



**Morningside Retirement & Health Services**  

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**Helping Elders. Building Community.**

*Since 1966*

## 2020 Annual Report

[www.mrhsny.org](http://www.mrhsny.org)

# Morningside Retirement and Health Services

100 La Salle Street, #MC, New York, NY 10027

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www.mrhsny.org

## Board of Directors

Michael Davidson, *President*  
Elise Rackmill, *Vice-President*  
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## Major Supporters

Government	New York City Department for the Aging New York State Office for the Aging Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine, City Council Member Daniel O'Donnell, State Assembly Member Brian Benjamin, State Senator
Foundation	UJA-Federation of New York Metzger-Price Fund Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation West Harlem Development Corporation Foundation for Art and Healing Horticultural Society of New York
Community	Morningside Heights Housing Corporation Columbia Community Services Morningside Heights Community Coalition Vandewater Community Grant DOROT Citizens Committee for New York City
Individual	Residents and friends of Morningside Gardens

## Staff

Ronald Bruno, LMSW  
Joanna Stolove, LCSW  
Saudia Garnette, LMSW  
Margaret Bianchi  
Danieal Sanzo, Megan Longo, Ajinah Blount  
Kim Sun Barber, Lauren Berry  
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Paul Fleischmann  
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Executive Director  
Assistant Director  
Social Worker  
Office Manager  
Social Work Interns  
Occupational Therapy Interns  
Nurse/Coordinator of Health Care  
Comptroller  
Volunteer Coordinator  
Home Health Aide

The 191 people who volunteered services to MRHS in 2020 are listed towards the back of this report.

# President's Report

Dear Friends and Neighbors:

This is the second year in a row that we are unable to meet together to present our Annual Report. Usually we present the Report, take questions, delight in some entertainment and are treated to some delicious desserts. Hopefully, we'll get back to that joyful time next year. But that doesn't stop us now from providing you with a view into our purpose, our accomplishments, and how we try to be as transparent as possible. As we think back and forge ahead, there are several things that stand out from this very difficult time.

First, our methods of communication have both changed and remained the same. We still deliver the green MRHS Newsletter to each apartment around the first of the month. This greeting of warmth, friendship and stability is a regular reminder that there is an entire organization devoted to the well being of our NORC based community.

Second, we have learned to meet with ZOOM instead of in-person. This has been the most difficult for many because getting together, whether it was in the MRHS office spaces, the MG recreation center, the Thurgood Marshall room, the MG grounds or in the rooms of institutions that surround us, has always been a source of great pleasure and friendship.

We can all picture what we use to enjoy in these places. The joyous holiday celebrations and lunches for our 175 or so volunteers stand out the most. The countless other classes, meetings and activities are a close second.

Third and most important, despite the limitations of meeting together, we continue to fulfill our two-fold primary mission: to help frail and at-risk elderly residents of MG to remain in their own homes for as long as possible; and to provide programs to help people who are infirm, homebound and isolated.

The one new event that we were able to accomplish has been giving Covid-19 vaccinations in our MRHS Center. For three days in February, the elderly of our community, especially those who could not go off our campus, were able to get vaccinated without leaving Morningside Gardens. I cannot even begin to say how much this was appreciated by those who could get an appointment and how much the Board of Directors appreciated the extraordinary work of our Executive Director, Ron Bruno and our staff in getting this accomplished.

It's been a long year since we thought of life at MRHS as normal. We will continue to look back, especially about the losses we've had to bear, but we will forge ahead. Normalcy is on the horizon. There are no guarantees, but we're hopeful that next year's Annual Report will include a return to all the things at MRHS that provides so much help and pleasure to our friends and neighbors.

**Michael S. Davidson, Ed.D.**  
**President, MRHS**

# Executive Director's Report

The year 2020 presented unforeseen challenges to MRHS and the Morningside Gardens community. In mid-March MRHS was forced to close its doors to the public due to the outbreak of Covid-19. All in-person activities were suspended at the direction of the NYC Department for the Aging. A skeleton crew of MRHS staff members did continue to come to the MRHS Center every business day through the pandemic, to keep the office open for essential tasks and emergencies.

MRHS case management services provided by the MRHS social workers and nurse were transitioned primarily to telephone and video chat. MRHS staff provided frequent check-in calls to residents of Morningside Gardens to monitor their health and safety, including checks for the need for food and supplies, and for air conditioners when the heat of the summer arrived. A limited number of smartphones and tablets, including data plans, were made available to older adult residents who were becoming isolated due to a lack of access to technology.

MRHS began a recruitment of younger volunteers from the Gardens in mid-March to assist older residents with shopping, prescription pickups, and other errands. Forty-five residents came forward to volunteer in an inspiring show of neighborliness. MRHS arranged for more than 150 errands to be carried out for our older, frailer residents, who had been advised by the authorities to stay home as much as possible. As volunteers became familiar with the residents they assisted, more errands were arranged privately.

Since all in-person group activities were suspended until further notice, our major events of the year, including our Spring Recognition Luncheon, Winter Celebration, Holiday Bazaar, and Ice Cream Social, had to be canceled.

However, MRHS and its programming partners soon began transitioning group programs to virtual platforms such as Zoom. By June, thirteen different programs were being held online and more were added as the pandemic continued into the second half of the year, including new programs such as the Life Story Workshop. MRHS staff provided individual instruction to Gardens residents who required help in accessing these online programs.

