



**B'nai B'rith
Senior Housing
Network**

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SENIORITY REPORT

Inform

We want to do our best to stay in touch with you. Please remember to send pictures and updates on the events in your building!

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INTERNATIONAL**

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Group photo

Resident Leadership Retreat August 7-12, 2025

By Janel Doughten, Associate Director, Center for Senior Services



Held every other summer since 1987, this year the Resident Leadership Retreat took place August 7-12 at B'nai B'rith Perlman Camp. Open to two resident leaders from each building, the goal of the retreat is to help develop and improve those leadership skills so residents can better run their respective Residents Associations.

Attendees participated in leadership development workshops, programs and even activities with the young campers, generating great ideas to take back to their buildings. This year, I added a session on empathy that included tools to understand what

it is like to have vision and hearing loss as well as other issues such as neuropathy. This led to a discussion on how to accommodate all the medical issues that could be

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Resident Leadership Retreat August 7-12, 2025

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Janel Doughten led a session on empathy “Take a Walk in My Shoes” with 3D glasses, ear plugs and gloves



barriers to other residents’ participation in building activities and everyone shared possible solutions.

Most importantly, participants explored what a Resident Association is and why it is so important to the life of the community. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development considers a Resident Association as a group of concerned citizens who are elected to represent the housing community in which the residents live. The association is the voice of the community, striving to make the housing

environment a better place to live by actively seeking to influence decisions that directly impact the residents it serves.

The Resident Association acts as a liaison between management and residents, as well as between residents and the community. Another important part of every Resident Association’s effort is programming or activities.

The Resident Association can also serve as the volunteer base for building activities in partnership with the staff and

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Resident Leadership Retreat August 7-12, 2025

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Residents attending Shabbat Services with Perlman Campers

boards of directors, such as assisting with a building's food bank, running a convenience store or setting up and staffing building activities. The Resident Association can take charge of volunteer recruitment, relieving staff from this role and thereby allowing them more time for other responsibilities.

This year at the retreat, one of the highlights was a dance session with the young Perlman campers. After the camp dance instructor taught the residents some of the dances with the young campers, our CSS campers taught the youngsters how to do the Electric Slide, proving that you are never too old or too young to learn and to teach!

Another highlight of the retreat was the last evening, when participants performed at the camp talent show. During a Friendship Circle, retreat participants also shared with their fellow resident leaders their heartfelt takeaways from the sessions. Residents stay in touch with each other and continue to network and share best practices.

CSS is excited that the next Resident Leadership Retreat will take place in 2027, 40 years since the first retreat was held in 1987!



Sharing successful programs with the group



A Note from the Chair

Dennis Rice, Chair, B'nai B'rith Center for Senior Services

Each year, the B'nai B'rith Center for Senior Services (CSS) hosts an in-person Conference on Senior Housing in the fall, a virtual conference in March, and an additional in-person meeting for building staff in late spring.

The most recent in-person Conference on Senior Housing was held Sept. 14–16, 2025, in Baltimore, Maryland, and was hosted by the board and staff of B'nai B'rith Homecrest House. The event brought together management staff, service coordinators and members of the boards of directors from across the B'nai B'rith senior housing network throughout the United States.

The conference opened on Sept. 14 with lunch and a special presentation honoring former Center for Senior Services Chair Marvin Siflinger and Mark Olshan, director of B'nai B'rith's Center for Senior Services, who will be retiring after more than 40 years of devoted service to B'nai B'rith. I was thrilled to preside over the recognition of their remarkable contributions. Both received certificates and a standing ovation in appreciation of their service.

It was a fitting segue to the first workshop, a leadership development session presented by Janel Doughten, associate director of CSS. Following this session, attendees divided into separate breakout groups for building staff and members of the boards of directors.

The managers' breakout, led by Janel, covered a range of timely and practical topics. These included Emergency Preparedness, with lessons learned from Hurricane Helene in Western North Carolina, along with additional discussions on emergency protocols and flexibility, employee burnout and communication strategies, an update on the Resident Leadership Retreat and resident feedback, and concluded with a listening session.

