

United Hebrew Geriatric Center Sponsors Staff Member Trip to New Orleans

New Rochelle, N.Y. - (April 27, 2006) - Karen Nodiff was a new staff member of United Hebrew Geriatric Center (UHGC) when the opportunity arose to travel to New Orleans this past March. Several members of her synagogue, Temple Israel of New Rochelle, were traveling to New Orleans with Habitat for Humanity of Westchester. Nodiff wanted to go but had not yet accrued any vacation or personal time at UHGC. To her surprise, not only did UHGC “donate” her time for the trip but it also provided financial sponsorship.

“UHGC provides its residents with a home that supports a life of dignity and high quality,” says Nodiff. “The Center believes that everyone should have a safe and dignified home, and that sponsoring my trip was a small but important way to help the citizens of New Orleans.”

Jim Killoran, Executive Director for Habitat for Humanity of Westchester, approached Rabbi Michael Z. Cahana of Temple Israel of New Rochelle about joining a New York group to work on two home construction sites in New Orleans. The 20 Temple Israel congregants also met with members of Touro

Photos 1 and 2: The Habitat for Humanity worksite in New Orleans

Photo 3: Karen Nodiff working on the site

Photo 4: Karen Nodiff with Judith Klein

Photo 5: Kathi Sarter with her daughter, Brynne. Both of Kathi's daughters are students at Tulane and helped for a short time between classes.

Photo 6: Group photo of the participants from Temple Israel of New Rochelle



Synagogue, the oldest house of worship in the US outside of the original 13 colonies.

The work was rigorous. Ms. Nodiff notes that “on one of the three days, we helped unload prefabricated frames from huge trucks and walk them to the site called Musicians Village. The idea was pioneered by Winston Marsalis and Harry Connick, Jr. in hope of bringing musicians back to the city. At least 14 people had to carry each frame because the frames were so heavy.” Nodiff and her team members were touched by the personal messages that were written on the frames by factory workers who manufactured the frames in Wisconsin. “The words of encouragement added another layer of human-to-human touch.”

Several images vividly stand out in Nodiff's mind. She recalls the tremendous destruction in the Lower Ninth Ward, where poorly constructed homes were totally destroyed for miles around. Many partially destroyed or flooded homes in middle class neighborhoods remain frozen in time, awaiting inspectors and insurance adjusters before their fate can be decided. While driving around, she and her husband had to drive around displaced houses sitting in the middle of the road, furniture and refrigerators hanging out their windows. Overturned cars sitting under homes or perched on fences were a common sight.

Since her return, Nodiff has been sharing photos and



stories of her trip with colleagues at UHGC. "Seeing New Orleans in its current state made me appreciate the importance of a safe home for everyone. I am proud of what UHGC has to offer our community."

About the United Hebrew Geriatric Center of New Rochelle:

UHGC is a vibrant not-for-profit, non-sectarian, multi-service senior living campus serving the Westchester metropolitan area since 1919. UHGC offers a rich array of skilled and community-based programs and services that encourages and supports a life of dignity and spirituality and promotes the highest possible quality of life. UHGC serves over 600 clients daily in its campus facilities -- Willow Towers, a 126 unit assisted living residence with The Phoenix Neighborhood for those with memory impairment; a 270 bed Nursing Home; the 135 unit Low-Savin Apartments for seniors; a Long Term Home Health Care Program; and the Azor Home Health Agency. Its newest project, the renovation and expansion of its nursing home facility, combines world-class care with state-of-the-art features.

Website: www.uhgc.org

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