In order to stay in touch with the MRHS community almost daily email blasts were sent out by MRHS in the early months of the shutdown. These email blasts included information and precautions regarding Covid-19; updates regarding MRHS and the community; and online opportunities for exercise, entertainment and enrichment while staying at home. Messages were also left each day on the MRHS telephone, with information derived from the email blasts. In total, more than one hundred email blasts were sent out in the months following the outbreak, helping to keep residents connected to MRHS and to their neighbors.

MRHS developed a new partnership with the nonprofit DOROT at the beginning of 2020. Due to the pandemic, programs had to be shifted to limit in-person contact. DOROT provided gift packages on special days to our older adult residents experiencing social isolation, as selected by MRHS clinical staff. Special days included the 9/11 Day of Remembrance; Thanksgiving; and the Holiday Season. DOROT volunteers were made available to make telephone calls to the residents on these days.

When vaccines became available for distribution at NORC programs in the city, MRHS was one of two sites selected to host the first round of vaccinations. One hundred, fifty vaccinations were administered in February 2021 to those most in need, with second doses administered in March. Not only were those vaccinated protected from the virus, but the Morningside Gardens community was made safer also.

Thanks to the dedication of the MRHS staff and the support of the MRHS board which continued to meet monthly online, MRHS was able to assist in protecting most older Morningside Gardens residents from the worst effects of the pandemic. Importantly, the MRHS staff also helped to protect vulnerable older residents from the collateral damage caused by Covid-19, including food and supply shortages, and social isolation with attendant depression, anxiety and cognitive challenges. We thank the volunteers who came forward in this effort as well. Unfortunately, we are aware of six residents who lost their lives to Covid or Covid-related complications. To those of you who lost family and friends, we will continue to mourn their loss with you.

As I write this at the beginning of Spring 2021, MRHS looks forward to a rebirth of our community of neighbors. We look forward to meeting again in person in 2021, renewing old friendships, and starting up our range of community-building activities, as we watch the blight of the pandemic recede from view. We hope to welcome all of you very soon to the open doors of the MRHS Center.

**Ron Bruno**  
**MRHS Executive Director**

## Mission of MRHS

The Mission of MRHS is twofold:

- 1) to help frail and at-risk elderly residents of Morningside Gardens remain in their own homes comfortably, safely, and with as much independence as possible for as long as they can; and
- 2) to provide programs which promote health and provide opportunities for education, socialization and recreation for all older residents of Morningside Gardens, with particular attention to the special needs of the infirm, homebound, and isolated.

## Values of MRHS

The board, staff, and volunteers of MRHS are committed to offering services that enable older residents of Morningside Gardens to remain in their own homes by:

- Promoting a caring community and enriching community life;
- Preserving the dignity and human rights of older people;
- Promoting and supporting independence by actively involving individuals in managing their own care;
- Preventing isolation by keeping older residents connected to the larger Morningside Gardens community; and
- Reflecting integrity, professionalism, responsibility, warmth and respect, and a commitment to diversity.

## Background and History of the MRHS Program

Morningside Retirement and Health Services (MRHS) was founded in 1966 on two principles: self-help for older adults and neighbors helping neighbors. The founders were a group of residents in Morningside Gardens, a middle-income cooperative housing complex in Morningside Heights/West Harlem. The apartment complex was constructed with government assistance and opened for occupancy in 1957 to house approximately 2,000 individuals. A group of forward-thinking older residents organized MRHS nine years later to serve those elderly residents who needed assistance in order to continue to live comfortably and safely in their homes.

For the first 20 years of the program, MRHS was staffed and run by older residents, working as volunteers. But by its twentieth year of service, the MRHS Board of Directors recognized that many of the original volunteers had “aged in place,” and themselves needed assistance. Morningside Gardens had become a “NORC” — Naturally Occurring Retirement Community — with more than half of the apartments occupied by residents over the age of 60. In order to address the multitude of problems elderly residents were facing, professional support was needed to guide and supplement the work of volunteers. Several MRHS volunteers formed a committee to raise funds for this purpose, and in 1986 the first professional social worker was hired.

Since that time, the program – still governed primarily by Morningside Gardens residents – has assisted and enriched the lives of hundreds of older residents. Working in conjunction with the professional staff, 191 volunteers offered their time and expertise to MRHS in 2020.

MRHS was one of fourteen programs chosen by New York State in 1995 to receive funding as a NORC program. In 1999 New York City created its own funding stream for existing and new NORC programs. MRHS was one of the programs chosen to receive city support and was selected in 2006 and in 2014, after Request for Proposals were issued by the city.

Through these special contracts and with foundation support, in 1995 MRHS began providing healthcare services in addition to social services. These services include on-site nursing, health education, health care screenings and cluster care laundry and shopping. MRHS was able to enhance the medical care provided to residents thanks to an arrangement with then St. Luke’s Hospital for the placement of a medical office on the premises of Morningside Gardens, which opened in November, 2000.

All of these changes and additions have not altered MRHS’s fundamental commitment to its mission. MRHS provided 2,690 units of case management and case assistance services in 2020, an increase of 3% from 2019. We also provided 1,639 units of healthcare management and healthcare assistance in 2020, an increase of 26% from 2019. These services were provided primarily by telephone and video chat in 2020 due to Covid-19. The increase in numbers reflects the outreach by the MRHS social workers and nurse during the pandemic.