The Senior Housing Committee breakout began with a welcome and introduction from me in my new role as chair of the Center for Senior Services. This was followed by an update on the Center for Senior Services presented by the Senior Housing Committee Co-Chairs Bruce Menditch and Abbie Stone, together with Mark Olshan.

The remainder of the meeting featured several important discussions.

Insurance: Evan Carmen, director of Aging Policy, and I led a discussion on CSS's efforts to have every facility under its sponsorship sign an Insurance and Indemnification Agreement. We reviewed the details of the agreement, and all facilities will be contacted in the coming months regarding next steps. B'nai B'rith has long been included as an additional insurer on all buildings' general liability policies; however, many insurance providers are now requesting a written agreement directly between CSS and the buildings.

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Conference participants visit to the host building, B'nai B'rith Homecrest House, Silver Spring, MD

A Note from the Chair

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Mission Statement & Purpose: Senior Housing Committee Co-Chairs Abbie and Bruce facilitated a conversation about board mission statements and their purpose.

A highlight of the meeting was the Around the Network/Sharing Best Practices session, during which participants shared innovative programs and ideas from their facilities. I always come away with valuable insights to bring back to my own building. This session concluded the afternoon programming for the Senior Housing Committee.

Day Two

The second day began with a welcome from me and participant introductions. Janel then led an engaging session on empathy titled “Take a Walk In My Shoes.” Participants wore gloves, 3-D glasses, and earplugs to simulate low vision, hearing loss, neuropathy, and limited English proficiency—an exercise designed to spotlight barriers residents may face when participating in building activities and to brainstorm solutions.



Dennis with board and staff from the B'nai B'rith Apartments of Deerfield Beach, FL participating in the Take a Walk in My Shoes session led by Janel Doughnten, Associate Director, CSS

Continuing the theme of programming, Elisabeth (Liz) Krebs, program manager of B'nai B'rith Connect (B'nai B'rith's young professionals group), discussed program opportunities and shared details about a successful bingo and pizza party jointly hosted by Connect and the board and Residents Association at the Adelstein Family–Project Hope B'nai B'rith House in the Bronx. Liz is eager to collaborate with any buildings interested in hosting a B'nai B'rith Connect event.

Additional sessions covered Fundraising, Grant Resources, and IRS Compliance, led by myself, Janel and Richy Leitner, chief operating officer of B'nai B'rith; and Food Insecurity Solutions, presented by Janel, along with Angela Jones, property manager at St. Mary's Court in Washington, D.C.

In the afternoon, attendees heard several updates, including from the National Association of Adult Protective Services; Medicare and Medicaid specialists from Health Benefits ABC's;

and representatives of the American Association of Service Coordinators.

Later that day, we boarded buses for a tour and dinner at the beautiful B'nai B'rith Homecrest House in Silver Spring, Maryland. Residents and staff graciously led tours of their apartments and facilities, followed by a delicious dinner. We enjoyed dancing and entertainment by residents and staff—a truly wonderful evening enjoyed by all.

Day Three

One of the highlights of the final day was an address by Robert Iber, senior advisor in the Office of Multifamily Housing Programs at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. As always, Bob delivered an informative update and generously answered many participant questions.

The next session, “Creating a Collaborative Working Relationship / The Life of the Community: The Roles of the Staff, Board and Residents,” was presented by resident leaders of B'nai B'rith Homecrest House and Executive Director Carol Cohen Wolfe, and facilitated by Janel. The session underscored the importance of a strong, cooperative relationship between staff and the Residents Association.

The conference concluded with Congressional, Federal, and CSS Network Updates from Evan and Janel, followed by closing remarks and updates from Senior Housing Committee Co-Chairs Bruce and Abbie.

I want to extend my sincere thanks to the CSS staff, Janel and Evan, as well as all presenters and participants for another successful conference.

We look forward to seeing everyone in 2026! Please check the Seniority Report calendar for upcoming meeting dates.



A Note from the Co-Chair

By Abbie Stone, Co-Chair, B'nai B'rith Senior Housing Committee

The talented and stellar staff and volunteers at the Center for Senior Services have been incredibly busy the past few months. The staff continues to advocate on behalf of our residents and keep all of us informed of the current happenings in Congress that impact the older adults living in B'nai B'rith sponsored communities. Additionally, CSS held our three annual national conferences, as well as the biennial Resident Leadership Retreat.

