



THE SELFHELP HOME
A TRADITION OF CARING

SUMMER 2024

AT HOME WITH SELFHELP

THE SELFHELP HOME IS A NON-PROFIT JEWISH HOME WITH A TRADITION OF CARING FOR MORE THAN 80 YEARS.

Tree of Life

Mosaic Fosters Creativity and Community among Residents

Mosaic project at **The Selfhelp Home** demonstrates the power of **art** to bring people together, foster **creativity**, and enhance a sense of **community**

If you drive past Selfhelp, you may notice a new stunning “**Tree of Life**” mosaic in front of the building created by our **residents** and **Maddy Engelfried**, our Art Therapy Intern from the **School of the Art Institute of Chicago**. Maddy led residents in creating this beautiful mosaic, now displayed outside the building.

As she puts it, art therapy is about art *in* therapy and art as therapy. “I believe every person deserves the chance to be creative, even if they have no art experience at all,” said Maddy.

“Since I began work on this project, I see mosaics everywhere – This project was a chance to learn a new art form, which naturally involves many mistakes, even with some degree of expert guidance.”

Maddy embarked on this special project to foster creativity and community among Selfhelp’s residents. This initiative centered on creating a mosaic of the Tree of Life, a significant Jewish symbol that resonates universally, making it a meaningful and inclusive choice for all residents and staff.

The mosaic project began with several preliminary sessions where residents, staff, and volunteers crafted smaller-scale mosaics to familiarize themselves with the materials. These sessions were instrumental in building confidence and enthusiasm among participants, setting the stage for the main project.

The design of the Tree of Life was developed with input from the residents from the entire

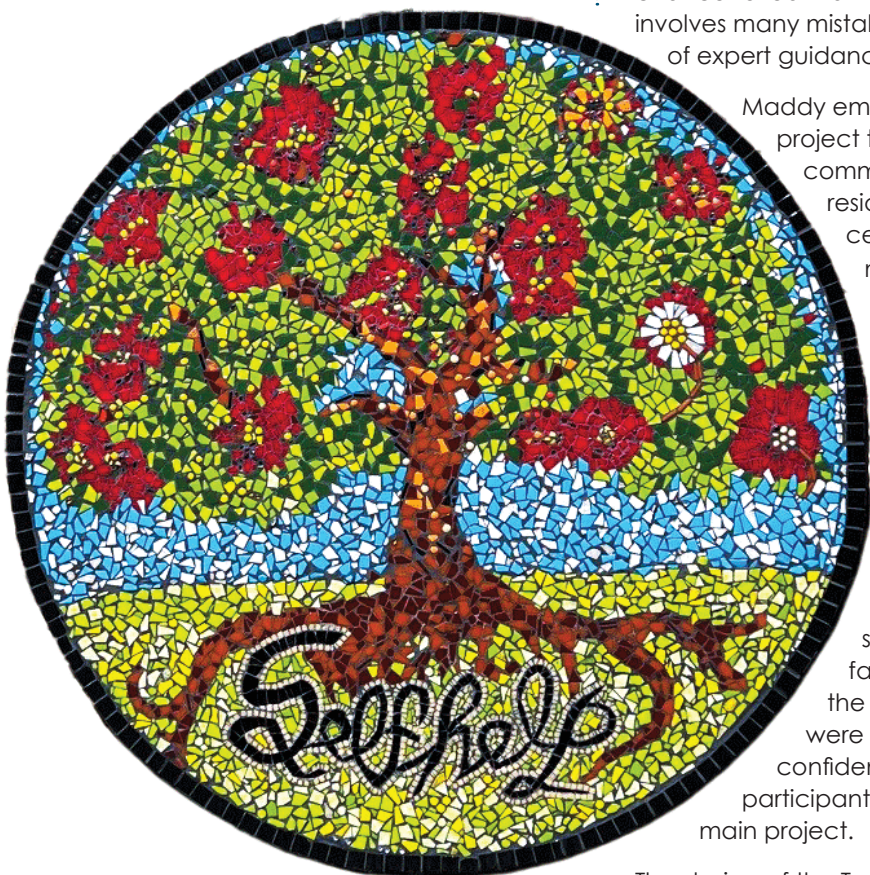
building, ensuring that everyone felt a sense of ownership and connection to the artwork.

