at this point.” Behavioral psychology may offer as many answers as medical treatments.

Perspectives

The daughter of a former Hebrew Home resident with dementia describes the futility of expecting conversational responses from her dad. “It was important to rephrase every question, avoiding unfair tests of recall that required correct answers. Instead of asking ‘Do you know who I am?’ I’d say ‘You know I’m your daughter Pearl, don’t you?’ This way he could nod yes when he was no longer able to speak. ‘You know that I love you, don’t you?’ And then I’d say, ‘You know that I know you love me, too.’ I was helping him express feelings that I knew he had but could no longer express.”

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www.smithlifecommunities.org

LifeTimes
• Dr. Albert also provided prevention advice around lifestyle changes including increased physical and mental activity and social engagement.
• At best, current drugs used to treat Alzheimer’s and other dementias offer a brief pause in the inevitable decline, said Dr. Albert.
• Depression is a common component of dementia but often goes unrecognized and untreated.
• Thirty to forty percent of caregivers die before the patient dies, so it is imperative that family caregivers reach out for advice and support.
• The government is working to address the issue of integrated care by 2019, according to Anthony Rodgers, deputy administrator for strategic planning, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. This includes aligned incentives between Medicare and Medicaid, a shifted focus on patient-centered care and raising health literacy.

Keynote speaker Barry Petersen, Emmy-award-winning CBS news correspondent and author of Jan’s Story: Love Lost to the Long Goodbye of Alzheimer’s, shared that individuals may develop physical changes associated with Alzheimer’s as much as 50 years before diagnosis. Peterson also spoke movingly about his own experiences caring for his wife Jan, who developed early-onset dementia. “If you met one caregiver who’s involved in this journey, then you’ve met one caregiver on a unique journey,” he concluded.

Attendees gave the symposium high ratings and praised the information conveyed, the variety of panelists and terrific speakers: “Excellent presentations. Focused on what we need as professionals and what we need as caregivers.” “Barry Petersen was phenomenal. He provided a powerful example of a caregiver’s personal experience, but this also shed to light issues that are common for many caregivers.”

Video highlights of presentations and photos from the event will be posted online at www.hebrew-home.org.

Your house can be more than a home

Owning a home can be a comfort — or a tremendous strain. The option of selling it can potentially leave you with a large tax burden. If this describes your situation, A New Twist: Use Your Home to Help the Hebrew Home, can be the perfect educational event for you.

Nationally-acclaimed speaker, Mark B. Weinberg, Esq. of Weinberg, Jacobs, & Tolani, will discuss how your home can simultaneously enhance your cash flow and help the residents of the Hebrew Home, all while you continue to use your property for the rest of your life. Mark Weinberg speaks and writes frequently about philanthropy and presents new ideas for charitable giving and estate tax issues for professionals and individuals alike.

Please join us at no charge on December 16, at 11 a.m. for an informative session in the Board Room of the Wasserman Residence. Following the program, a light lunch will be served. Dietary laws will be observed. Please reserve your seat by December 13 with Julia Pitkin-Shantz at 301.770.8342 or pitkin-shantz@hebrew-home.org.

Car simulator

Physical therapy specialist Sanjita Bandahri and lead therapist Laura Moody-Parker take a “ride” in the new car simulator in our physical therapy suite. Therapists use this important tool to teach patients how to get into and out of automobiles safely.
For 100 years, volunteers have been a vital part of the Home’s success. Visionary lay leaders, Men’s Club, Women’s Auxiliary, and Guardian Campaign Committee members, medical and dental professionals and countless others have contributed selflessly in unique and essential ways. From youngsters to retirees, our volunteers have ensured that the Home’s frail elderly residents always feel safe, cared for, comforted and embraced. This is but a tiny sampling; more volunteer photos are at www.hebrew-home.org

Spring Road
An American Red Cross volunteer helps with recreation activities.

1970s
Women’s Auxiliary volunteers ran a gift shop in the Wasserman lobby. Sarah Robins, Blanche Alloy, Elaine and David Gefter, Lillian Kessler.

1980s
Sarah Tunick established warm relationships with countless residents.