In March 2025, CSS held its annual virtual two-day conference. The first day included a mix of building staff and board members hearing from our own CSS experts as well as an update from Robert Iber from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The second day, the B'nai B'rith Senior Housing Committee met to discuss ways to strengthen the housing network and share information and ideas. This committee is made up of members of the board of directors from each of the buildings.

In June, the managers and service coordinators gathered in Asheville, North Carolina, for the annual CSS Managers and Service Coordinators training. Nestled in the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains, Asheville is still recovering from the devastating damage from Hurricane Helene which had hit the area in September 2024. We participated in a service project at the Haywood Street Downtown Welcome Table, a multi service weekly meal program serving those in need. Our assignments included gardening, greeting participants with a delicious hot home cooked meal and clean up. The Haywood project was instrumental in providing assistance to the Asheville community in recovery from the devastation of Hurricane Helene. Participating in this project was an important reminder for building staff to look for similar programs to partner with in their own communities as a potential benefit for their own residents

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Preparing Emergency Preparedness Bags at Givens Gerber Park



Group at Givens Gerber Park

A Note from the Co-Chair

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In the following days we had engaging sessions that raised awareness and sensitivity to enhance our compassion and presence in working with our residents on a daily basis. The information presented increased our skillset and as always, we were updated on HUD regulations and service coordinator information.

Yet another highlight of the conference was our visit to Givens Gerber Park, an affordable housing community that experienced major damage from the hurricane. We listened to what the community endured and how the staff and residents responded during the emergency to keep residents and the building safe. As a thank you to the staff and residents of Givens Gerber Park, participants assembled emergency preparedness kits to be distributed to each of the residents. It was truly a rewarding experience of service.

In August we gathered from far and near, traveling by plane, train, car and finally bus to our destination: Perlman Camp in the heart of the beautiful Poconos for the B'nai B'rith Resident Leadership Retreat. Alongside Janel Doughten, Evan Carmen, Bruce Menditch, my co-chair of the Senior Housing Committee, and myself were the resident leaders representing their respective B'nai B'rith communities.

The retreat is such an amazing experience! Every time I participate, I come away so moved by the residents and the wisdom and leadership they bring. This year was no exception; it was an extraordinary group. Participants engaged fully in the sessions led by Janel and me that provided leadership skills, a deeper understanding of the relationship between HUD and B'nai B'rith and coaching on enhancing their communication skills within their communities. All this and lots of fun activities that are always present at the camp. We are so fortunate to continue to offer this opportunity to our communities



On the bus to Perlman Camp for the Resident Leadership Retreat



Residents participating in the menorah lighting during the Resident Leadership Retreat

The annual Conference on Senior Housing was held in Baltimore in September 2025, hosted by the staff and board of directors of B'nai B'rith Homecrest House. This was a very special gathering as we wished well to Marvin Siflinger and Mark Olshan, two stalwarts of CSS.

The first to be honored was Marvin, who had recently stepped down as the longtime chair of the B'nai B'rith Center for Senior Services, and former co-chair of the Senior Housing Committee. Marvin has always had endless enthusiasm, knowledge and vision in the field of affordable housing. His expertise and contributions will be missed, although he will remain active with the program in an emeritus position.

Mark Olshan, the associate executive vice president of B'nai B'rith International and the longtime director of CSS, announced his retirement effective June 2026. Needless to say, Mark has been instrumental in creating the Center for Senior Services, leading the housing side of B'nai B'rith International into the 21st century and having wisdom beyond his years. His talents and knowledge have been invaluable to the organization.

Please take the time in the next few months to wish both Marvin and Mark well!

Contemplating 2026, we look to strengthen our housing network including the Senior Housing Committee and move forward with great intention to ensure safe and affordable housing to those individuals in need!



ON THE HILL



*by Evan Carmen
Legislative Director for
Aging Policy*

CSS Encourages Congress to Support Full Funding for HUD Senior Housing in FY26 Budget

The B'nai B'rith Center for Senior Services (CSS) spent the summer and fall advocating to congressional offices for fully funding the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) senior housing program for fiscal year 2026. Our meetings were in concert with the American Association of Service Coordinators (AASC), to ensure offices understand the critical importance of allowing seniors to age in place.