Each week, the collaborative mosaic group gathered to place tiles on contact paper, which would later be transferred to a wedi board backing, which is a solid, waterproof surface, for the final assembly.

Maddy cleverly designed the mosaic in several pieces, enabling residents with mobility issues to participate from their rooms. This approach ensured that everyone, regardless of physical ability or cognitive function, could contribute to the project.

Throughout the project, residents enjoyed numerous benefits. Working on a long-term, collaborative art piece provided opportunities for **social interaction, fostering new friendships, and strengthening existing ones**. The sessions were filled with lively conversations and often ended with participants surprised at how quickly the time had passed.

This mosaic will serve as a welcoming symbol for new residents. A special thank you to **Etty Hasak** from the **Chicago Mosaic School** for the expert advice, and additional thanks to the residents for the collaborative spirit of all involved.



Photo, from left to right:
Sara Kurganoff, Fela Dogadko, Maddy Engelfried, Rhoda Lev, Joan Sharpe

Selfhelp Speakeasy Sunday Repeals Prohibition!



Photos

On Sunday, June 2, 2024, almost 200 guests, caregivers, and staff came together at the **Chicago History Museum** to celebrate The Selfhelp Home. The gathering raised **more than \$80,000** for Selfhelp's programs and facility!

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, Selfhelp is so grateful to our sponsors, residents, families, and donors for supporting our wonderful senior living community.

Guests, who included **48th Ward Alderwoman Leni Manaa-Hoppenworth**, enjoyed welcome remarks from **Selfhelp President Austin Hirsch**, a presentation on Selfhelp programming from resident **Phyllis Toback** (an event co-chair

and major donor to the Home) and **Chief Development Officer Beth Ida Stern**, as well as a **Roaring Twenties** concert by **The Elaine Dame Trio**.

Selfhelp Speakeasy Sunday was a **ROARING** success. We look forward to next June's gala gathering!

If you've not already made a donation to Selfhelp, please consider doing so on our website:

www.SelfhelpHome.org/Donate

Top left: The Elaine Dame Trio (Elaine Dame, Joe Policastro, Chris White)

Top middle: Selfhelp President Austin Hirsch

Top right: Selfhelp resident Bob Cohen

Middle left: Selfhelp Board member Michael Perlstein and Paula Perlstein

Middle middle: Gala Co-Chair and Selfhelp resident Phyllis Toback and Chief Development Officer Beth Ida Stern

Middle right: Elaine Dame and Selfhelp resident Marie Leaner

Bottom left: Selfhelp staffers Crystal Lister and Jessica Dekreon visit Selfhelp resident Donald Davidson

Bottom middle: Shelly Levine, Beth Gomberg Hirsch, Selfhelp Board member Jack Bierig, 48th Ward Alderwoman Leni Manaa-Hoppenworth, Nicole Granacki

Bottom right: Selfhelp residents Sandra Perlow and Ruth Markus

Photo credit:

Lynn Renee Photography | www.LynnReneePhoto.com

Tribute Donations *Support Growth* at Selfhelp!

30%

of Selfhelp donations are made
in honor or memory of a loved one

Selfhelp's average
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19

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It's easy to make a Tribute Gift!

Online: www.selfhelphome.org/donate

Phone: Beth Ida Stern 773.595.5882

Email: bistern@selfhelphome.org

What better way to honor or memorialize someone you love than by making a donation to The Selfhelp Home?

In the first half of 2024, Selfhelp received more than 430 individual donations. Of these, one third were made to mark a yartzheit, birthday, anniversary, or other occasion.

