



LifeTimes

Managing anxiety in older adults

Anxiety is a challenging issue for anyone, but it can be particularly troublesome for older adults.

In fact, anxiety is the most prevalent disorder among older adults, with estimates indicating between 15 and 50% of older people experience significant anxiety.

Helping older adults manage anxiety and its disorders was the impetus for “Embracing Calm: Navigating Anxiety in the Senior Years,” the subject of the 14th annual Sara and Samuel J. Lessans Healthcare Symposium May 2 at the Woodmont Country Club.

Dr. Sandeep Jauhar, morning keynote speaker, focused on his newest book, *My Father’s Brain*, which describes his father’s battle with Alzheimer’s disease and its effect on him and his family. A cardiologist, Jauhar explained changes that occur in the brain of those diagnosed with

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Pictured at the annual health care symposium are, left to right, Carolyn Eichberg, PhD, CESLC psychologist; Dr. Ellen Lessans; the Lessans’ children, Matthew and Faye; Dr. Stuart Lessans; and Dr. Elisa Gil-Pires, CESLC executive vice president, Medical Affairs, Chief Medical Officer and medical director. Eichberg and Gil-Pires participated in the symposium, which is made possible by the Lessans in memory of Dr. Stuart Lessans’ parents, Sara and Samuel J. Lessans.

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Guardian Campaign gift sustains family legacy

David Bruce Smith's latest gift to the Guardian Campaign, through the Robert H. Smith Foundation, reflects a family legacy of beneficence that began with his grandfather, Charles E. Smith.

Charles E. Smith served as president of the Hebrew Home of Greater Washington from 1959 to 1962, creating the foundation for the scope of services CESLC offers today.

But he did more than that. He also endowed others with the meaning of giving. "When I was young," David Bruce Smith says, "my grandfather would give us a gift of money for our birthdays, but he would say to us, 'I want you to take part of it and give it to charity. I want you to know how it feels to give to others.'"

That message may have been difficult for teenagers to hear, David Bruce Smith says, "but as I got older, I understood how right he was. He was very perceptive. All these things he told us, such as 'the more you give, the better you will feel,' were true."

An author, publisher, business executive and co-founder of the Grateful American Book Prize, David Smith is the son of Robert H. and Clarice Chasen Smith. Robert was the son of Charles E. and Leah Smith.

"My grandfather believed very much in the concept of *tikkun olam*, to repair the world," Smith says. "And he wanted to lead by example." In 1967, he continues, his grandfather had a recurrent dream of men on scaffolding on the side of one the buildings his company had constructed. A deeply religious man who believed in signs from God, Charles Smith "interpreted that as a sign it was time to retire and do more important

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— David Bruce Smith



David Bruce Smith

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Alzheimer's and the challenges families face physically and emotionally as they navigate disease progression in the face of limited treatments.

Breakout sessions focused on anxiety and suggested treatments. "We all experience anxiety," said Neda Gould, PhD, associate director at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center Anxiety Disorders Clinic and associate professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, "which is a state of fear resulting from either a realistic situation or an imaginary threatening situation."

Although anxiety can be a normal, healthy response to a situation, aging introduces new experiences that can produce fear and uncertainty and even interfere with the functions of daily living.

While treatment can include medication, Rachel Singer, PhD, licensed psychologist, clinical director at Resnik and Associates and a faculty member at the University of Maryland, and Selena Snow, PhD, licensed psychologist with the Snow Psychology Group, focused on cognitive behavioral therapy. CBT offers techniques to challenge thoughts that lead to anxiety and worry.

An additional approach is mindfulness. Afternoon keynote speaker Serena Jain described her own experience in using mindfulness to overcome anxiety. A mindfulness-based stress reduction teacher and

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Taking part in the symposium were, left to right, Dr. Sandeep Jauhar, morning keynote speaker; Neda Gould, PhD, who led a breakout session; Dr. Elisa Gil-Pires, CESLC executive vice president, Medical Affairs, Chief Medical Officer and medical director; and Serena Jain, afternoon keynote speaker.

Assisted Living

301-450-7433

Independent Living

301-450-7097

Hirsh Health Center

301-816-5004

ElderSAFE™ Center

301-816-5099

Hebrew Home of Greater Washington

301-770-8476

National indicators underscore our quality care

CESLC's Hebrew Home of Greater Washington has received a five-star rating from the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) in quality measures rating and in both short-term and longer-stay quality measures. Those "much above average" ratings are a wonderful external assessment of the quality of care we provide.



