



At Home with *Selfhelp*

FALL 2022 UPDATE

The Selfhelp Home is a non-profit Jewish home with a tradition of caring for more than 70 years.

This Mitzvah Mensch is all about welcoming others

MEET OUR LATEST MITZVAH MENSCH, LIV HERSZAGE!

Liv Herszage's mitzvah project is all about fostering a welcoming environment for residents of The Selfhelp Home. Liv is 12 years old and in the middle of three sisters; she has two younger twin sisters and an older sister. A life-long member of Anshe Emet Synagogue, Liv attends Waters Elementary School in Chicago.

Outside of school, Liv is very creative and active! She participates in tumbling, gymnastics, dance, and theater. She recently played Cinderella in her school's performance of the musical, "Into the Woods." She's also on the yearbook staff and in Art Club at school.

Determined to make her mitzvah project meaningful, Liv decided to connect it to her Torah portion about the story of *Vayeira*. She explains, "Men disguised as angels tell Abraham and Sarah they've been walking for a long time, so Abraham and Sarah offer them a place to stay. Abraham's brother Lot also helped the angels out. So my mitzvah project is all about welcoming people in and being inviting!"

Once she decided on the theme to fit the Torah portion of her mitzvah project, it was time for Liv to figure out how she was going to carry this out. Liv and her mother, Brooke, were trying to come up with a plan when they saw a presentation about The Selfhelp Home's Mitzvah Mensch program at their synagogue. They quickly realized that not only did Selfhelp's program provide a wonderful place for her mitzvah project, but that her grandmother, Rebecca, had recently become a resident at the home—making us the perfect fit for her!



Mazel tov, Liv!

Liv and her mom decided to spend their Saturdays volunteering at Selfhelp. This project was extra special to their family as her sisters, parents, and her grandmother all volunteered with her. Liv has been instrumental in creating the welcoming environment she had hoped for. She has created and delivered Rosh Hashanah greeting cards, played all kinds of games with our residents, crafted sukkah decorations for Sukkot, and even helped give tours of the facility. Talk about a real mensch!

When asked about what becoming a Bat Mitzvah means to her, she said, "It means becoming a woman in the Jewish community. It's a really special moment—to be combined with family."

Liv's favorite part of volunteering at Selfhelp was meeting new people. She truly embodies the welcoming spirit. Selfhelp's residents have appreciated her visits and contributions to the home. Liv even learned how to play Rummikub and brought what she learned back home to teach her mother and her sisters.

Even prior to her mitzvah project, Liv helped out with the Selfhelp resident Summer Bash event on the rooftop back in July. She continues to make a positive impact by spreading the word about the Mitzvah Mensch program at Selfhelp; in fact, one of her friends has signed up! We can't thank her and her family enough for their service to our community.

Liv leaves us with a positive remark and a big smile: "I definitely recommend that other people my age do their mitzvah project at Selfhelp, it has been a really fun experience. My favorite part was getting to meet new people."

Liv's Bat Mitzvah is November 5, 2022, at Anshe Emet Synagogue.



Mitzvah Mensches received the Jewish Programming Award from American Jewish Aging Services (AJAS) and The LeadingAge Community Impact Honoring Excellence Award

In 2022, Selfhelp was recognized during the annual conference of American Jewish Aging Services (AJAS), a nonprofit group for Jewish senior living communities, with the Jewish programming award for Mitzvah Mensches. The award was given for innovative, creative programs specifically designed to enhance the spiritual well-being of the older adults they serve. At the conference, Efrat Dallal, Chief Marketing Officer, and former staff member Arielle Lewis, conducted a workshop on the program to help other communities replicate its success. Mitzvah Mensches was also recognized by Leading Age, a national organization representing non-profit senior living communities, with the 2022 Community Impact Award during their national conference.

mitzvah mensches

Since 2020, Mitzvah Mensches partners with nearby Chicago synagogues such as Anshe Emet and Temple Shalom and is open to any synagogue and Bar- and Bat Mitzvah-age volunteer.