Attendance at group programs has increased steadily since the new MRHS Center was opened in 2017, though this trend was interrupted in 2020 due to the pandemic and the closing of the Center to the community. Attendance decreased to 3,682 in 2020 as in-person programs were shut down or else transitioned to a virtual platform. The total number of residents utilizing MRHS services in 2020 was 322.

## The MRHS Center

The Renovation of the MRHS Program and Office Space was completed on April 3, 2017. With the opening of the new MRHS Center in 2017 program attendance increased dramatically. Total attendance at MRHS programs that year was 7,579, an increase of 38% from the prior year, and continued to climb in subsequent years.

The renovated space utilizes principles of Universal Design, making the space accessible to the older adult and disabled community. The architect, Matthias Hollwich of HWKN, and interior designer, Susanne Wagner, incorporated the following design elements into the new center:

- grab bars integrated throughout the space for balance and mobility
- flooring composed of a rubberized, slip-resistant material that promotes easy mobility as well as cushioning falls
- sturdy furniture items throughout the space, which promote stability and easy movement for users
- special lighting that reduces shadows and utilizes natural light, beneficial for those with the vision-impairment
- contrasting color schemes throughout the space to promote easy navigation, particularly for users with cognitive design or vision impairment
- fixtures and accessories that are accessible and easy to use, requiring a minimum of stretching

In addition, a media lounge was constructed, which promotes socialization and the use of a community space, since isolation has been recognized as a leading cause of decline in the aging population.

In 2020 ADA-approved handrails were added to the corridor leading to the MRHS Center from outside.

## EPIC Program at MRHS

The EPIC Program is the result of collaboration between three organizations: Emeritus Professors in Columbia (EPIC); Columbia University School of Professional Studies; and MRHS. Started in 2017, the series is open to the public without charge, taking place in the MRHS Center. EPIC is a professional and social fellowship of people who have formally retired from their Columbia careers as university professors, researchers, and administrators but are still professionally active. Due to Covid-19, only one program took place in 2020: "My Story: Paved with Good Intentions." This online program in June was a conversation between Barry Rosen, held hostage in the US Embassy in Tehran for 444 days, and Jo Shepherd, Teachers College, Columbia.

## Mount Sinai Hospital

MRHS and the Mount Sinai School of Medicine established a three-year partnership to present the *Mind Matters* program to the residents at Morningside Gardens. Through a UJA Federation grant, which ended in 2020, Mount Sinai geriatrician Joyce Fogel, MD, and geriatric psychologist Gregory Hinrichsen, PhD, worked with the MRHS community on issues related to memory and aging. Dr. Fogel and Dr. Hinrichsen presented a series of talks, discussions and workshops, led either by themselves or by guest speakers on various topics of aging and medicine.

## EBay Project

The MRHS EBay team is composed of volunteers, many recently retired, led by volunteer Angela Schramm. The team is dedicated to giving back to their community and has learned the skills of online marketing, selling and distributing through EBay. In 2020, the team raised more than \$7,000 for the benefit of MRHS.

## MRHS in the Community

NORC programs are meant to operate as a hub of services for older adults. MRHS works closely with a number of service providers in the community.

As described before, in recent years MRHS has established programs with the Mount Sinai School of Medicine and with Columbia University's EPIC program. Mount Sinai also works with MRHS in providing physician visits to homebound NORC residents, while Columbia Doctors, affiliated with New York Presbyterian Hospital, provides nurse practitioner visits.

MRHS established a new health care partnership in October 2020, with the Visiting Nurse Service of New York (VNSNY.) MRHS and VNSNY worked together as partners from the mid-1990's to 2014, so this is a reunion of our agencies. VNSNY not only brings a wealth of experience and resources in working with the aging population, they also made it possible for us to retain our nurse, Stacia Steen. MRHS has also had a health care partnership with the New Jewish Home (NJH) since 2013.

Staff from Mount Sinai Morningside Hospital distribute seasonal flu shots every fall. On November 2, with Covid protocols in place, ninety individuals were immunized at MRHS, at no cost to the recipients. Over the years MRHS has also worked with Mount Sinai in providing health care screenings and health promotion events, as well as developing grant proposals for new programs to serve the community.

MRHS works with Dr. Michael Correa, whose office is located on the grounds of Morningside Gardens on Amsterdam Avenue, and who treats many older residents. MRHS also works with Isabella Community and Home Care to coordinate meals-on-wheels and home care services to residents of Morningside Gardens.

MRHS and the Early Alzheimer's Foundation have been working in partnership since 2006 to present the Memory Tree program. This support program was developed to address the needs of people in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease, as well as those who have self-identified memory issues.

As a site for interns from various graduate programs in Social Work and for Occupational Therapy interns from Columbia's College of Physicians and Surgeons, MRHS works alongside leading practitioners in the field. MRHS also works with cultural and service organizations such as the Teachers & Writers Collaborative, Concerts in Motion, Dances For a Variable Population, ReServe, Read Ahead, and the Bloomingdale School of Music.

As a member of the West Side Inter-Agency Council for the Aging (WSIACA), LiveOn NY, Nonprofit New York, NYCON, the Human Services Council, and State-Wide Senior Action, MRHS consults and coordinates activities regularly with representatives of other community agencies. The MRHS Executive Director is co-chair of the NORC Directors meeting group, which holds quarterly meetings. MRHS staff and volunteers had made presentations at the annual conference of the American Society on Aging for the twelve years prior to the pandemic, as well as at other professional meetings.

