

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



THE SELFHELP HOME
A TRADITION OF CARING



DEAR SELFHELP FAMILY AND FRIENDS,

Looking back at 2021 at The Selfhelp Home is to look back over a year of extraordinary devotion and kindness. We are amazed at the continued outpouring from family members, friends, community members, our staff, and Board of Directors with generosity, flexibility, patience, and good humor. The number of Zoom meetings, face masks, temperatures, and COVID tests administered over the course of one year is staggering.

And yet, like we have since 1938, we persevered.

There are no words to express our deepest appreciation for the dedication provided by our frontline staff—from healthcare to dietary, facilities management to the front desk—as well as a whole host of hardworking individuals behind the scenes. The pandemic has taught us many things and continues to remind us that the Selfhelp community is filled with generosity every corner.

We are deeply grateful for the many organizations, foundations, corporations, families, and individuals who supported us with their extraordinary generosity over the past year. We are inspired by myriad of ways in which each of you have touched the lives of all of us at Selfhelp. It is with your help that, in the midst of year two of the pandemic, we were able to complete the renovation of our Social Hall in addition to dozens of resident rooms and apartments. In addition, with the kindness of two amazing individual contributors, we were able to launch the Friedmann Tuber Program for Cognitive Therapies, starting with the Music Therapy Program and enhanced dementia training for our staff.

While the past two years will remain in our collective memories for some time, we are excited about the future of Selfhelp. Plans for new strategic initiatives and continued renovation of shared and private spaces throughout the home are a priority as we look ahead to welcoming our community back in its full capacity.

With deepest gratitude and optimism for a wonderful year ahead,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Austin Hirsch".

Austin Hirsch
President of the Board



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sheila Bogen".

Sheila Bogen
Executive Director

THE SELFHELP HOME IS FIRST IN THE NATION TO ACHIEVE THE JOINT COMMISSION'S ASSISTED LIVING COMMUNITY ACCREDITATION

In September 2021, Selfhelp became the first community in the nation to achieve [The Joint Commission's](#) Assisted Living Community (ALC) Accreditation.

The new accreditation program helps raise the bar for seniors in ALCs across the nation. The program is in response to a shift in the Assisted Living environment that calls for more oversight and healthcare standards as seniors are staying in their homes longer and moving into ALCs with more healthcare needs than in the past.

"This accreditation highlights Selfhelp's continued commitment to providing the highest quality of service for all our residents throughout the continuum of care in our community," said Sheila Bogen, Executive Director of The Selfhelp Home. "Joint Commission Accreditation gives us the same opportunity to certify the quality and value we provide in Assisted Living that we've proven in our Skilled Nursing Unit and demonstrates our commitment to providing the best care to our residents."

The Joint Commission announced the ALC program in May 2021, the need for the program stems from a shift in the Assisted Living industry from a more hospitality-based environment to a more healthcare-focused setting that offers services for medication management, skilled nursing, and dementia care. This shift in services highlighted the need for national, consensus-based standards and accreditation.

"The Joint Commission commends The Selfhelp Home as the first to achieve our Assisted Living Community Accreditation—demonstrating a commitment to providing safe and quality care for its residents."

—Gina Zimmermann, Executive Director, Nursing Care Center and Assisted Living Community Services, The Joint Commission



The Accreditation standards were developed with consideration of scientific evidence and best practices, as well as state regulations and Life Safety Codes. The standards address the environment, staffing, emergency management, dementia care, medication management, provision of care and services, process improvement and more.

THE BERNARD HEEREY FAMILY FOUNDATION

Since 2007, The Bernard Heerey Family Foundation has provided generous funding that allows qualifying seniors to live at The Selfhelp Home. The Selfhelp Home is grateful to the Bernard Heerey Family Foundation for the generous contributions the Foundation has provided to 14 deserving Jewish people giving them the ability to make Selfhelp their home.

The Selfhelp Home Board President, Austin Hirsch, expressed his sincere gratitude for the resident scholarships received from the Bernard Heerey Family Foundation over the past 14 years.

"Having this program each year helps us in supporting our mission and allows us to expand our reach into the community to provide the best quality of life for seniors

in a culturally rich Jewish environment," said, Hirsch.

On behalf of The Selfhelp Home, Hirsch extended his sincere thanks to Nat Grey, Trustee of the Foundation:

"Nat's leadership and foresight highlight the importance of giving while providing life changing access to a vibrant Jewish life for many Chicago Jewish residents."

The grant provides financial assistance for residents with limited financial resources that otherwise would not qualify to live at Selfhelp.