We work with each Mensch to find a way to connect with our residents. Projects are individualized based on their interests, talents, or passions. Projects have included baking cookies for the community, putting on concerts, visiting with pets, teaching tech classes, making art projects, or raising money for Selfhelp's Holocaust survivor fund. During the COVID-19 pandemic, one Mensch led an iPad drive for the residents: The Mensch collected used iPads that allowed us to give every resident an iPad to stay in touch with family and participate in online activities during the pandemic.



This past spring, Mitzvah Mensch Sydney Tenenbaum created a pop-up store in the lobby with hand crafted beaded mask holders that she made for residents as a gift.

Several Mensches have continued to serve Selfhelp as volunteers even after the excitement of their mitzvah projects is over, which is one of the most rewarding results of the program.

The Mitzvah Mensches program is an intergenerational program that inspires other young adults to think about how they can have a positive impact on the Jewish community. At Selfhelp, the most meaningful part of the Mitzvah Mensch program is that the residents become a part of the Mensch's Jewish journey.

Music: the last thing we forget

MUSIC THERAPY PROGRAM

The Selfhelp Home implemented a comprehensive music therapy program for its residents in October 2021.

Last year, The Selfhelp Home proudly introduced our Comprehensive Music Therapy Program and Comprehensive Staff Dementia Training, supported by the vision of former board member Craig Tuber and underwritten by a generous grant from The Friedmann Family Foundation. This initial stage of the program is designed to bring music therapy to residents with dementia, as music has been shown to be highly effective in engaging people with dementia and improving their mood, interactions, and overall mental health.

Selfhelp has a strong history of music programming and continues to bring unique and high-quality music experiences to the residents for enrichment. Our Friedmann/Tuber Program for Cognitive Therapies is fast becoming one of the crown jewels in the Selfhelp cognitive and cultural programming. The program has been implemented under the leadership and supervision of our partners at Greater Chicago Music Therapy.

Musical memories are often preserved for individuals even when other memories begin to decline. The aim of music therapy in individuals with memory loss is to address emotions, cognitive powers, and thoughts and memories. It aims to enrich and give freedom, stability, organization, and focus. In fact, musical perception, musical emotion, and musical memory can survive long after other forms of memory and cognitive function have disappeared.

Selfhelp designed our Music Therapy Program so we can track its impact on our residents. Working with our partners from Greater Chicago Music Therapy and best practices in care for people with dementia, we established program objectives and documented participants' outcomes with this new intervention. Below we share our very exciting progress from the first year of the Music Therapy Program.

“Musical memories are often preserved for individuals even when other memories begin to decline.”



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

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The first phase of the Selfhelp Comprehensive Music Therapy Program was offered to select groups of long-term skilled care residents and independent and assisted living residents. Participants were identified by Selfhelp professional staff, using criteria and guidance provided by Greater Chicago Music Therapy professionals, in order to engage a limited number of residents with dementia in the initial pilot phase of the program. Originally designed to be administered in both group and individual settings, the Selfhelp Comprehensive Music Therapy Program was adjusted for individual implementation as well, due to restrictions presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. Interventions were tailored for each cohort's specific needs.

COHORT	WELLNESS OBJECTIVES	THERAPY OBJECTIVES
Long-term skilled nursing group	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-expression• Increase socialization/interaction/awareness of others• Active and meaningful participation• Cognitive and sensory stimulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve coping/adjustment/support• Improve mood• Normalization/group belonging• Self-expression• Increase interaction/socialization• Self-efficacy (choice/control)• Cognitive skills
Independent and assisted living group	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-expression• Increase socialization/interaction/awareness of others• Cognitive stimulation/cognitive skills• Active and meaningful participation• Improve mood	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve mood• Improve coping/support/quality of life• Normalization/group belonging• Self-expression• Increase interaction/socialization• Self-efficacy (choice/control)• Cognitive skills
One-on-one/individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Give opportunity for life review and self-expression (thoughts/feelings/preferences/choices)• Strengthen self-identity• Provide emotional support, comfort• Validate feelings/emotions and encouragement• Decrease anxiety/positive mood change as needed• Increase/maintain attention and stamina• Increase socialization/interaction• Maintain/improve communication/vocal quality	

PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

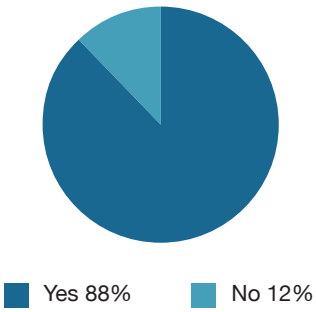
Over the first three quarters of the Friedmann/Tuber Program for Cognitive Therapies, Selfhelp convened 141 sessions, 68 full-length individual sessions, and 188 abbreviated individual sessions, with an average number of eight participants in each group.

QUARTER	GROUP	INDIVIDUAL FULL-LENGTH	INDIVIDUAL ABBREVIATED
One	47	23	63
Two	48	21	69
Three	46	24	56
TOTAL	141	68	188

PROGRAM IMPACT

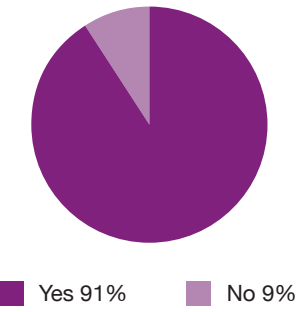
Preliminary program data was collected in each session for all individuals present at both individual and group sessions. Data collection with dementia patients is often subjective and is based on individual factors (e.g., disease progression, diagnosis, anecdotal evidence, etc.).

POSITIVE MOOD CHANGE



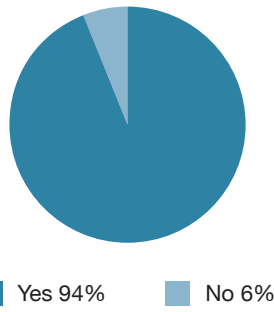
88%
of all participants had a positive mood shift from the beginning to end of the sessions

SELF-EXPRESSION



91%
of all participants engaged in self-expression via verbal or non-verbal response (e.g., musical and/or physical)

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION



94%
of all participants actively engaged and participated musically, verbally, or physically during the sessions

Resident Stories

RESIDENT #1: A resident was referred to Music Therapy due to increasing isolation, withdrawal, confusion, and an overall progression of her dementia. She presents with an extremely flat affect and usually gives one- to two-word answers that are vague and convey a lot of apathy. She spends most of her days in her room bed-bound. Often, she turns away physical and occupational therapy appointments, but she does allow the music therapist in every week. The resident's private care partner calls the resident's family members via FaceTime to have them join in during their individual sessions. One week, the resident's granddaughter had learned a song on the ukulele previously incorporated in Music Therapy, so she sang and played along with the music therapist, encouraging her grandmother to participate. Together with her two children and two grandchildren on the line, the resident danced and sang in her bed along to the music and her cheering family.

RESIDENT #2: A participant in the assisted and independent living therapy group had been engaging in the group interventions. Though she struggled with aphasia and dementia, she has been quite successful in the group sessions and used the music to interact non-verbally with others. Over the course of the quarter, she had a health status decline and was no longer able to benefit from the group. The music therapist has been able to continue seeing her for individual sessions, drawing upon her tendency to engage in rhythm and movement along with the music that remained strong despite her health setback. The focus of individual sessions was adapted, and the music therapist implemented music therapy interventions to calm the resident's agitation and to redirect her to do something else (e.g., getting out of bed) while engaging and interacting as much as possible. The resident's strong connection to rhythm and natural inclination to participate was strong during the group and remained strong in individual sessions despite her cognitive decline.

RESIDENT #3: On a beautiful, sunny day, the music therapist brought a resident to the rooftop garden to have her individual music therapy session.

They sat in the shade while discussing the resident's favorite things to do in a Chicago summer. They sang songs like “Oh, What a Beautiful Morning,” “Blue Skies,” “You Are My Sunshine,” and “Chicago.” This resident's baseline is usually very lethargic and mildly anxious about various things. At this session, the resident remained awake for the duration of the session and fully engaged in the music and conversation. The resident thanked the music therapist for taking her outside and for spending the time together. This experience provided the resident opportunities to meaningfully connect, engage, give autonomy, create a positive mood change, and enhance her quality of life.

