



LifeTimes

‘Voices of Ring House’ event builds residents’ ‘remarkable’ connections

Dana Adams Tate is “always amazed at how each person’s story can be so unique, yet so very universal.”

Finding the universal in the stories of Ring House residents was at the heart of the three-day Voices of Ring House festival. Through narrative, painting, photography and music, participants shared their connections to art and one another, strengthening the sense of community in the independent living residence.

The January festival featured a gallery of residents’ original paintings, photography and crafts, poetry readings, a skit and the premiere of a

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University of Baltimore Associate Professor Ian Power composed an original piece weaving together residents’ recorded voices with live and recorded music. The composition premiered at the festival’s finale.

At the heart of new technology: The resident

AI platforms that can diagnose disease. 3D printing for medical use. Immunotherapies that harness immune cells to combat autoimmune disease. A blood test for Alzheimer's.

Innovation is critical in today's rapidly evolving healthcare environment. When you add in a nationwide shortage of healthcare workers and the continued need for professional development, it becomes clear that remaining nimble and creative is essential for an organization to thrive and grow.

That understanding is particularly important for elder care communities like Charles E. Smith Life Communities (CESLC), which offers a range of services from independent living to long-term nursing care and memory support.

At CESLC, we are fortunate to have excellent leadership and caring associates prepared to serve in this dynamic landscape. We also benefit from the Jonathan S. and Patricia G. England CESLC Innovation Fund, established by Lenore England in memory of her parents, which energizes our search for new ways to provide care and meaningful life experiences for older adults.

As vice president of innovation and strategy, I collaborate across departments, employing research, and data to enhance the lives of the people we serve. My vision involves uniting advanced analytics with a person-centered approach to drive better clinical and organizational outcomes—while always respecting privacy, dignity and individual choice.

I believe we can transform how our residents experience wellness, autonomy and community. I see opportunities to pilot predictive analytics for preventive care, explore telehealth solutions and apply human-centered design to encourage innovation and resident engagement. At its core, my goal is to ensure cutting-edge tools support—not overshadow—genuine empathy and connection.

Bridging technology and health care is not new for me. My interdisciplinary background spans social work, public policy, data science ethics and medical informatics. I've served as a professor, director and consultant, overseeing multimillion-dollar portfolios and leading large grant-funded initiatives across academic, government and private sectors.



Kyle McGregor

I've learned sustainable progress comes from balancing rigorous data analysis with deep respect for the people we serve.

At the heart of these efforts is a single goal: to blend emerging technologies with compassion and understanding, consistently improving the quality of life for our residents and their families while shaping the future of care for older adults.

Kyle McGregor, MBA, PhD

Vice President of Innovation and Strategy

Honoring Joe Hoffman's legacy of leadership and philanthropy

Charles E. Smith Life Communities recently received a generous planned gift from longtime lay leader Joe Hoffman, who passed away on December 30, 2023. For more than 30 years, Hoffman dedicated himself to CESLC's mission, leaving an indelible mark on our community through his leadership and resolute commitment.



Joe Hoffman

Hoffman's service to CESLC was extraordinary. He chaired the Guardian Campaign Committee, the Resource Development Committee and the Board of Governors, guiding efforts that strengthened our ability to care for older adults with dignity and compassion. As a fundraiser, he was relentless and inspiring, raising millions of dollars to support the organization. But his impact extended beyond financial contributions—he motivated countless others to give their time and resources, fostering a culture of philanthropy that continues today.

Through his planned gift, Hoffman ensured that his dedication to CESLC would endure beyond his lifetime. His thoughtful estate gift earned him a place among Builders of the Future, CESLC's legacy giving society honoring those who include CESLC in their estate plans.

Joe Hoffman exemplified the Jewish value of *Tzedek*—acting with integrity, accountability and generosity of spirit. His leadership and vision mirror the legacy of our founder, Hymen Goldman, reinforcing the values that have guided CESLC since its inception. His kindness, dedication and unwavering support of our mission will be felt for years to come.

May his memory always be for a blessing.

Leave Your Legacy and Sustain Our Mission

A legacy gift to Charles E. Smith Life Communities allows you to fulfill your own charitable and financial planning goals, while ensuring that Charles E. Smith Life Communities' vital work of caring for our community's older adults continues far into the future.

There are many ways to show your support for CESLC. For more information, contact Director of Leadership Giving Jeanne Dimmick at 301-770-8328.

Ring House, Revitz House earn
2025 Customer Experience
Awards from Activated Insights



Ring House and Revitz House, the independent living residences at Charles E. Smith Life Communities, have each earned the 2025 Customer Experience Award from Activated Insights, a nationally recognized customer satisfaction firm.

This award highlights the residences’ commitment to delivering the highest standards of service – a CESLC core value.