SELFHELP LAUNCHES MUSIC THERAPY FOR RESIDENTS

New Music Therapy Pilot at Selfhelp is Funded by The Friedmann/Tuber Program for Cognitive Therapies

In 2021, The Selfhelp Home announced the start of a comprehensive music therapy program for its residents. The program is being funded under the Friedmann/Tuber Program for Cognitive Therapies and was founded by a generous donation of this two-year grant from the Philip M. Friedmann Family Charitable Trust, honoring Craig and Kay Tuber for their continual aid and support of the Selfhelp Home. The grant also supports an enhanced dementia training program for staff.

"Selfhelp has always been a special place," says Craig Tuber, longtime Board member and supporter of Selfhelp. Craig has seen how different therapies have changed the lives of residents living with dementia as well as their families.

"We wanted to give the residents something that directly impacts their lives and we felt this program fits perfectly with Selfhelp's mission."

In October, Selfhelp contracted with Rebecca Freiman and Mia Iliopoulos to provide a multidimensional, two-year program for residents of The Selfhelp Home suffering from various stages of memory loss. Both are master's level, board-certified music therapists from Greater Chicago Music Therapy Inc. and have strong backgrounds in using music therapy to help older adults across the continuum of care understand their unique challenges. Greater Chicago Music Therapy's goal at Selfhelp is to bring exceptional, strengths-based, creative music therapy services to our community.

"We are so excited to see people connecting and sharing about themselves with others, actively engaging, and finding joy during music therapy sessions," said Rebecca.

"The aim of music therapy in individuals with dementia is to address emotions, cognitive powers, thoughts, and memories. It aims to enrich and give freedom, stability, organization, and focus. Musical perception, musical emotion, and musical memory can survive long after other forms of memory and cognitive function have disappeared."



The Selfhelp Music Therapy Program includes both individual and group sessions with an initial focus dedicated to those dealing with cognitive impairments.

GERALD E. FRANKS CENTER FOR CULTURE & COMMUNITY

In 2021, The Selfhelp home successfully completed the renovation of the Social Hall and opened the Gerald E. Franks Center for Culture & Community.

In 2019, Selfhelp received a lead gift from the family of Selfhelp founder Gerry Franks to create a modernized social hall. The family of Franks, Debbie Lipsett and Dan and David Franks, envisioned a new social hall that included updated technology and a new look that extends from wall to wall and floor to ceiling.

Additional gifts from Jonathan and Jeremy Strauss (in memory of Helmut and Irma Strauss), The Werner and Phoebe Frank Family Foundation, and the Abt Family Foundation jumpstarted the campaign to outfit the space with state-of-the-art technology, including listening devices called "hearing loops" that aid and enhance the communal experience for the hearing-impaired.

Now lectures in our Social Hall sound crisp and clear for individuals with hearing loss. A hearing loop magnetically transfers the microphone or TV sound signal to hearing aids and cochlear implants that have an inexpensive "telecoil" receiver.

Other technology upgrades include a new sound system with Bluetooth capability and a large screen that comes down from the ceiling, allowing Selfhelp staff to enhance the experience for residents.

The Selfhelp Home gratefully acknowledges the following donors who supported the renovation of the Gerald E. Franks Center for Culture & Community:

- Abt Electronics
- Ethan and Elizabeth Bensinger
- Werner and Phoebe Frank
- Dan and Ronda Franks
- David Franks
- Austin Hirsch and Beth-Gomberg Hirsch
- Robert Hirsch
- Debbie and Barry Lipsett
- The Estate of Lois R. Mayer
- The Sephardic Foundation on Aging
- Dr. Myron Stern and Alan Stern, in memory of Mildred Stern
- Jeremy and Jonathan Strauss

▼ Installing the hearing loops system



MITZVAH MENSCHES

A meaningful mitzvah project can be the highlight of the special milestone of becoming a bar/bat mitzvah. One of most popular community-based intergenerational programs at Selfhelp is “Mitzvah Mensches.” The Mitzvah Mensch Program is a way for the residents of The Selfhelp Home to engage with bar/bat-mitzvah-aged young adults. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the program continued. The Selfhelp Home made some adjustments and utilized technology for a new generation of meaningful mitzvah projects. In fact, the pandemic gave the kids an opportunity to be creative as families had to find new ways to celebrate this milestone while facing disappointment in celebrations being cancelled.

Mitzvah Mensches came to be through our partnerships with nearby Chicago synagogues Anshe Emet and Temple Sholom. Families had been reaching out to us for years asking what their child could do with us for a project. We decided to formalize a program and welcome these young adults to our community.

Since the program launched, Selfhelp has welcomed many *mensches*! [Selfhelp's very first Mensch, Harry](#), is a member of [North Shore Congregation Israel](#) in nearby Glencoe, IL. When choosing Harry's project, a Zoom interview was scheduled to get to know him and learn about his passions and interests. When asked why he chose The Selfhelp Home, Harry had a number of reasons. First, his grandma was a social worker and worked in nursing homes throughout Chicago. Second, his great aunt's mom was a resident at Selfhelp many years ago. Harry connected with Selfhelp's mission, and it meant something special to him.