NEXT STEPS: EXPANDING THE PROGRAM

The first three pilot quarters of the Friedmann/Tuber Program for Cognitive Therapies have been very successful, based on participation, impact, and anecdotal metrics. Selfhelp plans to expand the reach of the program to include more participants.

We have begun to market the impact of our Music Therapy program through our website, newsletters, and community outreach, as the program differentiates and distinguishes us from other senior communities and is a leading-edge solution for dementia care.

In addition to implementing the program with dementia patients, we are expanding our efforts with patients with early dementia, as Music Therapy has proven to be a powerful intervention in delaying the onset of dementia and other cognitive challenges.

The Friedmann/Tuber Program for Cognitive Therapies has implications far beyond The Selfhelp Home, as the impacts our residents have enjoyed can be experienced in any facility that cares for dementia and early dementia patients. Our program can be shared with many other care organizations and impact many, many more lives.

For more information about our Music Therapy Program, please contact Beth Ida Stern at bistern@selfhelphome.org.

The view from above:

SELFHELP’S ROOFTOP RENOVATION IS THE TOPS!



WHAT MAKES THE SELFHELP HOME SO SPECIAL?

Our history, of course. We were founded for Holocaust survivors who adopted Chicago as their home. And our amazing residents and their families in our independent and assisted living, rehab, and long-term care units. And, of course, there's our world-class staff who have earned all those perfect ratings.

BUT HAVE YOU VISITED OUR ROOF DECK?

From the ninth floor of our historic building on Argyle Street, just blocks from Lake Michigan, you can relish 360-degree vistas of our gorgeous city and her incredible lakefront, skyline, and neighborhoods. This unique floor, with both indoor and outdoor spaces from which to appreciate the views, offers areas for residents and their guests to enjoy the performing arts, social gatherings, and gardening. We've done the Hora, the Hula and Klezmer, gathered safely throughout the warmer months of the pandemic, and grown flowers and herbs of all kinds.

CALL IT ROOF THERAPY!

As we all gracefully AGE together (people AND buildings!), Selfhelp is renovating our roof deck! Our campaign began last spring with so many of you generously supporting our efforts, and we're breaking ground right now! Our project includes upgrading the roof's structure and beautifying its surroundings so we can enjoy it for decades to come. We're adding new furniture and planters and a windscreen to our outdoor deck, with the goal of enjoying the updated space starting in the summer of 2023. We have contracted with LifeStudio for the Architecture and Design, a Chicago-based firm.

Join our campaign today!

What can you do to help besides counting the minutes until you can visit our roof deck next summer? Own a piece of the new roof! Become a Selfhelp partner by making your tax-deductible donation today.

As a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, The Selfhelp Home relies on the generosity of people like you to help us thrive into our second century.

We've included an envelope for you to use, just make sure to add a stamp!

Thank you so much

to our cherished Spring Appeal donors whose gifts helped us initiate the rooftop renovation

Won't you please join these generous visionaries to raise the roof at Selfhelp?

GIVING LEVELS			
Seed	\$18	Sprout	\$250
Root	\$50	Bloom	\$500
Bulb	\$100	Flower	\$1,000
Stem	\$180	Garden	\$2,500

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Introducing the Gerald E. Franks Center for Culture and Community!

As we embark on the renovation of our illustrious roof deck, The Selfhelp Home celebrates the completion of renovations to our Social Hall, now known as the Gerald E. Franks Center for Culture and Community. For those of you familiar with our home, this is the large gathering space to the left of the lobby as you enter the home on Argyle Street.

The Gerald E. Franks Center for Culture and Community will be host to more than 1,000 programs every year, including concerts, lectures, holiday and Shabbat services, and so much more. The Gerald E. Franks Center for Culture and Community incorporates state-of-the-art assistive technology, called hearing loops, an assistive listening technology for individuals with reduced ranges of hearing, as well as other leading-edge developments in audio and video technology. In addition, the Gerald E. Franks Center for Culture and Community has a new modern design, with soothing neutral colors in our new carpet, wall treatments, and donor sign.

