



Friends of the Russian Bilingual Services Program Newsletter

The Value of Home and Community: Staying Focused in Challenging Times

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Hebrew Rehabilitation Center (HRC), where Russian-speaking seniors with disabilities found a home almost 22 years ago, is a mission-driven organization, licensed as a long-term chronic care hospital. HRC accepts special responsibility for the frailest and neediest members of our community and its main goal is to make sure patients receive their needed care with dignity, compassion, and sensitivity to their culture and background. And that is exactly what HRC's amazing team has done all these years.

The team's strength and dedication continue to be tested during the pandemic more than anyone could ever imagine, and now with the war in Ukraine. The war impacts us on many different levels: many of our patients and staff are originally from Russia and Ukraine, and some have families and friends currently living in those regions.

Just as we rallied to face the COVID-19 crisis, we stand together with our employees now and are proud of their mutual support and compassion. During these stressful times, they stay focused on their work and go above and beyond in their extraordinary efforts to provide your loved ones with everything they may need, including comfort and compassion. When you visit your family members at HRC, please join me in expressing your profound gratitude to our staff for the life-saving work they do, particularly during these extremely trying circumstances.

Alexandra Dashevskaya, Director, Russian Bilingual Services Program



**Русская
Программа
HSL**

OUR FEATURED PATIENT: ASYA KHOLODNAYA



Asya was born in Odessa, Ukraine. During WW2 she worked on a joinery machine. Her husband was a journalist and spoke six languages. Asya recalls how they met at the beach in Odessa. It was love at first sight. He was so charmed by Asya that he asked her to marry him a week later. He proposed to his future bride in French. It was so romantic. Asya devoted most of her professional life to teaching the English language at the University in Chernovtsy. She admits that she always had an appreciative audience as her lectures on lexicology and phraseology were interesting and engaging, and says that her students remember her and still call her today. Asya wrote many scientific articles and is an author of the English-Russian dictionary of proverbs and sayings. Asya says that she loves poetry and theater. She is currently re-reading *The Forsyte Saga* by John Galsworthy. Asya fractured her leg and ambulation became a problem, so she came to live at HRC just over four months ago. Here she continues her hard work, putting together an English-Russian prepositions dictionary. She is grateful to the One Berenson staff for all their help. Asya says that nurses and aides are wonderful, kind, and very attentive. "Any of my needs are immediately addressed, whether it is glasses or medication or taking a bath. I am comfortable here."

OUR FEATURED STAFF: LARYSA CHOU

I moved to the United States from Ukraine in 2004. I didn't know anyone in America. My career at Hebrew Rehabilitation Center began in 2005 where I was hired to work as a nurse assistant. At the same time, I started attending college and taking prerequisites for an RN program. In 2006, I was accepted into the LPN program that was run by HSL. In 2008, I graduated from it and began my career as a Nurse. In 2012, I had my second child and took some time off to be with him, but continued to work as a per-diem. While enjoying some time off with my kids, I continued working toward my goal of becoming an RN. I got accepted into the River University "LPN to RN Program," which I successfully graduated from in 2020. I became a Nurse Manager in 2021. It is a challenge, but if I need support, support is always there.

Hebrew SeniorLife has been my home for 17 years and I can't wish for a better one. Management has helped and accommodated me through every step of my life. It is where I found many lifelong friends. It is a privilege to come to work every day knowing that I make a difference in someone's life. HSL is an organization that supports its employees so they may achieve any career dream they may have. I found my happy place.



OUR FEATURED PATIENT: YAKOV BASSIN



Yakov worked as a geologist for many years. He is proud of discovering numerous oil, gas and uranium fields. Geology is his passion. He admits that he was fascinated by rocks since childhood. During WW2 he was evacuated to Altay (Russia) where he was amazed by the beauty of the mountains. It is then when he firmly decided to become a geologist. As a teenager he started preparing for his future profession not only intellectually, but also physically by exercising and lifting weights. Yakov loved what he did and has a lot of warm memories about his numerous expeditions. He got awards for discovery of a gas field and an oilfield near Astrakhan, Russia.

Yakov is one of the oldest members of the Massachusetts Club of Russian-Speaking Scientists. Throughout his life Yakov wrote over 300 scientific articles. The topics include not only geology, but also history and politics. One of the articles that he is particularly proud of is his large study of the Great Revolution of 1917 in Russia.

Yakov believes that since there are so many Russian-speaking people living in this area, it is imperative to have a program like this supporting the Russian language and culture.

"Environment here at HRC is wonderful: excellent food and entertainment. I feel well taken care of. I could not wish for more".