## Partnership Committee

The goal of the MRHS Partnership Committee is to establish ties with the wider community beyond Morningside Gardens. The committee seeks to solicit input from the wider community regarding MRHS programs and services and to establish linkages that are mutually beneficial to MRHS and to community organizations, merchants, and other stakeholders.



## New Partnerships, New Programs in 2020

In spite of the pandemic, MRHS introduced new programs and partnerships in 2020.

### DOROT

MRHS developed a new partnership with the nonprofit DOROT at the beginning of the year. Due to Covid-19 the programs had to be shifted to limit in-person contact. However, DOROT provided gift packages on special days to Morningside Gardens residents, selected by MRHS staff based on social isolation, especially those isolated as a result of the pandemic. Special days included 9/11 Day of Remembrance; Thanksgiving; and Hanukkah/Holiday Season. DOROT also provided volunteers who were available to make telephone calls to the residents on these days. In 2021, the program is being expanded to include residents' birthdays, as well as other programs such as an intergenerational luncheon via Zoom with students from Johns Hopkins University.

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*"Most of all, we are grateful for MRHS and all that you do, especially in these times. We are so appreciative of the services and the people that hold the community together."* --- Daughter of MG Resident

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### Vita Story Club

MRHS and Vita Story Club offered a new, cost-free story-telling program in 2020 called the *Life Story Workshop*. Participants in the program gathered as a group over Zoom on a weekly basis. During the workshops the facilitator shares prompt questions with the group and everyone has an opportunity to share a life story and hear the life stories of their community members. For those who wish to save their stories as a family keepsake, the facilitator helps participants record their stories.

### Foundation for Art & Healing

MRHS and FAH offered an eight-week pilot program called the "Creativity Circle" via Zoom in 2020, with the goal of helping participants manage some of the challenges related to aging, such as social isolation and loneliness, and feel more connected to their community. Participants had an opportunity to experience art-based activities and exercises with others; engage in reflective discussions, exploring issues and feelings around aging; learn mindfulness strategies; and find new ways to reduce stress and experience life more fully – even during the Covid-19 pandemic.

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*"I'd just like to thank you and your staff for your exceptional professionalism, especially now, in helping our neighbors."*

--- Morningside Gardens Resident

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### Horticultural Society of New York

HSNY and MRHS came together as partners to present a new, no-cost *Botanical Art Class*. Class participants worked weekly for two hours in watercolors and colored pencil, observing fresh plants as inspiration. Prior to the outbreak of the virus two classes at the HSNY site at Riverbank Park were included. The class was interrupted by the pandemic in March but resumed online via Zoom at the end of April.

### Repair Cafe

MRHS and the Citizens Committee for NYC (CCNYC) worked together to create the *Repair Café*. Volunteers were recruited by MRHS from the community to fix or repair small household items at no cost to the user. On February 29 the well-attended "Café" took place in the Morningside Gardens Recreation Center, with residents bringing items that needed repair to the volunteers. Refreshments were served in a festive atmosphere that brought neighbors together in a program promoting sustainability.

## Volunteers in 2020

James Aaronson\*  
Mildred Acosta  
Linda Aristondo\*  
Nora Armani  
Emily Baldwin  
Mark Barth\*  
Joe Ben-David  
Alan Bentz-Letts  
Amy Berg  
Chris Berg  
Roberta Berman  
Robin Berson  
Odete Bigote  
Rena Blair\*  
Jim Blue  
Miriam Borstein  
Marianne Brinigar  
Ray Brizzi  
Anne Burley  
Marion Butler-Mills  
Anne Canty  
Eileen Canty  
Sharon Carr  
John W. Carter  
Sharon Lockhart Carter  
Chi Chaoyuan  
Rani Chaudhary  
Susan Chimonas  
Diane Cook  
Anisa Costa  
Gregory Darling  
Mary Davidson  
Michael Davidson  
Roy Davidson\*  
Michael De Borja\*  
Skip Delano  
Ralph Della Cava  
Peter Dewey  
Mitchell Dentsch  
Kate Dunn  
Jeffrey Edelson\*  
Nancy Eder  
Sarah Eggleston  
Mary Elder  
Sandy Elkind  
Jonathan Ellis\*  
Reva Ojeda Fienstein\*  
Edward Fortier  
Tova Francus  
Liliana Franklin\*  
Suzy Frazer  
Drew French\*  
Ellen Fried  
Conor Gaffney  
Deanna Gates  
Conchita Gonzalez  
Tom Goodridge  
Shirley Graves  
Michael Greene  
Marie-Louise Guinier  
Candy Gulko  
Eben Guran  
Taviel Guran\*  
Sidney Guran  
Eleanor Haray  
Lynn Casteel Harper  
Peggy Haskins  
Beatrice Hawkins  
Xiaohong He  
Joanna Herman  
Richard Herstein  
Paula Herz  
Kathy Hinton  
John Johnson  
Margaret Johnson  
Carl Jones  
Ching Juhl  
George Kadar  
Kamu Kamadoli  
Sherry Kane\*  
Joanna Kapner  
John Kapner  
Ronald Keene  
Pamela Kellner  
Margaret Ketley  
Harriet Chan King  
Leslie Kiss\*  
Maureen Knapp