We could not have completed this amazing renovation without the generous support of our donors, especially the family of Gerry Franks, a founder and former board member of The Selfhelp Home. The family includes Gerald's daughter, Debbie Lipsett, and his sons, Daniel and David. A full list of donors appears below. Thank you to all whose vision and partnerships enabled us to perform these important updates. We could not be more grateful for your support.

Gerry Franks dedicated his life to The Selfhelp Home. Fleeing Germany after Kristallnacht and settling in Chicago, 18-year-old Gerry became president of The Selfhelp Youth Group and was a frequent presence at the first home on Drexel Boulevard. He was smart, cultured, cosmopolitan, a patron of the arts. As a trustee of The Selfhelp Home for 70 years, he guided its growth and expansion. The Social Hall, the hub of the cultural arts at The Selfhelp Home, was a favorite place to relax and listen to music. When Gerry passed away in 2017, his family approached us to discuss a way to honor his legacy by updating and upgrading this space that meant so much to him.

"Gerry Franks was the very embodiment of the history, mission, and values of The Selfhelp Home."

"Gerry Franks was the very embodiment of the history, mission, and values of The Selfhelp Home," said Selfhelp Chairman Austin Hirsch. "Gerry was a true mentor of mine. When important decisions need to be made for Selfhelp, I often reflect, 'What would Gerry have done?' I am so proud that Gerry's family supported the renovation of the Social Hall. The Gerald E. Franks Center for Culture and Community will be a continuing benefit for our residents as our venue for music and educational events where residents and family members join together. On behalf of the entire Selfhelp community, I want to express our thanks to the Franks family for their continuing support of the Selfhelp Home."

We look forward to welcoming all of you to the Gerald E. Franks Center for Culture and Community. We will keep you posted as COVID restrictions continue to ease, and we can once again gather to celebrate our community, our history, and our impact on so many lives.

SOCIAL HALL DONORS

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Resident Esther Katz

A LIFELONG LEARNER, MAKES THE MOST OF HER TIME AT SELFHELP

SELFHELP RESIDENT ESTHER KATZ

was born and raised in New York City. Esther's family tree is certainly plentiful! "I have seven grandchildren, five great-grandchildren, and I'm expecting another grandchild!" Keeping up with everyone can be a challenge, but Esther enjoys staying in touch over FaceTime on her iPad.

Esther served as a fourth grade teacher for over 25 years while her husband, Joseph, maintained a career as a psychologist.

In 2016, household chores like cooking and cleaning became too much for her and Joseph to manage. Once they could no longer take care of their home and Joseph's health began to deteriorate, they knew it was time for them to find a place that could take care of them in their golden years. Esther and Joseph decided to relocate from their lifelong home in New York City to Chicago where one of their daughters lives. That's when the couple found the place they'd call home for their remaining years, The Selfhelp Home.

SELFHELP IS IN THE FAMILY!

Esther's family was already very familiar with Selfhelp because her son-in-law Danny's beloved parents, Marianne and Enrique Wallenberg, both lived at The Selfhelp Home in 2002 for several years. As a matter of fact, you can find Enrique's original artwork displayed on the wall just behind the Gerald E. Franks Center for Culture and Community, formerly known as our Social Hall.

"It was important to us to find a community with Jewish culture and activities," Esther shared. The couple made a new home together at Selfhelp for six years, until Joseph passed away in 2022. Now Esther lives in the apartment on her own, but she maintains a positive attitude and continues to stay active. She says, "It's the last part of your life, but it's a good part of your life."

NEVER A DULL MOMENT

Esther's time at The Selfhelp Home has been excellent. Here's what she had to say about her experience the past few years: "It's wonderful! This is a wonderful place for this stage of life. They think of everything. They have great activities. When you come here you can truly be part of a community, and that is so important."

"This is a wonderful place for this stage of life."

