

CARE Matters



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For the past year, I have resided at Beth Israel Nursing Home on the Shalom Park Campus, in Aurora, Colorado—a suburb of Denver.

Currently, the number of nursing-home-residents at Shalom Park is approximately one hundred thirty. We live here because we are no longer able to care for ourselves, alone. Everyone adjusts to new surroundings according to his or her individual temperament and everyone wishes to be in better health, but as a senior citizen, what can you really expect?—at least to feel comfortable. I am very comfortable at Shalom Park.

It has been my ongoing experience that all who work here have particular areas of expertise. Thus, in their many different capacities, they give care to the residents; help keep the facility clean, safe, and beautiful; or they plan, design, and present activities and programs of varied interests. We are encouraged to participate in our daily choices, all of which allows us to decide on our preferences. Whether it is an art class, music appreciation, current-events discussion, games, a life-long-learning gathering, religious services, a musical performance, or an outing, we are never short on uplifting activities, which are most certainly an important part of good care. Additionally, participating in the "One to One" program gives me regular opportunities to share the memories of my many years as a teacher, in my earlier life. Through our scheduled conversations, my special visitor and I experience a growing bond and mutual respect as we exercise the best form of conversation: talking as well as listening, with interest.

Not all employees might be called caregivers, as most people use the word, but their well-performed contributions are part of the finished tapestry that gives warmth to the care that we receive. The medical staff is meticulous and responsible in the dispensation of medications and the monitoring of health care. Consideration is given to non-Jewish residents when the meals are planned, prepared, and served in the Kosher manner. This also clarifies, that care, matters.

*"Care"... to be concerned, have thought of, or regard for, to provide for . . .
"Matter(s)" ... to be of significance or importance . . .*

The above dictionary definitions of *care*, and, *matters*, are meaningful on their own, but in placing them together, care matters becomes a powerful statement. And when a gentle heart and a well-spoken word are involved, the care becomes nearly perfect to the aging souls in nursing homes. Patience and respect also come to mind as I further ponder the thought of meaningful care.

Moreover, there is the significance of our rights as residents in a nursing facility. We have the right to accept or to refuse many aspects of our care, but, not necessarily in an impolite manner. For, just as we seniors might say that caregivers should try being in our shoes, so too, should we imagine being in theirs.

Realistically, care matters to those who need it, and unfortunately, everyone needs some form of it some time. Lest you or I, or our loved ones, experience poorly given attention, it is important that we never stop striving to improve on the matter of caring, for we never know how many are learning by our example. Thus to continue the nurturing of reciprocation of kindness is a primary way to care for one another.

Does it matter? . . . It matters to me!