While Congress has not passed a fully funded bill for fiscal year 2026, we will continue to advocate for the importance of robust funding for HUD senior housing.

In summer/fall of 2025 we met with staff members from the following offices:

SENATE

Tommy Tuberville (R-Ala.)
Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.)
Ted Cruz (R-Texas)
John Cornyn (R-Texas)
Rick Scott (R-Fla.)
Tammy Duckworth (D-Ill.)
Ashley Moody (R-Fla.)
Edward Markey (D-Mass.)
Alex Padilla (D-Calif.)
John Fetterman (D-Pa.)
Ruben Gallego (D-Ariz.)
Mark Kelly (D-Ariz.)
Angel Alsobrooks (D-Md.)
Ron Johnson (R-Wis.)

HOUSE

Jamie Raskin (D-Md.)
Katherine Clark (D-Mass.)
Donald Norcross (D-N.J.)
Herb Conaway (D-N.J.)
Seth Moulton (D-Mass.)
Chrissy Houlahan (D-Pa.)
Al Green (D-Texas)
Sylvia Garcia (D-Texas)
Glenn Grothmann (R-Wisc.)
Luz Rivas (D-Calif.)
Eric Sorensen (D-Ill.)

B'nai B'rith Expressed Concerns Over Federal Government Shutdown

As the largest national Jewish sponsor of subsidized housing for seniors in the United States, B'nai B'rith and its Center for Senior Services are uniquely aware of the important role federal programs play in the lives of older adults with limited means. During the shutdown we were troubled by the news that the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) was not able to meet its obligations. According to the United States Department of Agriculture, SNAP helps 6.5 million older adults (60+) afford their basic nutrition needs.

ON THE HILL

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We were also concerned about how the shutdown impacted the Department of Housing and Urban Developments (HUD) senior housing program. The longer a shutdown, the more difficult it is for HUD to fulfill its mission of providing affordable housing. We expressed our concerns over our social media platforms and with congressional offices which represent our senior housing properties, and reported updates on federal programs impacted by the shutdown to our housing network.

We remain concerned that Congress has yet to find a bipartisan solution to extend Affordable Care Act enhanced premium tax credits that ensure older adults have better access to healthcare. We are alarmed by premiums for many older adults rising by thousands of dollars. Lack of access to affordable medical care endangers older adults, who may forgo preventive check-ups and medications vital to their well-being.

Members of Congress Visit B'nai B'rith Properties

CSS was pleased to welcome Rep. Ryan Mackenzie (R-Pennsylvania) to B'nai B'rith Apartments in Allentown, where he engaged with residents and learned about the vital role subsidized senior housing plays in the community.

Mackenzie's tour of the building included resident apartments, a common room, gym, computer room, garden room, and patio. Mackenzie also met with residents to discuss how programs like Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and affordable housing impact the lives of older adults.

"The B'nai B'rith Apartments are a great example of what safe, affordable, and community-oriented housing can look like for seniors in the Greater Lehigh Valley," Mackenzie said. "It was great to tour the facility and hear firsthand from residents about what this community means to them."

Also, CSS was excited to welcome Rep. Sarah McBride (D-Delaware) to the Asher Rubin B'nai B'rith House in Claymont, Delaware, where she spoke with residents about issues impacting seniors.

"Every senior deserves the dignity of safe, stable, and affordable housing—and right now, too many older adults in Delaware and across the country are being forced to choose between paying rent, buying groceries, or filling a prescription," McBride said. "When we invest in affordable housing for seniors, we're not just providing a roof over someone's head—we're strengthening health, security, and peace of mind. I'm especially grateful to organizations like B'nai B'rith for their work in communities across the country, including at the Asher Rubin B'nai B'rith House in Claymont, Delaware, where that community and commitment to care is on full display."

McBride met with residents and answered their questions regarding Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, affordable housing and nutrition.