Bud Rothstein, DDS, began volunteering on Spring Road, providing dental care to residents in the clinic his father Robert J. Rothstein equipped at the Home. For 41 years, Rothstein Dental Laboratories produced free dental prostheses for residents. Today, Dr. Richard Meltzer and members of Alpha Omega Dental Fraternity continue to provide volunteer dental care.

Fay Burka founded the Guardian Campaign in 1958. For more than 50 years, dedicated campaign volunteers have raised critical funds for the Home. This year’s goal is over $1 million.

Hana Layson volunteered weekly as part of the Madeira school’s community service project.

Pets as volunteers? Shelly Weitzman and her dog represent the many engaging pet volunteers who have brought enjoyment to our residents over the years.

Nancy Fox, a junior volunteer, shares a light-hearted moment with Max Poms.

Ari Israel, today a rabbi, captured resident events with his movie camera.

Harry “Grandpa” Frey, a retired auto mechanic, repaired resident wheelchairs.

David Englander, a Holocaust survivor, led religious services and escorted residents to activities and physical therapy.

Dorothy Golomb, a beloved volunteer for over 33 years, did everything that needed doing; she never said no.
Ruth Pinkson was an exceptional volunteer for over 30 years; her husband Ray volunteered as the Home’s “official” photographer.

Adam Klein-Goldstein, who accompanied his mother on weekly visits, plays improvised duets at the piano with resident Henry Kalinsky.

Josefi Seltzer, today an attorney, was an active volunteer.

A teenager demonstrates a dance with elegant fans for residents.

Rachel Wiley, an outstanding student volunteer, created an art program for residents with Alzheimer’s. “They have no past, no future, but they have the moment, and that’s what I’m working with,” she said.

1990s
Claire Marwick, a 20-year volunteer, led a popular “Culture Hour” and made weekly deliveries of large-print books for visually-impaired residents.

Dorothea Lear organized imaginative activities for residents. She started as a volunteer, worked on staff for many years, and resumed volunteering upon retirement.

When residents with no families needed help managing their financial and medical paperwork, Julius Langsner came to their assistance.

Hedy Peyser, right, has guided volunteers for more than 30 years; many with the able assistance of Linda Cohen, left. Volunteer programs at the Home have won national awards.

2000s
Anne Naimark volunteered for over 37 years, more than 50,000 hours. She supervised a team of 30 volunteers who assisted with quarterly jewelry bazaars in our lobbies (earning over $100,000 for the Home) and initiated the successful “Bead Group,” training her successors who continue today.

Art Leibman and the “poker volunteers” have run a long-standing weekly poker game for residents.

Today
Twenty-five members of the Senase Group, a non-profit organization based in Silver Spring, reached out to residents.

Hedy Peyser, right, has guided volunteers for more than 30 years; many with the able assistance of Linda Cohen, left. Volunteer programs at the Home have won national awards.

Andy Siegel and Orly Farber continue Josh Stanton’s volunteer role on the award-winning “Lessons of a Lifetime: The Ethical Will project.” Hebrew Home resident, Herman Markowitz, center.
In Our Mailbox

Hi,

Both myself and my fiancé combined have had many wonderful and memorable connections with both the Hebrew Home and Revitz House over many years, with having loved ones given the best care in what we have felt to be one of the best eldercare facilities in the country.

My fiancé and I will be tying the knot on November 14, 2010, and we felt that at this stage in our lives, we do not need to get wedding gifts from friends and family – that the best gift that they could give us would be to make a donation to the Hebrew Home and Revitz House. We will be providing an address as an attachment to our wedding invitation. I would appreciate if you could provide me with an address that would facilitate their donations going to both. Thank you so much. . . .

invitations are going out soon!

Sincerely,
Gary Metz and fiancé Mary Lou Winkler

Evercare

Did you know that long-term care residents at the Hebrew Home who have Medicare A and B are eligible for a special Medicare program at no extra cost? The program is called Evercare, and more than 170 residents already take advantage of it. “This is such a powerful benefit,” says Beth Delucenay, VP, Planning and Development. “It keeps people healthier and offers money-saving features.” Evercare is a federally-funded Special Needs Medicare Program, designed for Medicare recipients who live in nursing homes. It provides enhanced benefits and focuses on preventing illnesses.