Activated Insights’ Customer Experience Award recognizes organizations that consistently rank within the top 15 percent of care providers nationwide. It is based on a variety of metrics including employee feedback, client satisfaction and overall care quality.



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Residents, students are ‘Better Together’

At CESLC, Better Together is doing, well, even better.

The national initiative, which pairs middle school students with residents of senior living communities, has seen increased interest and participation at the local level between Revitz House residents and seventh- and eighth-graders at Melvin J. Berman Hebrew Academy in Rockville.



At a recent gathering, residents and students shared family heirlooms and made picture frames to hold a new memory.

During last school year's session, the first for the local academy, leaders were initially concerned about recruiting enough students, says Naomi Chinn, middle school guidance counselor. "But this school year," she says, "we had so many students who wanted to participate that I had to ask them to write an essay about why they wanted to be involved," to limit the number to that needed for the program.

Once a month, between 20 and 22 students visit Revitz House residents, creating wonderful bonds between the generations, says Cathy Tricquet, life and leisure manager. Students and residents share lunch, celebrate Jewish holidays, create art projects and discuss topics such as ancestry, places of origin and hakarat ha'tov, and gratitude.

A recent project, for example, involved creating a tree poster that emphasized roots as symbols for ancestors. Other activities involved making decorations for holidays such as Sukkot.

"I think the program's a wonderful idea," says resident Arleen Fisher. "We have two residents paired with two students. I was so surprised that one of the students wrote a beautiful letter about me and another resident being part of the program. That made me feel so good. The kids are so well-behaved and thoughtful of us."

The students agree. "I love Better Together because it's very inspiring. You get to meet new people and learn their stories," says one.

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‘Voices of Ring House’ ... *Continued from Page 1*

musical composition by University of Baltimore Associate Professor Ian Power, inspired by and incorporating residents’ recorded voices.

“In my 40-plus-year career in senior living, I have never seen anything like this,” says Bret Stine, Ring House executive director. “It was both remarkable and meaningful. Parts made me laugh, some nearly brought a tear to my eye.” The event’s ultimate success, he adds, stemmed from overall resident engagement in conceiving, developing and executing the event.

“Voices of Ring House was a year-long exploration of creativity that began when residents Gail Rottweiler and Lisa Kassoﬀ approached me and expressed interest in better knowing their neighbors,” says Lauren Latessa, founder and executive director of Iris Music Project, whose Iris Piano Trio serves as the ensemble-in-residence at Charles E. Smith Life Communities. “We decided that creativity and the arts were a wonderful way to strengthen connections ... and grow in our empathy and understanding of each other.”

The festival gave residents the opportunity “to know one another better, to see each person as a unique individual with a unique story to tell,” says Rottweiler, “and we expressed our creativity in more ways than we could have imagined.” Preparations included interviewing approximately 40 residents about their lives, resulting in the festival title, Voices of Ring House.

Tate, who has taught creative writing classes and assisted with related projects at CESLC since 2017, helped residents create detailed narratives that were shared during an intimate session aptly titled Sharing Our Stories. “Storytelling allows people to connect on a deeper level by sharing experiences and emotions. I feel blessed beyond measure each time someone trusts me with their feelings and memories.”

Resident Jeffrey Greenspan wrote one of the two skits. “As part of an earlier Ring House festival entitled Music is Magic, I composed and read a poem on the wonder of creating music,” he says. “Although that poem was a serious meditation on the nature of creativity, it occurred to me that the topic also is ripe for parody. Thus, I wrote a comedic skit with the premise that sometimes ideas can hit you right in the face and you don’t pick up on them at the moment, but they remain

“Regardless of culture, religion, age or gender, each of us has cracks, scars, wounds, joys, fears, hopes and dreams that are invisible to most, and **it is through sharing that we can celebrate, heal, grow, thrive and recover.**”

— Dana Adams Tate



Residents' original artwork, photography, crafts and other works were showcased at the festival's opening reception.

buried in your thoughts and much later they emerge as 'creativity' and you may not even remember from where they came."

To illustrate the concept, Greenspan's skit proposed a tavern in which famous composers with writer's block, portrayed by Ring House residents, gather for inspiration. "Lines of punning dialogue that could be used as inspiration for creating music fly by, but the composers are oblivious to their future importance," he says. The audience, however, catches on as Iris Music Project members play snippets from the composers' later masterpieces.

In addition, nine residents, led by Kassoff, decided to highlight stories of women from the Old Testament. "Each resident shared background and read a poem from the perspective of a different female figure from the Bible with musical accompaniment throughout," says Latessa. "I loved seeing them work on this topic and feel a sense of empowerment, not only in sharing their own stories but also in having the courage to ask who else may have been overlooked in history."