With every "tribute" donation that Selfhelp receives, we will notify the honoree and/or family and loved ones of the memorial gift. The amount of the donation is not shared, but the donor and any messages are shared with the honoree so they know about the gift, and any sentiments that accompanied it.

Looking for a great gift idea for your big birthday or other occasion? Consider directing gifts to Selfhelp! We promise to put the funds to great use AND help you celebrate, memorialize, or otherwise mark the occasion.

Music Therapy Program Earns Two Awards

Recognized by the Illinois Association of Music Therapy and The Association for Jewish Aging Services (AJAS)



The Selfhelp Home kicked off 2024 earning two awards for its collaborative and inclusive music therapy program, **The Friedmann/Tuber Program for Cognitive Therapies**.

Selfhelp was the 2024 recipient of the **Illinois Association of Music Therapy (IAMT) Advocacy Award**. The **Greater Chicago Music Therapy (GCMT)** nominated The Selfhelp Home, and this marks the second award received this year.

Mia Iliopoulos Krings, MM, CDP, MT-BC, President of IAMT and a Board Certified Music Therapist nominated Selfhelp for the award. "Right away, it was clear that Selfhelp got it. They recognized the positive impact of music therapy, ensuring

it be used purposefully and seeing the possibilities of music therapy and the role it could play."

Music Therapy was also recognized by the **Association of Jewish Aging Services (AJAS)** and received the **Community Impact Award**.

The program offers multiple weekly music therapy wellness groups aimed at providing meaningful and strength-based sessions for all residents, including patients on the short-term rehabilitation floor. Additionally, a support group was created that focuses on loss, self-expression, and mood.



DONALD DAVIDSON

Meet Selfhelp Resident Don Davidson, a lover of music, folk dancing, and the Selfhelp Home

Selfhelp was “home” for **Donald Davidson** long before he moved here in 2012. Donald's folk dancing troupe performed at Selfhelp in the 1970s. Selfhelp's former Activities Director Miriam Levi was the mother of Donald's best friend from high school. And resident Lorraine Broday (z”l) invited Donald and his wife, Rita (z”l), to dine with her at Selfhelp, where they sat with Rita's first cousin, Ruth Raab (z”l), who became a dear friend. It was “beshert” that Donald and Rita joined the Selfhelp family!

Donald's life story prior to Selfhelp is inspiring. Donald's paternal **grandfather** was an Orthodox rabbi whose last name was “Pick.” In order to find work in South Africa, his grandfather purchased the passport of a Scottish national named Angus Davidson. You may have seen Donald's grandfather as the rabbi in the **Al Jolson movie** “*The Jazz Singer*.”



Donald's grandfather as the rabbi in the Al Jolson movie “*The Jazz Singer*.”

Donald is a lifelong Chicagoan, having graduated first in his class at **South Shore High School**. A vocational aptitude test in high school determined that he should pursue electrical or chemical engineering. Because he “can't screw in a light bulb,” Donald chose chemical engineering. He earned his bachelors and masters degrees from **University of Michigan**, having been awarded many honors for scholastic and extracurricular excellence. He was elected to **Tau Beta Pi**, the engineering society, as he was in the top 10% of his class. Donald received the **Vulcans Activity Award** as business manager for the Michigan Technic, the school's publication for its engineering students. And he was a member of the **Tau Delta Phi** social fraternity. Between his undergraduate

and graduate studies, Donald worked for **3M** in Saint Paul, Minnesota, and made enough money to cover his masters degree.

After earning his masters degree in 1960, Donald landed a job with **Universal Oil Products (UOP)** in Des Plaines, Illinois. Even though Donald was a **chemical engineer** by education, he showed such acuity with UOP's computer systems that they asked him to join that department, which he eventually ran. He rose through the ranks to become **Chief Technical Programmer** and then retired from UOP in 2002 after 42 years with the company.