An Evercare nurse practitioner monitors residents’ health, watches for any changes, and treats at bedside as quickly as possible, providing an extra layer of care. Evercare also “turns on” the Part A skilled benefit without a three-day hospital stay, and includes benefits in medically necessary transportation, podiatry, dental, hearing and vision services. Learn more from Evercare representative John Doyle at 617.548.5483.

Fighting falls

For older adults, falls are one of the greatest causes of serious health problems. A new piece of equipment at Revitz House, the Biodex, can assess a person’s risk of falling, identify the factors that put the person at risk, and improve mobility and independence.

Since the incidence of falls and the severity of fall-related complications rise steadily after age 60, this is an important initiative. In the U.S., one in three people aged 65 years and older fall each year and rates are even higher for age 75+.
H²YP Youth program begins its sophomore year

The second season of “H²YP,” the Hebrew Home’s successful youth philanthropy board, will begin in January, and we are seeking exceptional high school students to participate. This program enables teens to play an active role as philanthropists and as decision-makers for grants to benefit campus residents. The group will meet monthly from January to May, 2011.

Each participant will make a contribution of $250 toward the grant pool. Their gifts are augmented by an endowment established by the Harold and Shirley Robinson Family Foundation, for whom the program will be named. Students act as a foundation board, reviewing proposals from the Hebrew Home and Revitz House, asking pertinent questions and voting on which programs to fund. During this time, the students gain a deeper knowledge of tzedakah and what it can accomplish, and learn more about our campus.

The Home’s program is fashioned after the highly successful program run by the Partnership for Jewish Life and Learning in Washington. Rabbi Sarah Meytin will continue as the facilitator. Please forward contact information for appropriate high school students to Gale Deitch at deitch@hebrew-home.org or 301.770.8409.

2010 Home Run fun for all

Steve Rindner and Jon Tomares co-chaired the 2010 Home Run. Over 500 runners competed on a sunny Sunday morning, October 3. Special congratulations to our eldest runners: Jacqueline and Aaron Epstein, 78 and 79 respectively, who completed the 5k (and won their age groups!) and Nianxiang Zie, 83, who finished the 10k. Kids enjoyed the fun run led by Sandy Liss. View more race photos and complete results at www.hebrew-home.org.
Save the dates

December 11
Centennial Gala
Comedian Richard Lewis, emcee
Washington Hilton Hotel
RSVP at 301.770.8329

December 16
Planned Giving Seminar
A New Twist: Use your home to help the Hebrew Home with Mark B. Weinberg, Esq.
11 a.m., Wasserman Residence
Light lunch served;
RSVP at 301.770.8342

December 31
Last chance to help residents this year
Donate to the 2010 Guardian Campaign at www.hebrew-home.org

Support the Hebrew Home through your gift to United Way check 8111 or for CFC check 49705.

Centennial Gala on December 11 caps a milestone year
We care for 1,000 residents. Each senior has a unique personal story and now, each needs some supportive service found on our campus. We would like to have each and every one of our elderly residents represented by a guest at the Centennial Gala. Join us on December 11 to represent a World War II vet, a Holocaust survivor, a doting grandmother, a retired teacher, author or tailor. Find out more at www.hebrew-home.org or contact Carolyn Lesesane at 301.770.8329. The gala, chaired by Helen and Leonard Abel, Barbara Landow Bernstein, Sandy and Stanley Bobb, Arlene and Steve Friedlander, Alma and Joseph Gildenhorn, Barbara and Allan Hurwitz, Vivian Pollock, and Phyllis and Ron West, will feature comedian Richard Lewis, co-star of the hit HBO series Curb Your Enthusiasm. Information is available at www.hebrew-home.org/gala. If you would like to attend please contact Carolyn Lesesane at 301.770.8329.

How to reach us...

- Hebrew Home 301.770.8475
  www.hebrew-home.org
- Hirsh Health Center 301.816.5004
- Landow House 301.816.5060
  www.landowhouse.org
- Revitz House 301.881.7400
  www.revitzhouse.org
- Ring House 301.816.5012
  www.ringhouse.org
- Volunteer Programs 301.770.8333

For more information about upcoming events, resident activities and family support groups, visit our web site at www.hebrew-home.org.