Susan Kohn  
Robert Komatsu  
Madelyne Kraft\*  
Albertina Lal  
Mary Lanning  
Marie Ledoux  
Bridget Leicester  
Tiana Leonard\*  
Joan Levine  
Alice Lilly  
Marc Liu\*  
Suqing Liu  
Michelle Lou  
Artie Lowenstein\*  
Ben Lowenstein\*  
Boyd Lowry  
Mary Lowry  
Charles Macdonald\*  
Weilin Li Marabello  
Aliza Mazor  
Allison McDermott\*  
Allen Mellen  
Liz Mellen  
Susan Miller  
Dana Minaya  
Frank Minaya  
Gregory Minaya  
Anna Minsky\*  
Christina Molloy  
Kathryn Molloy  
Melinda Moore  
Galila Morahg  
Gil Morahg  
Joan Morford  
Anne Moses  
Ozier Muhammad  
Hilary Nudell\*  
Barbara O'Farrell  
Jasmine Pai  
Tonia Papke  
Wendi Paster\*  
Chris Pawelski\*  
Mary Ellen Peinelt  
Patricia Pell  
Michele Pellar  
Miranda Perez

Edna Philiba  
Sylvia Pirani\*  
Rita Marie Pullium  
Victor Quintana  
Elise Rackmill  
Lisa Redd  
Cecilia Ridette  
Craig Roberts  
Cynthia Rock  
Eugene Rodriguez  
Lea Rose  
Nancy Ross  
Marion Rothenberg  
Neil Rothfeld  
Mildred Roxborough  
Mary Lou Russell  
Cecile Russo\*  
Laura Brown Sands  
Yokiko Sato  
Angela Schramm  
Maggie Sears  
Merryl Sheldon  
Iris Shen  
Mytri Singh  
Carla Slomin  
Alene Smith  
Judith Solomon  
Dilia Solorzano  
Mark Speyer  
George Stack  
Susan St. John-Parsons  
Alan Stricoff  
Max Stolove  
Molly Sweeney  
Hilah Thomas  
Ken Thomas  
Peggy Thomas  
Karl Tiedemann  
Usa Ungsunan  
Nataline deLisle Vanderburg\*  
Shu-lian Wang  
Sydney Weinberg  
Lori Weisenberg\*  
Susan Wersan  
Tanika White  
Liz Wiesen

Audraine Wilson  
Marion Wright  
Shuli Wu  
Marion Yeh  
Samuel Yeh  
Margaret Yi  
June Zaccone

Linda Zehnder  
Anna Zhang  
Esther Zhang  
Theresa Thompson Ziegler

*\* Indicates Covid-19 Volunteers*



**Volunteers at the Repair Café held in February, 2020**



**Vaccines Being Administered at MRHS in March, 2021**

# Treasurer's Report and Committee Reports

## Treasurer's Report

2020 is a year none of us will forget for very obvious reasons. Covid-19 has had a devastating effect world-wide and our own community here at Morningside Gardens has suffered the consequences of this disease. I want to offer my sincerest condolences to those who lost family members and loved ones during these very difficult times. Hopefully 2021 will bring better days for all of us and a resumption of life as we knew it before the onset of this pandemic.

I joined the board of MRHS in March of 2016 and it has been a very rewarding experience being part of an organization that provides support and services to members of our community at large. I'm a Certified Public Accountant and have served as Treasurer since I joined the board.

The responsibilities of the Treasurer at MRHS include presenting a financial statement at monthly board meetings, serving on the Finance & Audit committee, monitoring bank accounts and balances, and signing checks.

On the operating side MRHS has adequate financial resources that enable it to cover ongoing operating expenses and provide program activities that are integral to the Naturally Occurring Retirement Center (NORC) here at Morningside Gardens. It's not only the financial resources that sustain and continue to grow the activities of MRHS but the people involved in making this happen. They are the staff and the volunteers who work in partnership to serve the community and ensure that programs and facilities are tailored to meet the requirements of the users. They do this mindful of the financial budget and have succeeded in providing programs and activities at a lower cost than might be expected.

In 2020, MRHS received program funding from the New York State Office for the Aging (SOFA) and the New York City Department for the Aging (DFTA). Other sources of funding included Columbia University, The Metzger Foundation, UJA Federation of New York and West Harlem Development Corporation. In addition, MHHC has continued to provide very generous support to MRHS and without which we would not be able to provide the full range of services currently on offer. MRHS is additionally supported by contributions to our annual fund from the Morningside Gardens community and beyond. In 2020 our annual fund appeal raised in excess of fifty-three thousand dollars (\$53,000)!

