

Goddard House – Part of the Neighborhood

WHAT MAKES A GREAT NEIGHBORHOOD? FROM THE BRONX TO BROOKLINE (AND JAMAICA PLAIN)

*G*oddard House offers a warm sense of community within its continuum of assisted living and skilled nursing and rehabilitation. *In Touch* explores what contributes to creating “neighborhoods” both inside Goddard House and in the neighborhoods that extend beyond our doors, Brookline and Jamaica Plain. Goddard House in Brookline resident Marian Miller and her son Gerry spoke with *In Touch* about joining new neighborhoods and giving back to them.



From L to R: Gerry, George, Rich, Daniel, Marian & Eliana Miller

Marian: My late husband George and I were lifelong New Yorkers and had a wonderful connection to our neighborhood, Riverdale in the Bronx, where we had raised our sons. Being a New Yorker is in your blood and it was hard to imagine, much less accept a move out of state.

Gerry: Both Dad and Mom had medical conditions that made it progressively more difficult to manage. My brother lives with his family in Washington, DC and I live in Boston, so my parents considered a move north or south.

Marian: There were plenty of retirement communities in Washington with retired ambassadors and their wives, but what I was looking for was more a sense of belonging and home – a neighborhood and a community. I really felt that when I visited Brookline and Goddard House Assisted Living. Then the unexpected happened.

Gerry: We were taken aback at the time – my dad had a bad fall in New York the day before my parents were supposed to move, but in hindsight, it turned out to be a godsend. I mean, imagine – my parents would have been on their own with their two adult sons in other states. Kim Ollerhead, the resident care director at Goddard House in Brookline, arranged to have my dad move directly to the Rehabilitation Unit at Goddard House Skilled Nursing Center just down the street in Jamaica Plain. Mom moved right into Goddard House in Brookline. Without missing a beat, both of my parents became part of the two Goddard House communities.

Marian: My husband’s original condition also involved a degenerative illness with memory loss and he could not speak much. Still, he longed to stay involved with things he loved – being with people, playing cards, and watching his favorite Western DVDs. It was tough to imagine that he could continue this with the stress of the fall and then the move.

Gerry: Then it was as if a team of angels, in the form of both staff and residents, appeared to offer a sense of family, neighborhood, and support for Dad. With some coaching from us, they helped him to feel at ease - comfortable and engaged in the things he loved to do. We began to get to know people at both communities simultaneously as my mom and I commuted back and forth

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to Jamaica Plain from Brookline to join my dad for meals. As one of many examples, Gertrude Maggio, who works in the nursing center's dining room, got my dad involved in helping out after lunch. Dad was always looking to be useful around the house, so this was fun for him and gave him purpose, becoming his regular routine. We'd look forward to visiting the nursing center and got to closely know many of the wonderful care staff like Martin Fuller, Maria Burgos and Elcie Kulumín.

Marian: I began to make wonderful friends at the assisted living community. I became involved with trips around Boston, fitness, opera class, art groups and current affairs forums. Sensing that residents can lead too, I decided to start an endeavor myself, the Welcoming Committee. That was when I realized that I'd really found my place and felt at home in Brookline – when I could start to give back. And the aides have been great to me, especially my regulars: Oxane Leveque, Marie Cartil, and Hernsey Clareus!

Gerry: Sadly, my dad passed away over a year ago. We felt such gratitude and connection to the skilled nursing center. My mom and I still visit residents over there regularly. Our family got together and bought new patio furniture for the nursing center so residents can hang out together in nice weather – something my father loved doing. A plaque posted nearby recognizes this tribute to Dad.

Marian: Friends are what makes a neighborhood. Anywhere. And we found two great neighborhoods at Goddard House. You can see from the photo that my son Rich and his family love this new neighborhood and are regular visitors from DC!

ON CENTRE

In Touch sat down with business owner and chef, Felicia Sanchez, at her Centre Street Café, a popular, organic food restaurant in the heart of Jamaica Plain, to find out what makes JP such a great neighborhood.

I've lived here for over 25 years, and I've seen the community change a lot over the years – mostly for the better. JP is a warmer and safer place now. It's nice being able to go from an urban part of Boston into nature in just a few seconds. Jamaica Pond, the Arnold Arboretum, and Franklin Park are all easily accessible and beautiful outdoor spaces. I also love the diversity of the neighborhood. While yes, it has become more gentrified in recent years, there is still a vibrant mix of cultures. There are people of all ages, from all different backgrounds.

There is a concerted effort from merchants to keep Jamaica Plain local and independent. This adds to the community feel of the business district. Centre Street is funky and eclectic and there are some really neat small businesses. There is also a real "neighborhoody" feel to Jamaica Plain. People are kind and greet one another by first name.

My favorite thing to do in JP is to hear live music. There are so many great area venues for music and art and fantastic street festivals that take place year 'round. I love being able to walk down to The Haven or the Midway Café to soak in the local music scene, which is as diverse and imaginative as the community.



ENJOY WHAT MAKES BROOKLINE A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE

The above message is stenciled by the door of the Chobee Hoy Real Estate office in Brookline Village. Chobee Hoy, businesswoman, community activist, philanthropist, and supporter of the arts, talked with *In Touch* about what goes into making a great neighborhood.