Esther keeps herself active by learning new things every day. She participates in many activities around the home, both virtual and in-person. She especially enjoys the Sunday concerts, TED Talks, Israeli News, Jewish Studies, and the fascinating virtual tours. She reminisces about a recent outing she enjoyed, "They took us to see the Chicago Symphony. We had our own section. It was just marvelous!"

Facts about Esther

- Esther was born "Estelle" but prefers to be called "Esther."
- Esther and Joe met at Yeshiva in Brooklyn, New York.
- Esther's first language is Yiddish.
- Esther and Joe traveled the world every summer and visited almost every country in Europe.

ESTHER'S ROAD TO RECOVERY AT SELFHELP

Over a year ago, Esther fractured her hip in a fall and lost mobility. She wasn't able to do necessary tasks like showering or using the washroom without assistance, but the staff at Selfhelp was by her side every step of the way during her recovery.

Through diligent, daily physical therapy at Selfhelp's Health and Rehabilitation Center, she was able to make a full recovery. Now a year later, she is back to being fully self-sufficient and can use her walker to get anywhere she pleases at Selfhelp!

Esther specifically wanted to show her appreciation for Selfhelp staff member Rey Gonzalez, Assistant Activity Director, for his hospitality and kindness. "He's fantastic. Every problem I've had, he's been here to help me. He has been great!"

Esther tries to attend as many activities as she can, maintaining an open mind to try new things to satisfy her lifelong hunger for learning. Rey taught Esther how to use her iPad and get on Zoom to connect with her family. She especially likes attending Zoom lectures. She says, "They offer all these activities, they have something for everyone. It's like a kibbutz. You can be busy from morning until night if you choose!"

A LIFELONG LEARNER

Esther is an avid reader and is eager to continue learning. Esther's love for reading and keeping up with current events allows her to maintain meaningful connections with her grandchildren, as she sends them books in the mail and they discuss it together. Determined to engage in more than small-talk, she jokes, "I have to keep up with the times because I would like to say more to my family than 'How are you' and 'How's the weather?'"



Esther and her late husband Joe Katz at Selfhelp enjoying the sun-filled corridor outside their apartment.

Esther started learning about philosophy so she could have thoughtful discussions with one of her grandsons about what he's learning at college. They frequently have discussions on Plato, Socrates, and other classical philosophers. Her favorite spot to read every afternoon is on the Selfhelp rooftop garden because of the beautiful view and the peacefulness. It's there that Esther enjoys planting tomatoes and taking peaceful naps when the weather is perfect. Esther just turned 96 years old and still has the passion to learn.

"How can you not say it's good here? I'm spoiled! They keep the place very clean for you, and they even make your bed. They cook all my meals, and the food here is delicious! They're here to help you with anything you need. You can count on everyone here."

Selfhelp welcomes our 23rd German intern, Julia Boecker!

Since 1998, The Selfhelp Home has partnered with the Berlin-based Action Reconciliation Service for Peace (ARSP), which works to bridge the gap between the lost older Jewish German generation and the youth in Germany, while building trusting relationships and healing painful, historic wounds.

For more than 50 years, ARSP has been committed to fighting racism, discrimination, and social exclusion through reconciliation and peace. ARSP creates global partnerships around the world to offer long-term international peace service programs. Every year, about 180 young adults between 19 and 25 years old participate around the world in 13 countries on a variety of educational, historical, political, and social projects. As the ARSP volunteers engage in understanding the history and other cultures, they strive passionately to make a positive contribution toward a more peaceful, just, and tolerant world.

Each year, Selfhelp is host to a young German intern who becomes an integral part of the Selfhelp family, helping residents and warming hearts. Selfhelp did not have an intern in 2021 due to the pandemic.

We recently welcomed Ms. Julia Boecker, our 23rd intern to join The Selfhelp Home family through our partnership with ARSP. Julia arrived from Dortmund, Germany, in September and will be spending a year at Selfhelp to complete her volunteer peace service, or gap year internship. As an intern, Julia is totally immersed in our community and lives at Selfhelp in a studio apartment while assisting with resident activities. Living at Selfhelp also affords her the opportunity to learn more about the Jewish culture and traditions.