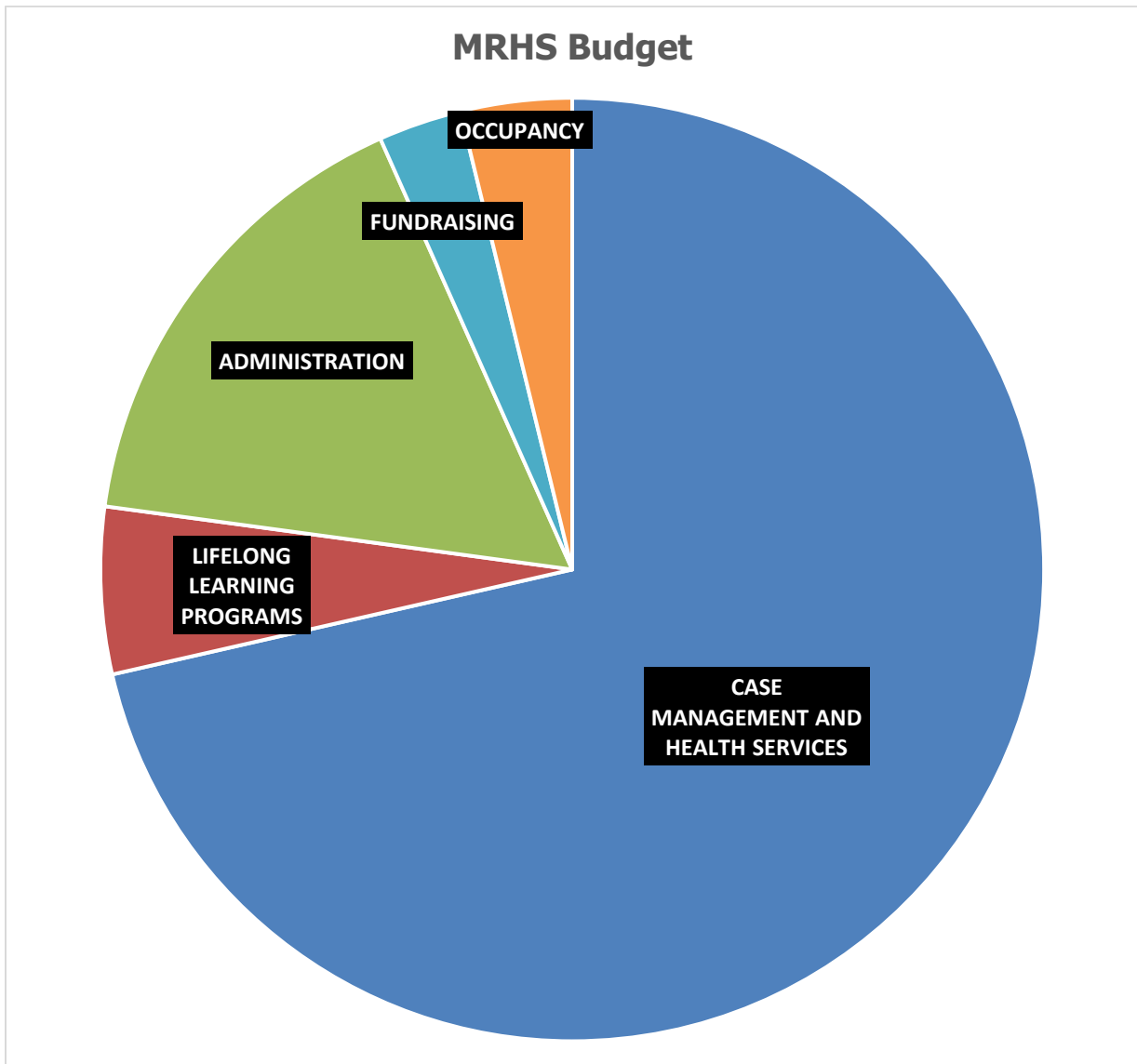
Other current and prior sources of revenue include proceeds from eBay sales, a silent auction during the Holiday Party, the annual Holiday Bazaar and bequests to MRHS from members of our Legacy Society.

MRHS hold their primary checking accounts along with reserve fund accounts with CitiBank. Business money-market accounts of liquid reserve funds are also with CitiBank. A board-designated reserve fund is held with New York Community Trust Fund. I'm happy to say we are a debt free organization.

As we continue to provide and expand the range of services in our newly renovated center, we are also very aware of the need to maintain fiscal responsibility to make sure this continues well into the future. Integral to the fiscal oversight of MRHS is the Finance and Audit Committee with responsibility for creating, reviewing and finalizing the annual budget of the organization.

MRHS has been and continues to be a great achievement on the part of all involved and I sincerely thank our community at large as well as our staff and the volunteers for making this happen.

Thank you,  
**Conor Gaffney, Treasurer**



**Copies of the MRHS Financial Report are available at the MRHS Office, 100 LaSalle Street, #MC, New York, NY.)**

## MRHS Finance and Audit Committee Report

### FY 2020

The Finance & Audit Committee was comprised of the following members in 2020:

Voting Committee Members:

Tonia Papke Waterbury (Committee Chair)  
Conor Gaffney (Treasurer)  
Robert Hill (Board Member)

Non-Voting Members:

Michael Davidson (Board President)  
Ron Bruno (Executive Director)  
Alan Stricoff (Controller)

The MRHS Finance & Audit Committee has the following responsibilities:

- Propose the annual operating budget to the board for approval.
- Review audits, internal financial statements, and 990's.
- Review and put into place policies governing MRHS Finances.
- Review and make suggestions on the investment of MRHS funds.
- Meet with the auditor before and after the audit. Review any major findings with the audit firm.
- Make recommendations to the board with respect to the overall financial health and funding of MRHS.

Financial Highlights for the Year:

The FY19 audit report was unqualified.

Even in the face of Covid, we finished 2020 in a strong position. Contract revenue and contributions tied very close to our budget. Earned Income, from participant fees and eBay sales, was significantly impacted by the pandemic. Programming continued but through Zoom and free of charge. We also received a large bequest for \$ 605,000 which was transferred to our Board Designated Fund. Due to that generous gift and the fact that expenses dropped by 10%, we ended the year with a significant surplus. The organization remains financially strong.

