

Brief History of Hebrew Senior Care

The ‘Home’ that Nickels Built

The story of “the home that nickels built” begins in the late 1800s after the immigration of vast numbers of East European Jews into the United States.

Insert Picture of Early Jewish Women Settlers

Caption: The founding mothers were the gerontologists of their time.

In 1898, 124 Orthodox Jewish women in Hartford formed the Hebrew Ladies Sick Benefit Association. The women agreed to contribute a nickel per week for the proposed home, and they resolved to go out and collect a nickel a week from others in the community. These volunteer collectors were known as “The Handkerchief Brigade” because they collected their nickels in large handkerchiefs.

Insert picture of Wooster Street 1911

It took 10 years but on October 14, 1907, the first Hebrew Old People’s Home in Connecticut opened with 4 residents. In 1911, the Hebrew Ladies Sick Benefit Association became the Hebrew Ladies’ Old People’s Home Association.

Insert Washington Street Picture

When the Home on Wooster Street could not accommodate any more people, the Hogle mansion at 276 Washington Street was purchased on April 3, 1919. In 1925, a three story annex was added to provide space for 65 residents.

January 1929 *“an auxiliary to the Hebrew Ladies’ Old People’s Home has been formed among the younger members of the home.* In June 1929, the first Strawberry Festival was held and the Auxiliary began their long-standing support of our mission.

As early as 1929, there were day and night nurses employed and doctors were hired to provide patient care; other doctors volunteered their time. It was in this period that the Hebrew Home for the Aged became the second nursing home in the state to be licensed.

Insert Sophie Tucker Picture

Since the Depression made it difficult for the Handkerchief Brigade to raise money, a formal fund drive was initiated in 1932. In 1934 the fundraising drive opened with a show at the Capitol Theater starring Sophie Tucker whose mother, Jennie Abuza, had been one of the founders of the Home. Miss Tucker returned in 1935 with a show at the State Theater. **All of Hartford helps to keep the promise.**

In January 27, 1937, the name of the Hebrew Ladies' Old Peoples Home of Hartford was changed to read Hebrew Home for the Aged of Hartford. Between 1939 and 1940 the Home was fully renovated and became a showplace visited by people from out of town.

In 1943 it was determined that newer, more modern quarters were needed. By 1948, the Hebrew Home for the Aged took part in the Hartford Jewish Federation Building Fund Campaign to support the expansion. The Home also received three acres of land on Tower Avenue from Mount Sinai Hospital as part of the shared drive agreement.

Insert Photo from Ground Breaking – 1954

The ground breaking for the new Home on Tower Avenue took place on May 9, 1954.

The beautiful new \$1,600,000 building was dedicated on December 11, 1955 with facilities for 200 residents. N. Aaron Naboicheck, the son of one of the founding women, was Chairman of the Executive Board at the time of the opening. In 1969 a new wing was added along with a first floor addition. Now the Home had space for 300 residents.

In January 1970 geriatrician Dr. Ian Lawson became the first full time Medical Director of the Hebrew Home and was the first full time doctor in a nursing home in the state. The Home initiated programs off its premises to maintain elderly people in the community for as long as possible. In 1974, an Adult Day Care Program was established; one of the first two established in Connecticut.

Moving into the Next Century

The Home's mission was broadened to accommodate the needs of the large and rapidly changing elderly population. Once again a new building was needed to accommodate the growing population of elderly. The Capital Campaign was launched in December 1985 under the chairmanship of Marc Abrahms and Robert J. Naboicheck, both of whom are the sons of previous Presidents of the Board of Trustees.

Abrahms Boulevard Ground Breaking

A ceremonial groundbreaking took place on June 26, 1986 and the Abrahms Boulevard facility opened the weekend of October 28, 1989.

Hebrew Health Care Today

The promise of Hebrew Health Care is a covenant that has spanned generations. Hebrew Health Care has evolved into a comprehensive adult health care organization becoming more than our founding mothers would have ever envisioned. Still affectionately recognized as "The Home", Hebrew Health Care now offers a dynamic system of care featuring a full spectrum of integrated and seamless inpatient, outpatient and community based geriatric services to meet the needs of older adults in the Greater Hartford community. We offer long-term skilled nursing care, a chronic

disease hospital especially designed for older patients, behavioral health hospital care, assisted living, home health care, adult day centers, and outpatient medical and therapy services.

Hebrew Health Care: Still Keeping the Promise

Hebrew Health Care has touched the lives of thousands of families for more than 100 years. What distinguishes us from other organizations? Simply stated: our long-term commitment to comprehensive care of the elderly. We do not simply say it. We do not simply build it. Hebrew Health Care does it – *every day, every week, and every year*. Join us as a full partner in upholding our long-standing promise to “honor thy father and thy mother” and “care for their needy elderly”.