Center for Senior Services 2026 Calendar

- March 16:** Virtual Conference on Senior Housing (joint program for boards and staff) 1-4 pm ET
- March 18:** Virtual Senior Housing Committee Meeting (open to all board members) 1-4 pm ET
- May 13-15:** Annual Managers and Service Coordinators Meeting, Las Vegas, NV
- Mid-October:** Annual Conference on Senior Housing (tentatively Denver, CO)

Around the Network Highlights from 2025



Carlos being presented with a Certificate of Appreciation by New York City Council member Sandra Ung and board president David Wanetik



Carlos being presented with a Certificate of Appreciation by Janel Doughnten on behalf of CSS.

Long Time Property Manager Carlos Marrero Retires

Carlos Marrero, property manager at Queens B'nai B'rith House in Flushing, NY, retired after 22 years of dedicated service to the residents of the building. Carlos was honored by board members and staff with a retirement luncheon on May 15 at the building. David Wanetik, board president, spoke about Carlos' hard work and devotion to his job. Additionally, Carlos was presented with Certificates of Appreciation by New York City Council member Sandra Ung and Center for Senior Services Associate Director Janel Doughnten. We wish Carlos a very happy and well-deserved retirement!

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Carlos with the staff of the Queens B'nai B'rith House

Around the Network Highlights from 2025

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Happy 100 th birthday to Lev Agranovich!

Lev Agranovich, resident of B'nai B'rith Golden Years Apartments in North Hollywood, California, was honored with a luncheon for his 100th birthday in June.

B'nai B'rith France Update

B'nai B'rith France (submitted by Etienne Levy, president, B'nai B'rith France Solidarity Commission)

The B'nai B'rith France Solidarity Commission arranges for weekly visits by members to senior housing buildings in France where they serve snacks and exchange recipes from their own family traditions with the residents.

In Paris, members visit with the residents of Moïse Léon home, originally a retirement home for Jewish women, founded in 1883. The building now has 44 independent senior living apartments. In Lyon, members visit with the residents of the Residence Bayard Bel Age and recently published a collection of the shared recipes.



What Staff Members Have Been Up To

On Oct. 17, Janel Doughten, associate director of CSS, held a virtual training session with the leaders of the Residents Alliance at the Irving B. Matross B'nai B'rith Covenant House in Brighton, Massachusetts. The session was followed by a discussion open to all members of the Residents Alliance on the role of Residents Associations in their building.

Janel Doughten, along with Evan Carmen, director of Aging Policy for CSS, held a virtual "Federal Updates and Q&A Program" with the residents of the Asher Rubin B'nai B'rith House in Claymont, Delaware on Dec. 8. The program included briefings on the Congressional budget, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Social Security Administration.



My Time at B'nai B'rith: A 42-Year Journey

By Mark D. Olshan, Associate Executive Vice President, B'nai B'rith International

This May, I will be turning 80! Not bad, if I do say so myself.

I have worked at B'nai B'rith for more than half of that time, some 42 years. Whew! Where did the time go? Thinking back on my career, lots of special memories and moments come to mind. Oddly, my first memory starts with my mom's dressmaker in New Jersey, because in a weird way she is the one who steered me toward B'nai B'rith.

In 1978, I moved back home to New Jersey after earning a Ph.D. in Human Factors Psychology from the University of South Dakota. I started job hunting, and, in an odd twist of fate, my mother's dressmaker had contacts at the International Center for Social Gerontology (ICSG), located in Washington, D.C. I was granted an interview. Within 24 hours of returning home from the interview, ICSG called to ask if I was available for a second interview. The job seemed promising, so I drove back to D.C. Quite unexpectedly, they offered me a job, I accepted, and moved to Washington.

While working at the ICSG, I helped train employees of area agencies on aging throughout the country on housing issues affecting older adults. I worked at the ICSG for two years. However, the day President Ronald Reagan was sworn into office, Commissioner Robert Benedict, a political appointee of President Jimmy Carter, was supposed to sign our grant extension. Well, he went out for lunch before signing, and, when he came back Reagan was president, and Benedict was no longer authorized to sign the extension. And boom, I lost my job!

Fortunately, I was hired by a consulting group, and my boss was someone named Lanny Morrison. So why does this matter? Well, Lanny's brother is Steve Morrison, who worked for, you guessed it, B'nai B'rith International. In 1983, the Director of Senior Housing position opened. Due to my relationship with Lanny, I connected with Steve and applied for the position. Given my existing background with senior housing, it seemed like a good fit.

