

Baycrest Matters

A bi-weekly update for Baycrest staff, families, clients and volunteers

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Baycrest is an academic health sciences centre fully affiliated with the University of Toronto

Cantors, klezmers and crooners featured in Learning Academy class



◀ Jordan Klapman (left) an instructor from Ryerson University, had residents of the Apotex Centre, Jewish Home for the Aged tapping their feet, humming and singing along in a class on the history of Jewish music on March 3. The class is part of Baycrest's Learning Academy program presented in partnership with the G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education at Ryerson.

Klapman is teaching a class about Klezmer music's contribution to the development of popular jazz, including the song, "Bei Mir Bistu Shein," a popular Yiddish song which was rewritten in English and became a hit for the Andrews Sisters in 1937.

Eva Kurtzman, a resident of the Apotex says she's enjoying the class. "It's very stimulating and I'm surprised I know so many of the words," she says. "It takes me back to the good old days when I used to attend dances. I loved to dance!"

A new session of Learning Academy classes will start in May for both residents in the Apotex and the community. Classes in the Apotex are exclusive to Apotex residents, while seniors in the community can enrol in classes taking place at the Joseph E. and Minnie Wagman Centre. For more information, contact Hayley Rosen at ext. 5602 or hrosen@baycrest.org.

RRI study sheds light on the effects of white matter disease

A researcher at Baycrest's Rotman Research Institute (RRI) has published a new study showing that a vascular disease affecting the brain's white matter may cause a broader range of cognitive impairment than previously thought.

Brandon P. Vasquez, a PhD candidate at RRI and the Department of Psychology at the University of Toronto, conducted a meta-analysis of 27 published studies comparing healthy older adults to older

adults who have cognitive impairment due to white matter disease. The disease hardens tiny arteries deep within the brain, gradually restricting nutrients to white matter – the connections between brain regions involved in executive abilities such as planning, organizing, problem-solving and attention.

"A central characteristic of white matter disease is impairment of executive functions and speed of thinking, but

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Baycrest

Innovations in aging

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there's long been suspicion in the scientific and clinical communities that the disease impairs a broader range of cognitive areas," says Vasquez.

Vasquez and his colleague Dr. Konstantine Zakzanis of the University of Toronto Scarborough found that compared to healthy participants, the patients with white matter disease showed significant deficits in all eight cognitive domains examined, including executive functioning, thinking speed, general functioning, language, immediate memory, delayed memory, working memory and visuo-spatial construction. Thinking speed showed the greatest impairment, followed by immediate and delayed memory, while



Brandon P. Vasquez, a PhD candidate recently published his research on white matter disease in the *Journal of Neuropsychology*.

working memory and visuo-spatial abilities were the least affected.

The study has been published online in the *Journal of Neuropsychology* ahead of print publication. RRI senior scientist Dr. Nicole Anderson was a senior advisor on the paper. The study was funded by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada.

Education Sessions teach about caring for older adults

Family members, private companions, volunteers, students and anyone interested in learning more about special topics relating to caring for seniors are invited to attend a series of free Education Sessions taking place in March and April. The sessions were originally created for the benefit of private companions working with Baycrest clients, but have now grown to include community members helping loved ones to age in place at home.

The series is offered twice a year, featuring different topics presented by Baycrest experts. To register, please contact Fran Cossever, manager, Consumer Education and Information at ext. 3195 or at fcossever@baycrest.org.

Upcoming education sessions:

March 18, 2 to 3:30 p.m.:
Advanced eating assistance training

March 25, 2 to 3:30 p.m.:
Enable not disable

April 8, 1:30 to 3 p.m.:
The dying person's bill of rights

April 29, 2 to 3 p.m.:
Age-related changes and Stop & Watch!



New brain talks series brings neuroscience to everyone

In celebration of the Rotman Research Institute's (RRI) 25th anniversary, Rotman scientists will be presenting a series of short talks about the latest developments in research on the brain and aging. Everyone from the Baycrest community is welcome to attend and the talks are designed to make the exciting work happening in the field of neuroscience accessible to a general audience.

The first of these Brain Talks at Baycrest will take place on March 28 in the Winter Garden Court and the series will continue throughout the year.

Can we really fix dementia?

**Presented by Dr. Jed Meltzer, scientist
Friday, March 28 at 11 a.m.**

Dementia is a major public health issue on the rise, and advances in diagnosis and treatment have the potential to improve the lives of millions of Canadians. Dr. Jed Meltzer's talk will give a hopeful but realistic overview of improvements that may be yielded by the latest brain research.

Who's up for Rappin' with the Rabbi?

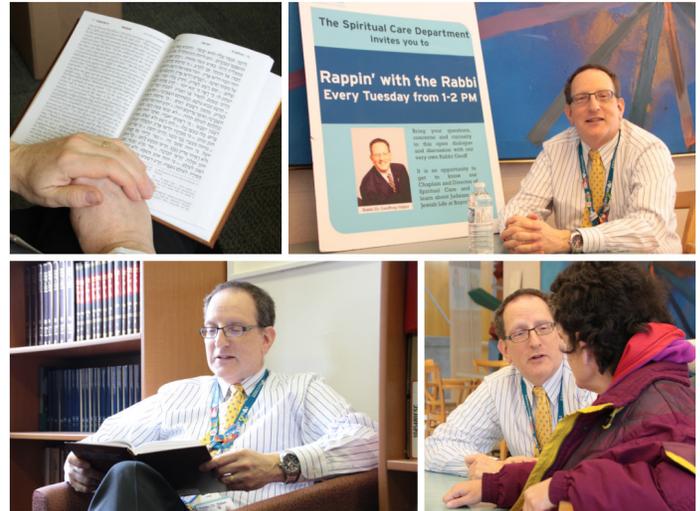
Since last November, Rabbi Dr. Geoffrey Haber, director, Spiritual Care has been sitting down at the W.A. Café each Tuesday afternoon, making himself available to answer questions or have heart-to-hearts with those who seek him out.