Donald has been married three times. All three of his wives enjoyed folk dancing, a passion of Donald's. His second wife, Betsy, was Selfhelp resident Sally Nusinson's best friend, so Donald and Sally have known each other for more than 50 years, another long-time connection to Selfhelp! Donald's third wife, Rita, has an adult daughter, Ellen, to whom Donald is very close, even though he did not have biological offspring of his own. After Donald retired and Rita developed Parkinson's disease, they moved to Del Ray Beach in Florida with Ellen. When Rita needed additional care, she and Donald moved to Selfhelp in 2012. Rita passed away in 2017.

Donald's passions are **folk music** and **dancing**, and **pulp fiction**. His love for folk dancing was born during his time at religious camp in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, where he was given the choice between studying Torah or learning to dance. Guess which one he chose? Donald developed a deep love for Eastern European folk music and became such a good dancer that he ended up teaching at the **Old Town School of Folk Music** and performing in a dance troupe (the one that visited Selfhelp in the 1970s).

Donald Davidson is one of the many unique, vibrant, and fascinating stories behind Selfhelp. Thank you, Donald, for sharing your life with us! We're so glad you're here!

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Generations Connected

*Julia Fishman & Mia McBreen
are building intergenerational
bonds through service*



Left to right; Mia McBreen and Julia Fishman

GENERATIONS CONNECTED
Teen
VOLUNTEERS



In a world where community service often involves doing things *for* others, our **Generations Connected** club's focus is to create meaningful connections *with* others here at The Selfhelp Home. In other words, the goal is to create emotional bonds between this crew of high school volunteers and our live-in residents. This is the mission of Generations Connected - an **intergenerational club** founded by **Lane Tech College Prep High School Juniors; Julia Fishman and Mia McBreen**. This is their story.

The genesis of Generations Connected can be traced back to a difficult attempt by Julia and Mia at starting a knitting club at Lane Tech during the 2022-2023 school year. For some reason, it just wasn't taking off. As luck would have it, Julia and Mia were already volunteering at The Selfhelp Home, and they saw an opportunity to channel their passion for service into something greater. They envisioned a club where they and their friends could volunteer regularly to make a difference in the lives of our residents.

With this vision in mind, Generations Connected officially launched in mid-October of 2023. They plan interactive activities at Selfhelp once a month, and bring a crew of 6-7 volunteers to interact with residents. Julia and Mia set clear expectations for the club members; to commit to scheduled events and prioritize building bonds with the residents. They want volunteers who genuinely care about the well-being of the community they serve, and train all volunteers on how to best interact with residents while creating meaningful bonds.

Julia and Mia's programming began with a **Halloween Candy Bag Making** event, the next was a **Winter Clothing Drive** for the purpose of *chesed* (a Hebrew word meaning kindness). They facilitated two **Knitting** sessions, a **Valentine's Day Cookie Baking** event, a **Plant Repotting** clinic, and finally, they produced and participated in a **Talent Show** that showcased their and our residents' talents and skills. Every event was a huge success!

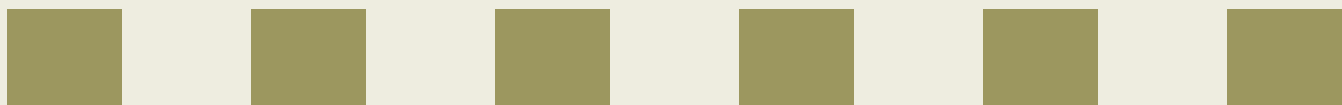
The response to Generations Connected was overwhelming! What started with just a few volunteers quickly ballooned to a team of 38 dedicated individuals. Despite the challenges of managing such a large group, Julia and Mia ensure that every volunteer has the opportunity to participate in events by carefully coordinating schedules.

Behind Generations Connected's success stands their **teacher-sponsor, Mr. Eric Golden**, a Lane Tech math teacher who has served as a mentor to Mia - even before she and Julia began Generation Connected. His support has been invaluable in helping the club thrive!