Julia learned about the program from her neighbor who served in Czechoslovakia with ARSP. When Julia initially visited the ARSP website, she was immediately inspired by its goals and values, especially the focus on history and promoting peace between different nations, which she felt was really important.

"Looking at German history, it is necessary to take responsibility for the events that happened in World War II, because even though our generation is not actively guilty anymore, it is still an important factor to create awareness and maybe achieve to show that a nation can learn out of huge mistakes and can spread love instead of hate," says Julia. "I was thrilled by the idea of doing something important and maybe even making people's lives a little easier."

Julia knew she would enjoy being at Selfhelp after she completed an internship at a nursing home in St.-Elisabeth-Altenpflege in Dortmund. "Before applying to ARSP, I did an internship for two weeks at my local nursing home where I helped organize free time activities like singing, cooking, brain training, and many other things, and visited the residents in their rooms."

Julia attends the University of Siegen and is in her fourth semester, majoring in psychology.

Julia speaks German, English, Spanish, and Latin, and she enjoys music. She has played the piano for ten years, learned the guitar for four years, and also enjoys reading, drawing, and swimming.

Julia continues, "Doing a gap year in the United States has been my dream for ages. I started to love the English language when I entered school and I remember learning every single sentence of the dialogues in our English workbook by heart. I had the opportunity to visit New York City in 2017, and it was one of the most amazing experiences of my life."

We welcome Julia to the Selfhelp family and are so inspired by and grateful for the work of ARSP.



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The Selfhelp Home has earned the Joint Commission Seal of Approval for Post-Acute Care and Nursing Care and is the first in the nation to be accredited for Assisted Living.

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The Selfhelp Home is a not-for-profit Jewish retirement community with a tradition of caring for more than 70 years.

VISIT THE SELFHELP HOME ONLINE



For more information about Selfhelp or our special events, please visit our website by taking a photo of the QR code with your phone or go to SelfhelpHome.org.

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Board members in the spotlight: Jim Gimpel & Jo Reizner

Q: What is your name and position/responsibility on the Selfhelp Board?

JIM: My name is Jim Gimpel, and I've been on the Board since April 2020. I was recently asked to chair the Facilities Committee.

JO: I'm Jo Reizner and have been on the Selfhelp Board since April 2020. I am currently a member of the Executive Committee.

Q: Where do you live and with whom?

We have lived in Hyde Park, on the south side of Chicago, for 36 years, raised our two daughters here, and have been long-time members of Congregation Rodfei Zedek. We're currently empty nesters, with the exception of our 13-year-old "puppy," Maggie.

Q: Where did you grow up and attend high school and college?

JIM: I grew up in Laurelton, New York, until I was 13 years old, where I attended the Yeshivah of Central Queens. When we moved to the Midwest, we settled in Aurora, Illinois, and lived one block from the only synagogue in that city so that my grandmother, who was Orthodox and lived with us, could walk to shul every Shabbat.

After high school, I attended the University of Illinois in Champaign and majored in architecture. My Master's degree had a focus on structural engineering.

JO: I am a life-long Chicagoan, born in South Shore, raised in Highland Park, and now living in Hyde Park. I graduated from Highland Park High School and attended Northwestern University and the University of Illinois, graduating with a degree in Economics. I also attended the University of Chicago Executive MBA program but was interrupted in that endeavor by the birth of our first child, Hillary. It turns out that motherhood has provided me with a much more interesting and rewarding education!

Q: Do/did you work outside your home? If so, what do/did you do for a living?

JIM: I started working at a small architectural firm in Aurora where I was exposed to all aspects of the profession, literally starting at the ground. I learned how to survey and draw the contours of an empty field. I used my skills to design many different types of facilities, prepared engineering documents, built presentation models, and had a lot of customer-facing responsibilities. I was a victim of the economic downturn in 1979-1980 and found myself shifting professions to a related field in real-estate property management. I was responsible for managing many different types of properties including some high rises along Lake Shore Drive and learned about the maintenance and upkeep of many older buildings.