I remember having to go through a few rounds of interviews. I interviewed with Harvey Gerstein, chair of the Senior Housing Committee; Anne Spiwak, director of Administration; and B'nai B'rith's Executive Vice President Daniel Thursz. During a second interview Thursz turned to Spiwak and said, "So when does he start?" Funny thing, I hadn't been offered the job yet. Well, I accepted the job offer, started work on June 1, 1983, and the rest, as they say, is history.

One article cannot contain all my memories from the past 42 years. However, let me name a few. I remember being at Amos Towers, a B'nai B'rith-sponsored senior housing building in Scranton, Pennsylvania, for my first ribbon-cutting ceremony. I was standing on a flatbed truck with other B'nai B'rith members in the community in honor of the building being opened. I wore a brown suit and sported a beard.

As many readers know, B'nai B'rith sponsors U.S. Department of Housing

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From a multitude of proud moments: my team on Capitol Hill. From left: Center for Senior Services Legislative Director for Aging Policy Evan Carmen; Associate Director of the B'nai B'rith International Center for Senior Services Janel Doughten; and me.

My Time at B'nai B'rith: A 42-Year Journey

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and Urban Development (HUD) senior housing properties across the country, including 35 buildings, in 16 states, that serve about 5,000 people.

I recall meetings in the 1980s with officials at HUD regarding our sponsored building in Deerfield Beach, Florida. The city of Deerfield Beach provided us with 10 acres of land at a good price. So, we purchased the property and applied to HUD for a 150-unit building. Well, HUD offered only enough funding for 100 units; we begrudgingly accepted the money for the project. Over the years we applied to HUD for more funding and managed to get two additional buildings constructed, with 83 and 88 units, respectively.

It's special knowing I direct a program that has provided affordable housing to countless seniors around the country.

I also remember fondly working with HUD secretaries Jack Kemp, Henry Cisneros and Andrew Cuomo, representing both major political parties, but all sharing the same goal of advancing senior housing programs.

The expansion of our housing program isn't just about buildings; it also includes programing. I remember creating B'nai B'rith's Conference on Senior Housing Managers and Service Coordinators Training. These meetings provide training for our building staff and boards of directors, on all matters relating to housing and aging. Plus, they are a great opportunity for our housing network to come together to share ideas and best practices.

Our programming doesn't stop with our building staff and boards but also extends to our sponsored buildings' residents. In the early 1990s I connected with a group that was putting together vacation programing for seniors. I attended one of the group's retreats and the next year started the biannual Resident Leadership Retreat, where resident council members from our various sponsored properties came for a working "vacation" at Pearlman Camp in Pennsylvania. Over time, I passed the baton to my colleague Janel Doughten, associate director for the Center for Senior Services, who extended the stays and created programing for those attending to improve their residents' councils back home.

My time at B'nai B'rith has involved more than senior housing. I recall my first trip to Israel in the late 1980s, traveling around the country with B'nai B'rith volunteers and taking classes at Hebrew University. I went back to Israel again for the B'nai B'rith convention in 1998. The programing we did at the Western Wall, one of the holiest Jewish sites in Jerusalem, was first rate.

What if I'd never worked at ICSG and I had accepted a job somewhere in New Jersey, California or Florida? I probably would never have worked for B'nai B'rith, moved to D.C. and met my wife. Ever play dominos? It feels like a game of dominos led me to B'nai B'rith. The first domino was my mom's dressmaker, then working at ICSG, our grant expiring and finally meeting Lanny Morrison. If one of those dominos didn't fall, I probably never would have ended up here.

So why am I telling you all of this? Well, this will be my last column for B'nai B'rith Magazine. After over 40 years, I will be retiring soon. My time at B'nai B'rith has been filled with lots of great memories, but everything must come to an end. I look forward to spending time with family, in particular my granddaughter who graduates from college in the spring, and with friends. While I am excited for the next chapter, I will miss my B'nai B'rith family. It's going to be hard to top the past 42 years, but I will do my best to try.

Mark D. Olshan, who holds a doctorate in psychology, is associate executive vice president of B'nai B'rith International and director of the organization's Center for Senior Services.