

# Attach Your Name To Baycrest

Baycrest Foundation

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A REPORT ON FAMILIES WHO CARE ABOUT AGING

## Gift of music helps patients celebrate birthdays



**Edward Bronfman** The prominent Montreal-born businessman and internationally-renowned philanthropist, who passed away in April 2005 at 77, rarely passed up the chance to make a direct impact on people's lives, explains **Dayle Rakowsky**, former executive director of the Edward Bronfman Family

Baycrest Hospital's beloved Birthday Program will continue to provide patients with the opportunity to celebrate their birthdays collectively with monthly onsite concerts, thanks to the generosity of the late **Edward Bronfman**.

Foundation. "He saw his contribution to the Birthday Program as a way to help put a smile on people's faces," she explains. "He really liked to see people smile."

In keeping with his "hands on" philanthropic philosophy, Bronfman, who received the Order of Canada in 2000 for his charitable work, came out to a number of programs to see for himself the positive impact they had on the participants and their friends and family. "It gave him a great deal of satisfaction to know his gift was making a difference," adds Rakowsky.

"The program has been a favourite for many years," explains recreational therapist **Paula Jorgensen**. "People really appreciate being recognized on their special day."

## Happy Bat Mitzvah Jennifer Silverstein!

"Baycrest is so leading edge. It's an easy cause to contribute to," says **Shari Silverstein**, mother of **Benjamin**, 16, **Jennifer**, 13, **Zachary**, 10 and **Danny**, 7. When Shari informed Jennifer that her Bat Mitzvah cheques totaled several thousand dollars, Jen wanted to give nearly all of it to charity. "I was surprised she didn't want to keep more of it and eventually persuaded her to put some away for future needs."

Baycrest was high on Jennifer's list. Her grandfather, **Milton Wolfe** - her beloved "Papa" - was treated at Baycrest for Alzheimer's. After his

death the family established the **Milton Wolfe Covenant Fund**. Baycrest covenant funds are an enduring way to memorialize a loved one. Donors like Jennifer can decide whether to allocate the funds to Care, Research, Education or to Baycrest's most pressing needs.

"I've added to the Fund from time to time," says Shari, who tries to be a role model for her children on tzedakah. Jennifer was impressed by how hard her mother worked to raise money for a bike

riding fundraiser in Israel.

"Grandpa's illness was so gradual. At first I didn't realize what was happening," Jennifer recalls. "He would call up and say, 'Hi, it's Uncle Milton,' instead of Papa. I hope the money will go to help people with Alzheimer's," she adds.

The Silverstein family (l to r): Danny, Ron, Ben, Zach, Shari and Jennifer, December 2005



# Community heavyweight leaves lasting legacy

**Alex Beder** wore many different hats throughout his long and legendary life. But the one hat he never took off, whether he was in the gym, on a building site, or working out with famed Toronto Argonauts, was that of a compassionate community member.

It seemed there wasn't a cause the spirited and youngest son of **Benjamin and Bertha Beder** wasn't drawn to after dropping out of high school at 14 to help out in his father's fur business.

"Alex was always the champion of the underdog," recalls nephew **Robert (Bobby) Beder**, who was treated like a son by Alex who, although married to wife **Terry** for more than 50 years, never had children of his own.

Staying in top physical condition through daily workouts and pursuing his passion for weightlifting was almost as important to Alex as demonstrating his Jewish pride and rushing to the aid of those in need. Alex was particularly proud of his involvement in Toronto's infamous Christie Pits riots when the fit and feisty 27-year-old joined fellow Jews and members of other ethnic minorities to fight against an anti-Semitic mob. "His Jewish identity meant a lot to him," says Bobby, recalling the "countless letters" his uncle wrote to newspaper editors arguing the case for a strong State of Israel whenever he felt the Jewish homeland was under attack.

Although his various careers in real-estate, show business and even a short stint as a restaurateur kept

Alex busy, the eager entrepreneur always found time for his favourite causes. The Soldiers of Israel, the Variety Club and Holy Blossom's Out of the Cold Program were especially important to Alex along with supporting Baycrest. Terry spent considerable time at Baycrest during the last three years of her life before passing away in her home in October 1999. "Terry loved Baycrest's 'Jewishness' and its caring staff so much that she never liked leaving there," recalls Bobby.