The unaudited preliminary financial statements for FY20 are included below.

Both the annual audit and 990 are available for view in the MRHS Office.

Respectfully submitted,

**Tonia Papke Waterbury, Chair**

## **Nominating Committee**

The Nomination Committee Is responsible for identifying and recruiting new board members. The goal of the committee is to recruit candidates that have skills, talent and life experiences that would help advance MRHS's Mission and that reflect the diversity of the Garden's community.

The current committee is composed of Elise Rackmill and I. This committee is looking to fill an open slot that was vacated by Mark Speyer. In the interim, Ron Bruno and Michael Davidson have helped in advising this committee.

The newest member of the MRHS board is Alice Lilly. Alice is replacing Karen Barrowclough. We do have some vacancies on the board and expect more this year.

It has been suggested that we look for new members from each of the 6 buildings which make up our community. Every effort will be made to make that happen.

**Ozier Muhammad, Chair**

## **Personnel Committee**

The Personnel Committee is responsible for reviewing issues concerning MRHS employees, often in close coordination with the Finance and Audit Committee. This year the committee members were Karen Barrowclough, Tonia Papke, Anne Moses, Mark Speyer; Michael Davidson, Board President, participated *ex officio*.

### **Compensation & Benefits**

In recent years the Personnel Committee has recommended important adjustments in employee retirement accounts, health care benefits, and compensation. The emergence of COVID early in the year necessitated that staff alternate working from home with onsite days and our program was able to continue to serve residents. We transitioned to online platforms but also were able to see individual residents in person when needed.

Our committee recommended a cost of living increase for all employees as well as continuing to fully cover health insurance benefits. In 2019 the former personnel committee recommended instituting employee contributions to health care coverage in the 2000 budget, but our committee recommended delaying this until the COVID crisis has been resolved. Our recommendations were adopted by the Finance and Audit Committee and by the full Board of MRHS.

### **Annual Performance Evaluation of the Executive Director**

The Committee chair, in coordination with the Board President, evaluated the performance of the Executive Director during the past year. This position involves a great number and a great variety of responsibilities large and small, immediate and long-range, from counseling and staff supervision to political and community outreach. We found the Executive Director's performance to be outstanding, both in mastery of small details and in keeping our larger mission firmly in mind.

**Anne Moses, Chair**



## **Education and Advocacy Committee**

The role of the Education and Advocacy Committee is to educate ourselves and our Community about issues that impact on seniors in particularly and where applicable to join with others and engage in advocacy.

During the COVID 19 Pandemic, two important projects were unable to continue. These were Lobby Presentations where MRHS Board Members were available in each building to meet cooperators, discuss our services and programs and display our literature. The other was our participation in a new community wide group aptly named The Elevator Lobby. The group's mission was to reach out to all potential constituencies to advocate for increased accessibility via an elevator at the 125th and Broadway Subway Station.

We continue to participate electronically with other Senior Focused Organizations and share relevant information with the MRHS Board. In the last round of city and state budget talks, we joined with other NORCS when grassroots phone calls were needed. One successful effort was the lobbying campaign to provide for financial support for NORC Nursing Services.

The tragic events of the past year have reinforced the importance of continued advocacy for programs such as MRHS that provide a wealth of services and activities to improve the quality of life and support safely maintain elders in their community.

**Elise Rackmill, Chair**

## **Daily Money Management Committee**

This committee performs the board oversight of MRHS social workers who assist participating resident elders with management of their immediate expenses. Staff is bonded to handle small amounts of cash for payment to, for example, home health aides. Staff also helps with opening mail, as requested, and making sure monthly bills are paid. This service permits elders to stay in their homes with less anxiety about personal business matters.

The DMM committee meets with the MRHS assistant director twice a year to offer support and to hear of any problems. Typically a detailed account of a case is presented, anonymously, so that the committee fully understands typical staff activity. Residents in need of this service are identified by social workers, our nurse, neighbors, friends or family members who may notice that personal business needs support, and it is strictly confidential and voluntary. Staff social workers perform the services with great sensitivity and care. MRHS wants the community to understand that this free service is available to all at any time.

**Cynthia Rock, Chair**

## Development Committee

Despite the challenges presented by COVID-19 for much of 2020, the Development Committee moved ahead on various fronts, with Board members Edward Fortier and Nora Armani continuing to serve on the Committee. The Committee meets virtually or by phone, at least once a month. There are supplemental meetings with Michael Davidson and Ron Bruno as necessary.

In 2020 we continued to discuss, finalize and provide updated MRHS marketing materials. To date we have completed a new brochure, MRHS contact magnet and designed a series of simple, inexpensive to print rack cards which can easily be changed to reflect specific programs or updated developments. Rack cards developed include: MRHS Overview, Updated MRHS Services given COVID Restrictions and Legacy Society. We have also provided feedback to other Committees and staff related to the redesign and updating of the MRHS website.

These various marketing materials along with a letter from Michael Davidson were delivered to the apt doors of nineteen new MG shareholders (11/1/2019-12/31/2020) as obtained from MHHC management. Given the temporary suspension of all individual and group meetings, the materials were delivered in written format.

Efforts are underway to more closely define those who contribute to MRHS especially the Annual Appeal. Information is needed to better understand if the pandemic has affected the “giving support” to MRHS resulting in short/long term financial effects and need for outreach in specific areas. Statistics recently available will continue to be examined during 2021.