*Susan Boettger, Senior Director,
Clinical Excellence & Pandemic
Response*

In fact, Hebrew Home has retained its five-star quality rating on the CMS Nursing Home Compare website—an online tool to help consumers compare skilled nursing centers—for nine consecutive quarters. The rating system uses information from health care surveys including both standard and complaints, quality measures and staffing.

The ratings document our success in focusing on person-centered wellness. That's a priority for us. As an interdisciplinary team, we look at the whole person and do a better job, I believe, by embracing each resident and patient as an individual worthy of respect and dignity, an individual with likes and dislikes, with a history and family—with what I like to refer to as their "story"—that we try to learn and understand.

They also provide specific indicators of how we're doing, as measured by national standards. Among indicators for short-stay residents, who are admitted for care following a hospitalization or for rehabilitation:

- Our percentage of those re-hospitalized after admission was 15.1%. That figure compares favorably to a national average of 23.1% and a Maryland average of 21.5%.
- Our percentage of residents who experienced one or more falls with major injury during their stay was 0.3%. The national rate is 0.8%.
- The rate of our residents returning to home or the community after a stay was 59.4%, comparing favorably to a national average of 49.7%.

Our indicators for longer-term residents are equally noteworthy:

- Our number of long-stay high-risk residents with pressure ulcers was 6.7%. That figure compares favorably to a national average of 7.8% and a Maryland average of 9.6%.
- Our percentage of long-stay residents whose ability to move independently got worse was 11.4%. That percentage compares favorably to national and Maryland averages, respectively, of 15.4% and 25.2%.

That last indicator is especially important to us because we focus on minimizing residents' decline in factors related to independence. In addition, our use of the BCAT Approach™, tools and interventions to

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improve the lives of those who face cognitive decline, exemplifies our recognition as a cognitive center of excellence.

Does all of this mean everything is perfect? Of course not. Providing 24-hour care and services to older adults with complex care needs is a multifaceted process.

But these measures serve as guideposts for our journey in providing clinical excellence as we sustain our emphasis on continuous quality enhancement.

Susan Boettger

Senior Director, Clinical Excellence & Pandemic Response

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certified integrative health and wellbeing coach, she teaches mindfulness at the Orchard Hill Center, formerly known as The Princeton Center for Yoga & Health.

Anxiety represents future-orientated thoughts, but mindfulness advocates focusing on the present, she said. “Mindfulness helped me to step out of that worried, ruminating mind that happens when you’re anxious and into the present moment,” Jain said. “It gave me the tools to be able to cope with anxiety.” She noted studies have supported the use of mindfulness-based interventions to help older adults deal with anxiety, depression and stress, resulting as well in a decline in loneliness and depression and an increase in certain positive physical and cognitive factors.

Although the phrase AI, or artificial intelligence, sometimes is portrayed as a frightening concept, breakout speaker Joan Green described ways in which AI and technology, such as distance monitoring and support, can aid older adults, potentially reducing anxiety by lessening isolation. Green is a licensed and certified speech-language pathologist, technology consultant and “eldertech” advocate.

Dr. Naveen Maddineni, psychiatry director, Maryland, for Psychogeriatric Services, discussed behavioral disturbances among patients who have dementia.

The symposium was made possible by Drs. Ellen and Stuart Lessans, in loving memory of his parents, Sara and Samuel J. Lessans. ■

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Contact us: info@ceslc.org | www.smithlifecommunities.org

EXPRESSING OUR APPRECIATION

Donor Thank You Dinner

DONOR SUPPORT OF CESLC: IT'S 'FOR REAL'

While master illusionist Shimshi may have dazzled the audience by seemingly reading minds and making the impossible seem real, what wasn't an illusion at the event was attendees' support of Charles E. Smith Life Communities.

The mentalist and illusionist provided entertainment at CESLC's annual donor thank you dinner. Born and raised in Israel, Shimshi has performed for audiences ranging from Fortune 500 companies to celebrities and dignitaries.

The event honored donors who gave \$500 or more during 2023, including those who contributed to the annual Guardian Campaign, which celebrated its 65th year of generating support for CESLC.