Subsequently, I became the University Architect at the University of Chicago and later accepted the position of Associate Vice Chancellor for Capital Programs at the University of Illinois. Later, I became Director and Executive Architect of the South Campus Expansion.

My final career move was to accept the position as the Director of Facility Development for the Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago, and I retired with great pride and satisfaction at the completion of that once-in-a-lifetime project.

JO: I began my career in a medium-sized property management firm in Evanston, where I worked for eight years. The following 23 years, I was the vice-president for Real Estate Operations (REO) at the University of Chicago. REO was a microcosm of the real estate industry, involved in all aspects of the field, including buying, selling, developing, financing, and managing of residential, commercial, and office buildings. A non-academic auxiliary of the University of Chicago, REO

was, in essence, a \$35M company with over 75 employees. The business oversaw about \$250M of real estate assets, consisting of 2,000 residential units in over 100 buildings, and several hundred thousand square feet of retail, commercial, and office space.

Q: What are five words that best describe you?

JIM: Detailed, dedicated, honest, kind-hearted, husband/father/grandfather

JO: Funny, grandmother/mother/wife, music-loving, extroverted introvert, reliably kind, and caring

Q: What is your connection to Selfhelp? When did you first learn about us?

JIM: My father, Max Gimpel, z"l, lived in Sun City Arizona with my mother, Alice, z"l. At 95, a few years after my mother's passing, we helped Max move back to Chicago and came straight to The Selfhelp Home. We learned about Selfhelp earlier from Congregation Rodfei Zedek congregants who had moved there and from friends who had volunteered to do Friday Night Services. After Dad moved in, I, too, volunteered to do Kabbalat Shabbat Services, which unfortunately ended when COVID started.

JO: I remember Selfhelp from ages ago when we brought our children's Hebrew School class to the building to sing Chanukah songs to the residents. We became re-acquainted with Selfhelp when Dad (Jim's father, Max) moved here from Arizona upon the strong recommendation of two dear friends/fellow congregants whose mothers were living here.

Q: What is your favorite memory of Selfhelp?

JIM: I don't have a single memory but a stream of visions of my father and the added years to his life that Selfhelp gave him and us.

JO: My favorite memories are of how happy Dad was living here, how well-cared for he always was, and the comfort we had in knowing that Dad was "seen" and treated with respect.

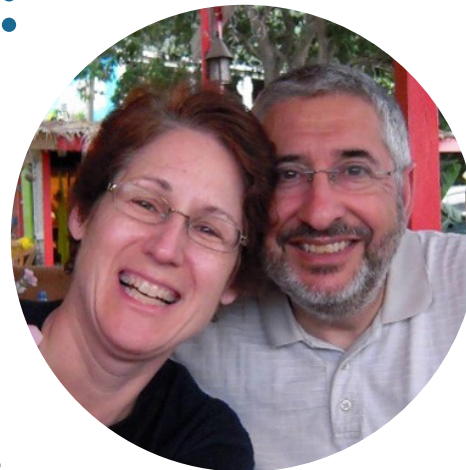
Q: How do you describe Selfhelp when you tell people about the organization?

JIM: I describe Selfhelp as *haimish*, but it goes far deeper than just a cozy, friendly, and warm environment. The care and treatment of the residents with the utmost respect is only matched by the warmth and friendliness of the staff toward the residents. They truly enjoy their work, and it shows in the treatment of the residents.

JO: I always start off by telling people what Jim stated above—that the care and overall environment at Selfhelp undoubtedly gave us the gift of many more years with Dad than we would otherwise have had. Selfhelp is an organization of people caring for people, not staff caring for residents, and it shows.

Q: Is there anything else you'd like to share?

JIM & JO: Selfhelp is an anomaly, in the very best way, among other institutions offering a similar set of services. The accolades and annual five-star ratings earned by Selfhelp that continuously set it apart from others in the field are all very well deserved and reflect the hard work and dedication of the wonderful staff. We were very grateful to be the beneficiaries of this wonderful organization.



THE SELFHELP HOME

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