

More Than Service: Volunteers Create Meaningful Connections at Seven Acres and The Medallion

“Residents light up when they see the volunteers arrive,” said Jill.

The Volunteer Program at Seven Acres Jewish Senior Care Services and The Medallion Jewish Assisted Living Residence offers a wide range of activities designed to enhance social interaction and community engagement, all while bringing joy to the residents.

Director of Life Enrichment and Volunteer Services, Jill Newman has worked for the organization for 15 years and has overseen the volunteer program for the past two and a half years.

Her goal was to develop a program that residents would enjoy and that volunteers would be excited to support. With a full schedule of activities across both Seven Acres and The Medallion, Jill emphasized just how vital volunteer support has become.

“We have so much back-to-back programming,” she shared. “It would be impossible to run all of the programs without the volunteers. They are a big help.”

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), loneliness and social isolation are common challenges for many seniors, particularly those with limited mobility. Group activities and shared learning experiences offer meaningful opportunities for connection and friendship. At Seven Acres and The Medallion, promoting regular social interaction is a key priority, as it plays an essential role in enhancing the quality of life and supporting the mental well-being of older adults.

Seven Acres and The Medallion offer activities such as Bingo, Cooking with Ellie, Sing Along, Happy Hour, Musing with Mort, Yiddish Group, Arts & Crafts, Exercise, and Religious Programming among many others.

Ellie Stanton has been a dedicated volunteer at both organizations for the past six years, bringing joy and connection through her popular program, Cooking with Ellie, a favorite among residents.

“I love them,” Ellie shared warmly. “What I enjoy most is tailoring the class to meet their individual needs so that everyone can participate and enjoy the process of making food, no matter their ability.”

Ellie continued.

“They get a lot of pleasure out of it, and I get a lot of pleasure seeing how happy it makes them.”

On a typical afternoon at Seven Acres, the hallways come alive as residents roll their way to the crafts room for a lively game of Bingo, another one of their most beloved activities.

“Do I hear bingo?,” calls out Activity Assistant Denise Ray over the microphone.

Denise worked at Seven Acres for more than 20 years before retiring in 2017. In her time off she enjoyed spending time with her 12 grandchildren and 4 adopted children. In 2024, after realizing she had a lot of free time on her hands, she returned to work in the activities department.

Denise said there was only one thing that brought her back.

“It’s the residents, I really enjoy the residents,” she said. “They keep me going and they make me laugh. Literally never a dull moment.”

“Honestly, I might need someone’s help one day,” she continued. “So, I give now and who knows, the kindness might come back to me in return later.”

For the Activities Department, it’s not just about providing service, it’s about fostering meaningful connections with the residents.

“I’m always so in awe and appreciative of the volunteers and how much they are willing to do for the residents,” Jill said. “They are always putting them first.”

Looking ahead, Jill is excited about the future of the program and the potential for new volunteers.

“We plan to keep growing,” she said. “The sky’s the limit, especially because volunteers often bring great suggestions and fresh ideas.”

If you are interested in volunteering at Seven Acres or The Medallion, please contact Jill Newman at (713) 778-5782. For more information about our beautiful assisted living community contact Loren Gordon at 713-778-5702. To stay connected, follow us on Facebook and Instagram or visit sevenacres.org and themedallion.org.