OUR FEATURED STAFF: IANA VESELOVA

Iana was born in Novosibirsk and lived in St. Petersburg for 12 years prior to coming to the US in 2016. She graduated from college with a double major in Choreography and Management. She admits that dance is her passion and started her career as a dance teacher for children. Then she studied at the Fred Astaire Company and received a professional certificate to teach ballroom dancing. Later, Iana worked as an instructor and a choreographer at the Park and Recreation Youth Dance program.

In 2020, during the COVID-19 outbreak, Iana joined Hebrew Rehabilitation Center as a Patient Care Assistant. It was an uncertain time, and she tried to project positive thoughts and provide comfort to patients, so they would not feel lonely and isolated.

Now Iana is a Life Enhancement Coordinator. She is a magician when it comes to designing diverse and inclusive programs. Her wonderful ideas help tremendously to meet the needs of patients with various cognitive and physical abilities. Her ideas emphasize a patient's abilities and she says her goal is to care for patients by building emotional and stimulating supports for them through engagement in creative projects. "This job allows me to apply my personal experience in the field of psychology and mental health," Iana says. She enjoys what she does and is excited to be a part of the Russian program at HRC.



MUSIC & MEMORY



Music has the power to bring us back to the most important times in our lives. Through our music therapy groups, we actively engage patients in making and reflecting on music. As we learned more about the power of music, we aimed to reach as many patients as possible. This goal led to the creation of our Music and Memory project at Hebrew Rehabilitation Center. Designed and managed by our Expressive Therapy department, this program uses modern technology to bring a personalized music experience to more patients.

Together with our engineers and IT specialists, we installed music listening stations in common spaces. Personalized playlists are loaded onto iPads, a recent tech upgrade. In order to create a play list, we interview patients and families about preferred music. Nurses, life enhancement professionals, or volunteers help patients connect to their personalized playlists.

This program is especially beneficial to patients who are unable to engage in group activities and those with low vision, poor hearing, or memory impairment. For those who are unable to get to the listening stations, we provide music opportunities in their rooms through iPods. In the future, the Listening stations will connect patients and families via FaceTime technology.

It is so rewarding to see our patients singing and moving to their favorite tunes, to see a smile on their faces, and to hear their thoughts about the music. We hear many positive comments and stories from our nurses, who find the listening stations very helpful for those who participate.



Bilingual Russian Program
 Alexandra Dashevskaya
 Program Director
 1200 Centre Street
 Roslindale, MA 02131

Phone (617)363-8425
 Fax (617)363-8910
 Email:
 dashevskaya@hsl.harvard.edu

www.hebrewseniorlife.org/russian

TIPS FOR VISITING YOUR LOVED ONES

Visiting your loved one in a facility is often difficult emotionally, especially if they are experiencing declining health. Many people struggle with how to make such visits meaningful and joyful, especially if their family member has cognitive impairments, memory loss, and frailty. We would like to offer some tips for visiting your loved one here at Hebrew Rehabilitation Center:

- Get to know the HRC staff. They are the ones who take care of your loved one every day and can offer helpful information.
- If your family member once loved a specific type of music, download it to your phone so you can listen to it together. Bring headphones or put the music on a speaker.
- Reminisce about prior life events together. Bring old family photographs and other keepsakes.
- Share what is currently happening in your family. Even if they do not understand specifics, hearing familiar names is comforting.
- On their calendar, take a highlighter and mark the date for your next visit. This will serve as a reminder that you are returning soon.
- Bring a book they once loved and read together during your visit. Recite poetry they once knew and loved.
- Take them outside to look at plants and greenery around the building.
- Provide hand massages and back rubs. A massage is often uplifting, especially when touch is provided by a loved one.
- Don't be afraid to laugh and share humorous stories.
- Share videos of your kids' activities, such as music or dance recitals, and new baby videos.
- If your loved one is suffering from dementia, always state who you are when you enter the room.
- Let your loved one express their feelings and accept them. They just need someone to listen. You don't have to have all the answers. Your presence is enough. Enjoy the time you have together.
- Review these very useful tips from the Alzheimer's Association specifically for how to visit a loved one with dementia:

https://www.alz.org/media/greatermissourivisiting_loved_ones_with_dementia.pdf

SUPPORT US FINANCIALLY - HELP IMPROVE OUR PATIENTS' LIVES

- Give a gift in honor of a special caregiver
- Donate in memory of a loved one
- Give to help us honor special occasions like birthday & holidays
 - ⇒ Give online (make a quick, secure online donation).
 - ⇒ Mail a check
 - ⇒ Double your gifts through Matching Gifts

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

Check our website at: www.hebrewseniorlife.org/giving or
www.hebrewseniorlife.org/russian