All of those gifts, Natalie West, chair of the CESLC Board of Governors, said, "enable us to continue fulfilling our mission of service and care to 1,100 residents and their families every day."

FUNDING THE FUTURE

The event, attended by approximately 100 people, also honored Builders of the Future, donors who have included CESLC in their estate plans. As part of that recognition, a tribute was offered to the late Joseph Hoffman, who passed away Dec. 30.

"A past chair of CESLC, Joe was one of our most dedicated leaders and fundraisers," Bruce J. Lederman, CESLC president/CEO, said. "He exemplified our value of *tzedek*, to do what is right, act with integrity, accountability and generosity of spirit."

As a volunteer leader and chair of several boards, "Joe was passionate about our mission and inspired many others," Lederman said. "He was a relentless and successful fundraiser, raising millions for the organization, and thoughtfully established a legacy gift to perpetuate his commitment."



2023 Guardian Campaign Co-Chairs Lori and Gary Saffitz (front row center), pay tribute to their committee members surrounding them. The campaign raised more than \$1.3 million.



Long-time supporter Phyllis Scalettar lends a hand to illusionist and mentalist Shimshi, who performed at the donor event.

Below: Builders of the Future Society member Bobbi Fagen, left, with her friend Maribeth Sherman.



A PIVOTAL ROLE IN THE COMMUNITY

"My experience with Charles E Smith Life Communities is woven into all aspects of my life," said Lori Saffitz, who along with her husband, Gary, co-chaired the Guardian Campaign.

"I spent 40 years here as an employee," she said. "After retirement, I volunteered. I am a donor and a family member and this year became a fundraiser. In all of these roles, I have seen and experienced how the contributions you so generously and thoughtfully make create a positive difference in the quality of life of all the people who live, work, volunteer and make this community their home." ■

CAMPAIGN CELEBRATES MILESTONE YEAR

Sixty-five years old. But considering retirement? Absolutely not!

Charles E. Smith Life Communities' Guardian Campaign is now 65, but is as vital and important as ever. The recent campaign raised more than \$1.3 million for the senior living community and related services.

Gary and Lori Saffitz co-chaired the campaign, leading a committee of 30 who solicited gifts through personal letters, phone calls and emails. More than 400 donors contributed to the campaign.

"It's important to note in this anniversary year that nearly 75% of our residents in nursing care rely on Medicaid, which doesn't cover the full costs of care, and 60% do not have outside visitors," Lori Saffitz said. "If you ever wonder if your contributions make a difference, please know that your support ensures the highest standards of quality care, enhanced with meaningful social experiences. For so many residents, we are their family."

WOMEN'S NETWORKING EVENT

Women network to enjoy comedian, support senior care

More than 150 women from the Greater Washington area recently enjoyed a night of comedy while learning more about the historic mission of Charles E. Smith Life Communities.



Ophira Eisenberg, comedian

The women gathered April 10 at Pinstripes at Pike and Rose for CESLC's annual Women's Networking Event, "An Evening of Comedy," featuring Ophira Eisenberg. The event provides an opportunity for donors and potential donors, community members, families, board members and other supporters to network while also receiving updates on CESLC's services.

"A number of people who have not participated in recent years attended this event, which offered them the opportunity to learn about the changes and challenges we face," said Natalie West, chair of the Board of Governors. "Their continuing support is very important."

The networking event began about five years ago when women on the CESLC board wanted to bring together women from the community to provide more information about the senior life care community. "Because women often research options for care for their parents and family members, we want them to know as much about us as possible," Alison S. Baraf, vice chair, Resource Development Committee, said.

Eisenberg is the host of NPR's and WNYC's weekly trivia, puzzle and game show, "Ask Me Another." She's performed on late-night programs, Comedy Central, VH-1, the Today Show and various comedy series. She was featured in The New York Post's "The 50 Best Bits That Crack Up Pro Comics" and selected by BackStage as one of "10 Standout Stand Ups Worth Watching." ■



Challah event offers recipe for learning, unity



The Challah Prince shows off his custom-designed challah menorah.



Provided with challah dough, guests made their own challah to take home and bake.

What requires 220 pounds of flour, 22 pounds of sugar, three pounds of yeast, four pounds of salt, 22 pounds of sunflower oil and a lot of water?

The answer: 200 loaves of challah.

Two hundred community members came together to create their own custom-made challah to take home and bake. They were guided in that effort by Idan Chabasov, also known as the Challah Prince.