Harry discovered his passion for music in 3rd grade when he learned to play the piano. From there, his talents took off as he also learned to play the cello and worked on his singing skills. He is active in the school orchestra and choir. Once it was time to choose a mitzvah project, Harry knew he wanted to incorporate his love for music. Harry said, “I personally really love music and always found that it can help make me happy.”

This inspired his idea of creating a video

with clips of him and his friends from his theater group performing songs for residents of The Selfhelp Home to enjoy. The video includes a variety of songs and genres. Harry chose to sing “Miracle of Miracles” from *Fiddler on the Roof*. He had been working on the song with his voice teacher and felt like it was an upbeat, positive message to share. And it was...mid-pandemic, it was the perfect pick-me-up for residents. Harry also took it a step further and decided to write letters to the residents in addition to the video performances.

“I thought it would be meaningful for the residents to receive a letter during COVID-19 when they might be lonely and haven't gotten to see their families for awhile. I felt they would enjoy hearing from people from the ‘outside world’ and wanted them to feel loved.”

While Harry didn't have a traditional celebration due to COVID-19, his family found a creative, fun way to still celebrate his accomplishment.

The most meaningful part of the Mitzvah Mensches program is that The Selfhelp Home and the residents become a part of the *mensch's* Jewish journey. We always ask participants, what does it mean to you to become a bar/bat mitzvah?”

For Harry, “Bar Mitzvah means to be able to do more and help others. I can take more action with the community and charity work. I'm more independent and selfless.”

“Becoming B'nei Mitzvah means being responsible for others. For our people, it is as important to learn how to lead as a volunteer and care for others in our community as it is to lead our community in Tefillah (prayer) and Torah reading.”

– Rabbi Russo, Anshe Emet Synagogue



MEET STAFF MEMBER AARON FERRARAS, RN

Aaron has been part of The Selfhelp Home Team for three and half years now. You can find him in our [Health & Rehabilitation Center](#), tending to patients recovering from a hospital stay or surgery as they undergo physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy.

Aaron found Selfhelp through his mother, Eleanor Bulatao, RN. Eleanor worked at Selfhelp years ago and had also worked with Sheila Bogen, Executive Director of Selfhelp, for many years at other senior living communities.

Aaron was immediately impressed with Selfhelp and considers it a “hidden gem.” When asked what attracted Aaron to Selfhelp, he said, “Selfhelp had great patient success stories, patient outcomes, and incredible reviews. After talking to Sheila and getting a feel for the nursing team, I could see the compassion and dedication that the staff members have...it seemed like everyone was really committed to doing their part to help the patients, and I wanted to be part of that.”

What Aaron loves most is working closely with all the staff members to provide the best care possible for the patients. As the head Nurse on the Rehab Floor, Aaron describes his role as advocating for patients. “I want to make a difference for them in one of the most vulnerable times of these individuals’ lives,” he added.

The best part of Aaron’s day is interacting with the patients, whether that be giving them their medications, checking their vitals, or just talking with them.

“I enjoy learning what they’re struggling with and how I’m able to help. Just being a shoulder to lean on and knowing I’m making a difference.”

Aaron describes working at Selfhelp as “refreshing.” “I’ve seen and been inside other facilities and I can confidently say that Selfhelp is light years ahead of them as far as compassion and dedication. We really strive for that. And it speaks to our track record that we have patients that have discharged and have come back. They are recommending family members and friends, which says a lot.”

Aaron enjoys talking to patients about his hobbies, such as playing instruments. Aaron plays a variety of instruments, including playing drums for 22 years and the violin for 6 years. You will find him playing guitar for residents from time to time, giving them a musical welcome. “I try to connect with patients in non-medical ways to distract them from their current situation at hand. Coming from the hospital...it’s a lot. Between dealing with major surgeries and recent illness, it’s nice to get their minds off of it.”

Aaron does his best to maintain a positive atmosphere and believes that the environment is conducive to the patient’s overall healing process. “That’s our vibe!” he says. “As a nursing team, we do whatever we can to create a good energy for everyone. Not only is it helpful for the patients, but it also makes The Selfhelp Home a great place to work every day!”



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THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

Through annual giving, legacy gifts from wills and trusts, and special gifts for capital improvements, these generous contributions support the life of the Home in so many ways. This past year was challenging for all of us in so many ways. We are deeply appreciative for all the generosity and kindness provided by individuals and organizations, alike, which helped us maintain excellent care for our community.

The following reflects gifts from October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2021.

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