Voices of Ring House underscored Tate's observation that "people are more alike than different. Regardless of culture, religion, age or gender, each of us has cracks, scars, wounds, joys, fears, hopes and dreams that are invisible to most, and it is through sharing that we can celebrate, heal, grow, thrive and recover."

"I am so proud of the finished product," says Rottweiler, "and thrilled to share with my peers that our stories matter, and people are open to hearing them."

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Upcoming Events



APRIL 24

**11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m., Evelyn Auerbach
Social Hall at Ring House**

Sherlock Holmes and The Case of the Secret Formula: A Murder Mystery for the Sleuth in You

Join us for lunch and an afternoon of mystery and intrigue. Sherlock Holmes must solve a baffling murder, and lucky for him, you were on the scene when it happened! Help the famous detective crack the case before the day is over.

MAY 8

**8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.,
Woodmont Country Club
and Zoom**

Sara and Samuel J. Lessans Healthcare Symposium, Perspectives on Aging: Strategies for Clinicians and Caregivers



Join leading healthcare professionals to explore the factors that contribute to healthy aging. Sessions will focus on the importance of social connections, the negative impact of ageism and health policy.



MAY 15

**11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m., Yetta Krupsaw
and Samuel Paul Cohen Social Hall
at Smith-Kogod Residence**

Saving Claire and the Fight to Reduce Falls: Screening and Discussion

Join us for a special screening of "Saving Claire," a powerful documentary that

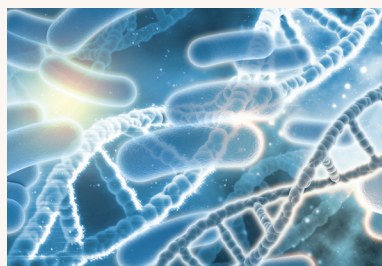
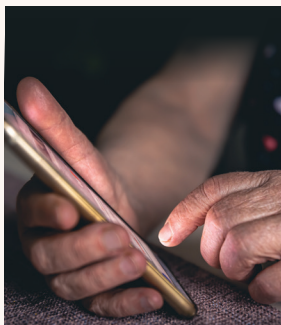
examines aging, resistance to change and behaviors that increase the risk of falls. Following the documentary, a panel of local experts will discuss the film.

JUNE 18

11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m., Yetta Krupsaw and Samuel Paul Cohen Social Hall at Smith-Kogod Residence and Zoom

Protecting Yourself from Fraud

Can you recognize potential financial scams? FBI field agent Sarah Lewis will provide expert insights on the latest scams and ways to protect yourself from financial abuse.



JUNE 24

1 - 2:30 p.m., Zoom

The Brain-Gut Connection: Unlocking Cognitive Health

Dr. Marsha Seidelman and Lynn Young, vice president of operations at Mansbach Health Tools, LLC.,

home of the BCAT®, will discuss the concept of cognition as a vital sign, the gut-brain connection and how improving your gut health can help improve your cognition.

For more information and to register for these events, please scan the QR code or visit smithlifecommunities.org/events.



‘Better Together’ ... *Continued from Page 5*

Another notes, “I like building a connection with the seniors.”

Although CESLC has participated in the program for more than five years, the partnership with Berman Hebrew Academy began in the 2023-24 school year. When school officials considered the program, CESLC quickly emerged as their ideal partner because of its nearby location and history of service, Chinn says. Program funding is coming from a four-year grant the academy received from a nationally respected anonymous foundation.

While some students from last school year have moved on to high school, a few participants returned this year and were paired with the same residents, Tricquet notes.

Chinn is pleased with the results, with students developing enhanced interpersonal skills as they take part in activities initially “outside their comfort zone,” she says. “They are maturing in those skills in ways even they may not realize.”



From Chaos to Clarity

Eliminating clutter – physical and emotional – was top of mind for the many attendees at this insightful virtual event held early in the new year. Alonso Zamora of the move management company White Glove Solution and Dr. Kim Bercovitz, a behavioral scientist, gerontologist, healthy life transition coach and owner of Byte-Size Wellness Academy, shared useful tips to help participants declutter their physical space and improve their mental well-being.

Annual Donor Appreciation Dinner

In early January, donors who contributed more than \$500 to CESLC in 2024 were riveted by master of deception Ben Seidman at the Canopy at Pike & Rose. This annual event is our opportunity to thank donors for their meaningful contributions to support compassionate care and life-enriching experiences for CESLC residents.



Building Connections in Dementia Caregiving

Caregiving advocate and community educator Carolyn Schick highlighted practical strategies from Jolene Brackey's book, "Creating Moments of Joy" for creating meaningful moments with loved ones facing cognitive decline. Stay tuned to CESLC's Events page for an in-person follow-up to this impactful online presentation later this year.



Passover

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