Chabasov, a resident of Israel and considered a master of creating intricate challah, frequently tours the United States and other countries presenting workshops and demonstrations. He has said the role of the challah is to bring people together. "Although it is a Jewish bread, for me challah is for everybody," he said.

Braided challah with three, four or six strands are the most common. Because the strands look like arms intertwined, they are said to symbolize love. Three braids also are described as representing truth, peace and justice.

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David Bruce Smith *Continued from Page 2*

things. He felt he had made enough money” from his construction and building management company.

He turned the business over to Robert Smith and Robert Kogod and set his sights on full-time volunteer efforts to improve the community. Aware of the Hebrew Home’s need to expand, he spearheaded the multi-million-dollar campaign to build a complex to house the Home as well as the Jewish Social Services Agency and the Jewish Community Center. That move occurred two years later, the legacy of giving and community support Charles Smith envisioned now on sound footing.

Later, the Robert Smith and Robert Kogod families continued that legacy by making a \$12 million gift and leading the campaign that resulted in the Smith-Kogod Residence. They also served as honorary chairs for a \$15.4 million capital campaign between 1999 and 2001 and, more recently, made a gift to support post-acute care services at CESLC, honoring CEO Emeritus Warren R. Slavin in the process.

That legacy continues with David Bruce Smith’s recent gift, part of a unique connection between grandfather and grandson. ■

Challah event *Continued from Page 9*

The event was cosponsored by CESLC and the LEV Experience, a grassroots organization created for people looking to deepen their connection to Jewish life. Founded by Rabbi Shlomo and Devorah Buxbaum, the LEV Experience offers learning opportunities and Jewish experiences in homes, offices and communities in the Greater Washington area.

“This collaboration is really incredible,” Devorah Buxbaum said. “Each of our organizations serves our community in different but in meaningful and impactful ways. At this time in our lives, unity and light are more meaningful than ever.” ■

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Upcoming Events

JUNE 26 | 1 p.m.

Optimizing Brain Health in Senior Living Communities:
An Evidence-Based Approach

SEPTEMBER 17 | 11:30 a.m. | Ring House

Thriving Alone: Navigating Life as a Solo Ager

H2YP participants learn to make difficult decisions

The decisions were not easy ones. But learning to make difficult decisions is part of the value of the Harold & Shirley Robinson H2YP Youth Philanthropy program.

H2YP provides high school students with the opportunity to learn about financial needs, giving and the decisions involved in philanthropy. Grant requests support programs throughout Charles E. Smith Life Communities. Benefits to participants include teamwork, problem-solving and decision-making skills.

Decisions this year involved careful deliberation. Grant requests totaled more than \$23,000, while available funds were less than half that amount. Each participant makes a \$250 donation to help fund approved grants, with remaining allocated funds provided through the program's endowment.

The 2024 H2YP cohort received nine grant requests, three more than last year. The group deliberated on each request, agreeing through consensus on how to divide available funds.

Grant proposals funded include adoptive sports equipment for Hebrew Home, an Art in the Park trip for Cohen-Rosen residents, a writing workshop for Ring House residents and a shelter for the ElderSAFE™ Center.

"We considered impact, reach and relevance to the mission during our discussions," said GiGi Gordon, a three-year H2YP board member. "In the end, although we wished we could have fully funded all of the grant proposals, we were pleased with our results."

"Watching them, I could tell they were learning valuable lessons that will make them excellent future nonprofit board members and leaders," said Monica Mayer, manager of volunteers and the program facilitator.

Registration for the 2025 H2YP cohort opens in December. While more information is available on the CESLC website, anyone interested in being added to the program's mail list should email Mayer at mayer@ceslc.org. Participants earn Student Service Learning hours while developing a deeper appreciation of the Jewish concept of tzedakah and what it can accomplish. ■

Pictured, left to right, are Natalie West, chair, Board of Governors, Lauren Berman, Bryan Berman, Skylar Cohen, GiGi Gordon, Tyler Portnoy, Leah Rosenstein, Bennett Richman, David Schanzer, Zachary Schanzer, and Alison Baraf, resource development chair. Not pictured are Sienna Friedson, Alexa Greenstein and Jack Rosenstein.





- Visit us online at
www.smithlifecommunities.org to:
- Register for all events
 - Find volunteer and career opportunities
 - Make a donation



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