<b>MRHS ANNUAL APPEAL</b>	<b>2019</b>		<b>2020</b>	
	Number	Amount	Number	Amount
MG Residents	252	\$ 55,029	259	\$ 48,926
Not MG Residents	25	\$ 5,695	20	\$ 5,175
Unknown	6	\$ 1,024	3	\$ 140
<b>Totals</b>	283	\$ 61,748	262	\$ 54,241

The Legacy Society continues to be explored as a long-term funding vehicle. The Committee has examined the Society both in terms of past interpretation and the direction for the future.

Respectfully submitted,  
**Christine E. Pawelski, EdD, Chair**

## Program Committee

In a normal year the Program Committee would meet monthly to organize yearly traditional events. In 2020 we experienced anything but a “normal” year due to the impact of the Corona Virus. The last committee meeting for 2020 was held on February 6, 2020 which enabled us to plan what would become our last “in-person” program for 2020, our annual celebration of Black History Month

### In Celebration of Black History Month



Toni Morrison  
Credit: Timothy Greenfield-Sanders

If you missed the documentary ***“Toni Morrison: The Pieces I Am”***, or wish to view this engaging film again, please join us on for an honest, up close and personal view of Toni Morrison, her life and expansive work, all of which have contributed mightily to our American History. After the viewing there will be time for a Q&A and sharing of thoughts about the film and the author.

Date: Wednesday, February 26, 2020

Time: 7:00 PM

Film Running Time: 2 Hours

Location: Thurgood Marshall Community Center

In 80 LaSalle Street (use the rear entrance)

As of March 20, 2020 Governor Cuomo, in response to the Corona Virus Pandemic, announced a state-wide stay-at-home order which closed all non-essential businesses and cancelled all non-essential gatherings (especially those in-doors) and shortly after mandated the wearing of face masks and social distancing. This made it necessary for MRHS to cancel all of the following annual “in-person” events that were scheduled for the balance of the year:

- Annual Recognition Luncheon, normally at the Riverside Church in June
- Annual Ice Cream Social, normally held in June in the plaza between buildings 1 and 2 of our complex
- Thanksgiving Luncheon, normally held at the Riverside Church in November
- Winter Celebration, normally held at the Riverside Church in December

To make contact and remind our population of the continuing MRHS presence during the holiday season, holiday cookie trays were made available to our residents.

Fortunately, with the direct support of MRHS staff, in particular Joanna Stolove, we were able to migrate a majority of our daily classes to the Zoom platform and most of our residents were able to make the adjustment to this mode and continue enjoying those programs.

At the writing of this report, the constraints of the Coronavirus remain in place as we await the completion of vaccinations, and the state's announcement of what that will mean for the resumption of any in-door activities or gatherings on our premises.

**Alice Lilly, Chair**

### **Technology and Website Committee**

The Technology and Website Committee addresses the internet, technology, and website needs of MRHS. This year, the members were Robert Hill, Ron Bruno, Joanna Stolove, Paul Fleischman, Mike Davidson, Ed Fortier, and B. Chandrasekaran. In the 2020-21 term, we were engaged with three major topics of discussion.

#### **Topic 1: Website Redevelopment.**

Having spent the previous year studying website redevelopment needs, this year we deployed the redesigned website at <https://mrhsny.org>. The new website meets all previously identified needs.

- **Adapts to Mobile Devices:** The website accommodates desktop, laptop, tablet, and phone platforms.
- **Branding:** The MRHS brand is effectively represented in a format that reflects a fresh, up-to-date design.
- **Content Management System:** The website is running the Weebly content management system. This allows average-skilled people to edit the content while automatically updating security patches and back-end services.
- **Donation Tools:** There is a secure mechanism for accepting online donations via PayPal. In addition, there are easy links to the MRHS Ebay page and also to the Amazon Smile service, where a portion of all sales purchased on Amazon via this link is returned to MRHS at no additional cost to MRHS or the purchasers.
- **Event Registration Tools:** There is a secure mechanism to register people for events, such as online classes and seminars.
- **Fresh Content:** The content is frequently updated, especially with links to events using the MRHS Zoom account. Newsletter archives are provided from 2019 to present, and the structure is in-place to provide Newsletters dating back to the 1980s.
- **Group Communication Tools:** While it is possible to integrate online social media in the new website, these features are not turned on at this time. An up-to-date Calendar function is populated with links to various events.

Special acknowledgements go out to Paul Fleischman, who took the time and learned the skills to take the lead in these redevelopment efforts. His remarkable efforts are noted and appreciated.

**Topic 2: Video Conferencing Solution.**

MRHS has made extensive use of the Zoom teleconferencing service via a paid account. Rather than deploy the G-Suite teleconference service for MRHS Board meetings, we decided to simply use the Executive Director’s Zoom account. The Executive Director joins all regular Board meetings as well as many other Committee meetings, so there was no point in establishing a redundant service.

For the 2020-21 term year, all MRHS Board and most Committee meetings have been conducted via Zoom, at zero additional cost to the MRHS organization.

**Topic 3: MRHS Board Email Accounts.**

Previously, we had undertaken the project of establishing dedicated Board email accounts for all Board members and certain other volunteers, service professionals, and interns. In the 2020-21 term year, we have extended these practices and started establishing formal policy statements.

Respectfully submitted,

**Robert Hill, Chair**