Well, I can tell you what's really mattered to me for the 46 years I've lived in Brookline. We've got incredible diversity here – my street is like the United Nations. There are interesting and dynamic activities. The town has a real homey, physically comfortable feeling because it's well run and there is easy access to public transportation and to destinations on foot. Our physical location, right next to Boston, helps define Brookline as well. We have that small-town feeling but we're right next door to one of the greatest cities in the world!

Our citizens are the real heart of Brookline. While people are highly educated here, most are down-to-earth and friendly. The interest residents take in their town is astounding. There are 240



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GRANT AWARD BENEFITS CARE, CHOICE, AND QUALITY OF LIFE AT GODDARD HOUSE

Goddard House Skilled Nursing & Rehabilitation Center has been awarded a 2011/2012 Quality of Life Grant from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. The grant focuses on the development of consistent staffing as a cornerstone of *culture change* – the ongoing process of creating a neighborhood and home-like environment that enhances care, choice, and quality of life for the diverse population at the nursing center. Consistent staffing means that the residents see the same caregivers in all departments throughout the week. Residents, families, and staff are better able to build relationships with one another so that knowledge of care needs and individual preferences grows over time. The grant sponsors training and education related to culture change.

"I've been invested in consistent staffing since I first came to Goddard House over four years ago," reports Jim Sugrue, R.N., Director of Nursing. "Staff, residents and families get to know and care about one another. You want to do the very best for someone you care about. This frail elderly population has complex medical needs. From a clinical standpoint, consistent staffing improves



L - R: Clarence Karim, Jim Sugrue, Ellen Jones

care. If residents have the same staff assigned to them each day, there is far greater likelihood that any changes in their condition will be quickly recognized and addressed so that they can be treated here at Goddard House."

Executive Director Denise Riley Okun adds, "Consistent staffing along with our other efforts at culture change are making such a difference in our residents' lives. Giving residents more choices makes them feel counted. We ourselves take for granted the choices we make in daily life. Give our residents their choice of food, trips, and activities, and they are empowered with a sense of restored independence. Residents are also partners in their care and have a say about what goes on at Goddard House." Resident Council co-chairs, Ellen Jones and Clarence Karim, concur. "At first I was shy to chair, but experiencing the resident satisfaction that has come out of it, I'm glad I did," states Jones.

"People need to know that at Goddard House, residents and staff alike feel comfortable and respected," emphasizes Riley Okun. "We are a neighborhood within our Jamaica Plain neighborhood – a caring and welcoming community to all."

FUN, FRIENDS & FITNESS: NEW WORKOUT STUDIO OPENS AT GODDARD HOUSE IN BROOKLINE

As Jessica Gittes, Doctor of Physical Therapy and senior fitness trainer, unlocks the doors to the new fitness studio, several of her most devoted clients are already lined up ready to begin their regular workouts. Jessica's one-on-one fitness training and group classes have quickly become among the most popular programs at Goddard House in Brookline. After just eight weeks, over 20 residents are working out regularly, gaining the benefits of their new trainer's energy and expertise. The studio is open on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

Jessica and each resident begin work together with a full assessment of current strength and wellness, once a physician gives medical clearance. Individual fitness goals are established and then the sessions begin. Paul Cassidy states, "When I first started I could do just three push ups. Now I'm doing nine push ups – it feels great and this is just the beginning!" Dr. Immacula Cantave, a retired physician, has become a fast devotee, "I'm there as much as I can be – I love the new fitness studio and everyone is saying I look thinner."

When asked what the greatest rewards of her job are, Jessica states, "I enjoy watching the residents do more than they think they can do and then set new goals. I love hearing them cheer each other on with encouraging words during their workouts. It's great positive energy." Gittes wasn't planning on a career in senior fitness when she entered the physical therapy program at Northeastern University. Along the way, an



Fitness Trainer Jessica Gittes and Trish Manley

**GODDARD HOUSE
PARTNERS WITH
A.R.T.'S COMMUNITY
CONNECTIONS**

Goddard House in Brookline residents, pictured here at the American Repertory Theater, gather around Actor Phillip Boykin, who portrayed the villain Crown, in the theater's recent production of Porgy & Bess. The residents attended the now Broadway-bound musical to kick off A.R.T.'s new Community Connections partnership with Goddard House that will offer residents theater-going opportunities throughout this season.



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internship with older adults proved to be "complete inspiration" and that led her to Goddard House. Her wonderful blend of skillfulness, compassion, and approachability is a winning combination for her students.

Another winning combination is responsible for the equipment in the fitness studio. Goddard House wrote grants and received gifts from foundations to purchase the professional gym-grade equipment that is specially designed for use by older adults. Our thanks to the following for their generous contributions to the health and well-being of our residents: Alice Willard Dorr Foundation, Ida Ballou Littlefield Foundation, The Mattina R. Proctor Foundation, Bank of Canton, and Bay State Charitable Foundation.

Enjoy What Makes Brookline Great *Continued from page 2*

town meeting members who attend weekly meetings. They are like the "state reps" of their neighborhoods.

My favorite thing to do on a rainy afternoon (when I'm not working of course!) is to head to the Coolidge Corner Theater for a foreign or documentary film. When the theater was struggling in the late 1980s, a group of dedicated Brookline residents, myself included, helped save it from being demolished. Coupled with Brookline Booksmith, the Theater is one of the venues that makes Coolidge Corner such a special, community-oriented destination. Although some chain stores have moved into the area, the independent businesses of Brookline are what make this community shine.

The town's diversity, commitment to the arts and education, and friendliness of its residents all make Brookline a great place to live!

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