A subject of many newspaper articles touting his generosity and activism, Alex is perhaps best known in the community for starting an annual tradition at age 90 where he marked his birthday by joining forces with old friend and restaurant owner **John Letnick** to organize a free meal for 1,000 homeless people at Letnick's landmark dockside floating restaurant. "He loved serving lunch and having direct contact with the people because it made him feel like he was truly making a difference in their lives," he explains. Captain John Letnick continues to sponsor the lunch every year in commemoration of Alex's birthday.

After the vigorous 97-year-old passed away in February 2004, funds left in Alex and Terry's wills went to support Baycrest's Brain Health Centre Clinics along with other community causes. "My uncle was thrilled knowing that he would be helping Baycrest even after he was gone," adds Bobby. "After all, Baycrest, just like Alex, is all about helping people who can't help themselves."



Terry and Alex Beder (seated) surrounded by Adam, Sharron and Aarin Beder, Alison Beder Solway and Robert Beder during Alex's 85th birthday celebration.

# Father's Baycrest experience inspires special gift

When **Celie Goldstein** began to notice her father slipping away following the untimely death of his son, **Lionel Weinstein**, she decided to give Baycrest a call. A few weeks later, **Ralph Weinstein** found a new reason to get up in the morning and Celie saw her father smile again.

“The change in my father was quite profound,” explains Celie, who witnessed her father, a lifelong Jewish scholar and retired family physician, come alive again at 94 whenever he visited Baycrest’s Mountainview Club. Even though the Club offers seniors everything from art classes to current events discussions, Celie, who drove her father to the day respite program twice weekly, believes it was the people that Ralph really enjoyed.

Club social worker **Dianne Phillips** concurs. “I think more than anything Ralph liked socializing and being among people.”

“He loved reminiscing with people about what it was like being a doctor,” adds receptionist **Janice Miller**. “I always made a point of calling him ‘Dr. Weinstein’ when he came through the door.”

In fact, according to Mountainview staff, one of the few pastimes Ralph enjoyed as much as engaging others in

conversation, was listening to music, especially the Yiddish songs he used to hear growing up in an orthodox home in Lithuania. That’s why it came as no surprise when Celie chose to honour her father’s memory by purchasing a new entertainment system for the Club.



Ralph Weinstein

“Music is very therapeutic to our members,” adds **Michelle Eisner**, who also staffs the Mountainview Club. “I know our clients will benefit greatly from an improved sound system and that Ralph would have been very happy to know that his memory will live on at the Club through this generous gift.”

## Attach Your Name to Baycrest

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**Mark Gryfe**, President, Baycrest Foundation  
416-785-2500, ext. 2039 or e-mail [mgryfe@baycrest.org](mailto:mgryfe@baycrest.org)

For **Helen Eisenstat**, the Jewish values of family, education and community were the enduring pillars of her life.

“My mother was a dynamic and memorable woman,” her daughter **Marilyn Eisenstat** explains. “She had a drive to do things well, whether it was as a wife and mother, or as a member of her community. She never stinted on her energies in any task.”

An avid student, Helen was devastated when at 16 the Depression cut short her education and forced her into the workforce as a bookkeeper. When she married **Louis Eisenstat**, she threw herself with energy and dedication into her life as a member of his extended family. Her four children, **Marilyn, Lorraine Weinrib, Barbara Eisenstat, and Sholom Eisenstat**, extol her skills as a superb cook and her renown as a hostess to their friends, who learned that this was a home that was both fragrant and welcoming. She was an enthusiastic grandmother to **Aliza, Sara, Jacob, Yedida and Ayala** and carved out vital relationships with each of them.



Helen Eisenstat

Widowed at 61, Helen was determined to resume her education and enrolled in York University’s Jewish Studies Program, earning a BA at the age of 75. Her own mother’s health soon deteriorated but Helen was determined to succeed as a student while still continuing to provide her mother with the best available care. Marilyn remembers, “In the mornings my mother would take the bus to the University and on her way back she would trek to the Terraces of Baycrest to see her mother. She was so grateful that she could indulge her desire to study while knowing that her mother was being well taken care of.”

It was during her mother’s last years that Helen purchased a life insurance policy for herself with the Baycrest Foundation as the beneficiary.