Reflecting on their experiences, Julia and Mia highlight the **Winter Clothing Drive for Migrants** as one of their favorite activities. Not only did they witness the positive impact it had on both volunteers and residents, but it also reinforced their belief in the power of emotional bonding that brings people together.

As Julia and Mia approach their final year of high school, they are already planning for the future of Generations Connected. They intend to pass on the baton and spend their senior year training underclassmen to carry on the Generations Connected partnership with Selfhelp. Looking toward the future, both Julia and Mia plan to continue their involvement in community service, even as they pursue their respective college paths. Julia is considering a focus in Political Science and/or Public Policy, while Mia plans to delve into Business and Finance with a minor in Marketing and Communications.

In the end, Generations Connected is more than just a club; it's a testament to the transformative power of service when approached with empathy, dedication, and a genuine desire to connect with others. Julia and Mia's **intergenerational journey** serves as an inspiration for anyone looking to make a difference in their community, one bond at a time.





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A TRADITION OF CARING

SUMMER 2024

At Home with Selfhelp is published by The Selfhelp Home and distributed to members and residents four times a year.

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mitzvah mensches

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The Selfhelp Home is fortunate to serve as the base for an award-winning intergenerational volunteer program, Mitzvah Mensches. Teenage volunteers craft their own opportunities to enrich the lives of our residents by sharing conversations, crafts, games, and more.

Ari Walny

Bernard Zell Anshe Emet
Day School

Mitzvah Mensch **Ari Walny** (and his mother Melissa) brightened the days of residents and staff alike during Pesach when they delivered homemade Kosher for

Passover muffins in many flavors. The opportunity to visit Selfhelp's residents served as the perfect intersection between the joy Ari receives from helping others and his passion for baking.



"Ari Walny is a thoughtful and compassionate member of

Anshe Emet Synagogue and student at the **Bernard Zell Anshe Emet Day School**," said Rabbi Benjy Forester, who is assisting Ari as he prepares for his upcoming Bar Mitzvah in June.

"Ari also has many talents, and is particularly passionate about cooking and baking. We came up with the idea of having him bake and deliver special Passover treats to residents at the Selfhelp Home, to bring them connection and nourishment. Yasher koach to Ari for choosing such a meaningful Mitzvah project!" said Rabbi Forester.

When he's not baking for fun or **Tikkun Olam**, Ari enjoys playing video games and spending his summers at Camp Chi. We look forward to sharing the results of Ari's culinary expertise with residents again in the future. Those muffins were certainly delicious!

Ian Warman

Bernard Zell Anshe Emet
Day School

When **Ian Warman** began his Mitzvah Mensch journey with Selfhelp, no one realized that it would become a family affair.

Not only did Ian do his **Mitzvah**

Project at Selfhelp, but he and his family have joined us for recent events like our Purim Party and our Passover Seder. Ian is quickly becoming a weekly fixture in the Bensinger Lounge playing games like Rummikub with residents.



Regarding his Mitzvah project, Ian's favorite part is having conversations with Selfhelp residents, and helping them feel less alone. "It's fun for them and it's fun for me," Ian explained. Our residents feel the same about Ian!

We love that Ian got a head start on his **Tikkun Olam** project, as his Bar Mitzvah at Anshe Emet isn't until February of 2025. A student at **Bernard Zell Anshe Emet Day School**, Ian's passions beyond volunteering include competitive sports and following Chicago baseball. (FYI: He's a White Sox fan).

Ari's fourth grade teacher and Bar Mitzvah tutor, Rabbi Daniel Atwood, has this to say about Ian: "Over the past few years, I have seen Ian Warman engage in sophisticated and passionate exploration of Jewish texts and his Jewish identity. I'm so proud to see him putting the words of the Torah into practice at The Selfhelp Home."



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.



THE SELFHELP HOME
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A JEWISH SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITY

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ARE HERE



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