Taking place weekly, Rappin' with the Rabbi began as an opportunity for people to get to know Haber as a chaplain – a role and relationship he says is as deep and as open as people wish to make it. "There's much variety and variance in the topics people bring," Haber says. "Some seek simple answers to questions about Jewish culture and holidays while others seek guidance, grief counselling or emotional support for life changes."

"I'm here as a resource for all things to all those at Baycrest."

Sessions are kept deliberately small, creating what Haber likens to a fireside chat where "people can feel like they're in a safe, confidential environment to speak openly and have queries answered without embarrassment."

Drop in for a session of **Rappin' with the Rabbi every Tuesday, 1 to 2 p.m. in the W.A. Café.** No appointment necessary.



▲ A look into Rabbi Geoff's Tuesday afternoons: Rappin' with the Rabbi calls for preparatory readings on counselling and psalms; a volunteer stops by for a chat; look for the poster to know when the Rabbi is in.

Easier to hear: Sound system enhances programs at Terraces, Wagman Centre

A new sound system is making life better for everyone involved in programs at The Terraces of Baycrest Retirement Residence and the Joseph E. and Minnie Wagman Centre. The portable microphone, headset and speaker system was graciously donated by Rabbi Mark Dov Shapiro in memory of his mother, Terraces resident Pearl Shapiro, who experienced hearing loss.

Rabbi Shapiro is grateful to the Terraces' team, saying they were "attentive to her, and respectful and supportive, both of her and of me."



◀ The new sound system is used in dance classes and other programs at The Terraces of Baycrest Retirement Residence and Joseph E. and Minnie Wagman Centre.

The sound system's portable mike is easy to pass around during discussions, which speaks to the needs of many clients, according to Terraces social worker Shawn Fremeth. "Having portable equipment means people with hearing difficulties can participate at a much more meaningful level."

For information about ways you can give, contact the Baycrest Foundation at 416-785-2875 or donations@baycrest.org.



Happy Purim!

Purim is a time of prizes, treats, costumes and gift-giving that celebrates the day that Jews living in the ancient Persian empire were delivered from a plot to destroy them. The story is told in the *Megillah*, the Biblical Scroll of Esther. At Purim the *Megillah* is read in synagogue. It is a tradition for young and old alike to dress up in costumes and use noisemakers to blot out the name of the evil Haman, the villain in this story.

Other Purim festivities include sending gifts of food to friends, giving to charity, and feasting. The traditional food associated with Purim is hamantaschen, sweet triangle-shaped pastries. This year, Purim begins on the evening of Saturday, March 15 and ends the evening of Sunday, March 16.

At Baycrest, there will be on-floor celebrations in the week leading up to Purim. Check your recreation calendars for details.

Purim services

Traditional services in Wortsman Hall
Saturday, March 15, 8:10 to 9:30 p.m.
 Evening service and *Megillah* reading
Sunday, March 16, 9 to 11 a.m.
 Morning service and *Megillah* reading

Liberal service in the Winter Garden
Sunday, March 16, 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.
Megillah reading

Passover is just around the corner

This year, Baycrest will be hosting two Passover Seders. A traditional Seder will be held on the first night of Passover, Monday, April 14. On Tuesday, April 15 there will be a Liberal-Abridged Seder. Both Seders will take place in the Winter Garden Court at 6:30 p.m.

Tickets for both Seders will go on sale on Tuesday, March 18. More information will be posted throughout the centre in the

coming weeks. Please note that tickets are available to family members of Baycrest residents. Tickets for residents are free, but residents must sign up to attend.

Sale of chametz

The Department of Spiritual Care is pleased to offer this service to clients, families, staff and volunteers. Rabbi Geoff will be available to arrange for the sale of chametz on **Wednesday, April 9 and Friday, April 11, from noon to 1:30 p.m. outside of Wortsman Hall.**

The people around us: A staff feature

Sandra White



Meet one of the friendly faces of Baycrest: Sandra White, housekeeping aide, Apotex Centre, Jewish Home for the Aged. After 13 years as an employee, Baycrest has very much become a “home away from home” for Sandra who lives in Scarborough.

Through her work, she is in close contact with clients who find themselves drawn to her optimistic demeanour and alluring singing voice. As Sandra sings, clients frequently join in and reminisce about the memories evoked by their sing-alongs.

Sandra and her husband have three adult daughters and four grandchildren between the

ages of four and 10. Music and singing is the glue that binds the three generations together; every member of the family has an ear for music, and is never shy to pick up the microphone or take a turn with the turntable. Apart from music, Sandra enjoys cooking and trying dishes from kitchens all over the world. With a knack for replicating flavour and tastes with the herbs and spices of her own kitchen, she is known for an ever-growing repertoire of international dishes in the meals she prepares.

Where to catch her: Say hello to Baycrest’s songbird on the third floor of the Apotex Centre where she’s responsible for keeping rooms and common areas tidy for our clients.