“Helen was a remarkable woman who was able to make a huge impact on the work we do at Baycrest,” explains **Florence Weinberger**, the Foundation’s director of Development. “She established a life insurance policy because she wanted to turn a modest annual premium into a large and meaningful future gift. And we are most grateful.”

Helen was a tireless worker for her community – in Adath Israel’s Sisterhood, in her involvement in the synagogue’s Club L’Chaim, and as president of the Association of Jewish Seniors for three years. She died on November 26, 2005, at the age of 87.

Helen Eisenstat fulfilled, in her own written words, the mitzvah of “reaching beyond our own limited lives to see the future.”

To find out more about making a Planned Gift to Baycrest, please call Florence Weinberger at 416-785-2500, ext. 2055.

**Harry Gorman** says there are lots of endowment funds that support researchers and scientists. "But we wanted to help other staff, to give them a chance to better themselves," he says.

"I remember a guy who worked in Baycrest's boiler room a few years back. He wanted to go back to school so badly and I was really pleased that the Award gave him that chance. He not only finished his studies, he went back and got his Master's," he adds.

Harry and his wife, **Sara**, had plenty of opportunity to witness the dedication of the rank and file staff at Baycrest. "Sara's grandfather was a resident at Baycrest," Harry says of the man who died in 1970 at 103. "Both our mothers were at Baycrest," Sara recalls. "The staff was wonderful and we wanted to motivate them to study and move up the ladder."

**The Hy & Bertha Shore and Harry & Sara Gorman Award** originated as a means of perpetuating the names of Harry's sister and brother-in-law, Hy and Bertha Shore. "Hy, Ben Katz and I were partners in real estate development," Harry explains. "We were instrumental in getting **Ben and Hilda Katz** to make a large donation to Baycrest Hospital, which today bears their name."

"We have continued to augment the Award fund," Harry says, "and whenever we have family celebrations we encourage people to do the same." The Gormans have also pulled their weight as volunteers at Baycrest. Harry was co-chair of the last Annual Campaign and Sara chaired the successful Gala, From Generation to Generation, with Carl Reiner and Mel Brooks, in 1998. "I brought all my daughters to help me," she recalls. The Gormans have four children and 11 grandchildren.

"We're both from humble beginnings," Sara explains, "and our education was interrupted." The Award's Philosophy, as set out in the application form, states that 'every staff member plays an important role in maintaining high standards of care for the elderly' and that each should be encouraged to increase knowledge and further their professional growth.

**Shoshana Yaakobi**, a social worker in the Community Day Centre and a recipient of the 2005 Award, couldn't agree more. "I couldn't have gone back to school on my own," she says. "Not only have the Shore and Gorman families touched my life by funding my education but this will also enhance the lives of my clients. And so it's also a wonderful way to help the community."



Neil Shore (middle row, centre) and Harry and Sara Gorman (seated) recently caught up with 15 of the 55 staff members who have received the Shore Gorman Award since its inception in 1988. The Award helps staff continue their professional development to enrich the lives of the elderly. (Absent with regrets: Fred Shore)

# Young supporter leads by example



Sarah Spitz

At 14, **Sarah Spitz** is a seasoned Baycrest supporter. After establishing a covenant fund at Baycrest and asking friends and family to make donations in lieu of other gifts for her 9th birthday, Sarah is also leading by example.

“I didn’t feel like I needed anything,” explains Sarah who made the same generous gesture for her Bat Mitzvah celebration. Based on regular visits to her great aunt, **Chana Greenberg**, who is a resident of the Apotex Centre, Jewish Home for the Aged, Sarah felt Baycrest was the natural choice for her.

Younger sister **Emma** followed in her big sister’s footsteps two years ago on her 7th birthday as did a friend of Sarah’s, when they both decided to request donations be made to the Hospital for Sick Children in honour of their birthdays.

“I think it’s cool that I was able to be an example for others,” admits the grade 8 Hebrew day school student who attributes her strong sense of community to the lessons in Derech Eretz (acting with consideration of others) she has learned over the years.

“It just felt like it was the right thing to do.”

## Contact Us!

*Attach Your Name to Baycrest* is published semi-annually to keep you up-to-date on events, individuals and programs that relate to activities at Baycrest.

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