

# THE OJC

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DEVOTED TO AMERICAN AND JEWISH IDEALS

## Community Action Day to take place this weekend

page 2

## Weapons would have armed Hezbollah for a month

page 3

## Grinspoon honored for camping impact

page 3

## Peres calls on Palestinian leader not to quit

page 3

### ABOUT THE COVER

David Rosen, President and CEO of Wexner Heritage Village talks about the necessary changes that have occurred at Wexner Heritage Village. He affirms the need to wed fiscal responsibility to the Jewish 'moral imperative' of caring for an aging population. At right, Rosen confers with Dr. Sanford Melmed (l.), Medical Director of WHV and Polster Medical Center; and Dr. Jennifer Hirsh (r.), Medical Director of Zusman Community Hospice.

### In The Chronicle

At The JCC .....	9
Bowling .....	10
Community .....	6-7
Editor's Mailbox .....	5
Federation .....	8
Front Page .....	2
Lifecycle .....	10
Marketplace .....	12
New Generation .....	7
Synagogues .....	11
Viewpoint .....	4-5
World News .....	3



### MISSION POSSIBLE

## Meeting the needs of an aging Jewish society

By Jennifer Franko

For nearly 60 years, Wexner Heritage Village (WHV) has carried out its mission to enrich those it serves in life-affirming Jewish culture—providing quality housing, health, spiritual, and supportive services which meet the needs of our aging society. In such a time as this, with the uncertain state of today's economy and the impending health care reform, is this mission impossible? David Rosen, President and CEO of Wexner Heritage Village, doesn't think so.

"Wexner Heritage Village isn't just a nursing home. WHV is a health care system that goes beyond the nursing home," says Rosen.

The economic and health care climates are creating a crisis in typical nursing homes. Frankly—if they haven't already—nursing home facilities could face the prospect of going out of business or, at a minimum, be forced to make changes to the type of care they offer their residents.

So, how will WHV step up to the challenges created by diminished public reimbursement—and remain strong for the influx of baby boomers? Many in our Jewish community have real concerns about whether or not—when the time comes—WHV will have a place for them in their long-term care unit (nursing home).

"Growing old is not a choice, but the choice we do control is how we care for our vulnerable populations who can't fully care for themselves. The *mitzvah* of providing for the well-being of those who are 'growing old' is a Jewish moral imperative, and we—WHV—will not falter from our mission," said Rosen.

In a recent interview, Rosen shared insights re-

garding the decision to reduce the number of skilled-nursing facility licensed beds in 2009, as well as how the assertion that the reduction will not compromise quality of care. Addi-

rily because it was a very difficult decision. But I feel it's important to keep our community informed. And what's essential for our community to understand is that reducing the number of bed

est level quality of care for our residents, members, and patients. To provide a lesser level of quality care is simply unacceptable, inconceivable, and non-negotiable to us—and is incongruent with our culture and mission.

The bottom line is the government isn't providing adequate reimbursement to WHV for the amount it actually costs to provide this standard of long-term care. As a result, we were forced to consider an alternate solution. If we didn't choose to reduce bed licenses, eventually we'd be forced to go out of business. We're pleased that we were able to handle the reduction with great care, and no one was discharged as a result of it.

This process has led us through many new doors, and the doors we've chosen to walk through have led us to a plan to "fill the gap" in services that is more financially sustainable and also what seniors prefer and want. So, we turned our business model upside down—the first point of entry at WHV used to be through our long-term care service. Now long-term care is available



tionally, he shared his vision for redefining services to provide innovative senior health and housing options that meet our aging population's needs and desires.

**JF:** Why is there a perception that WHV won't have room for the aging Jewish of our community?

**DR:** The community has watched WHV recently reduce the number of licensed beds by 25% (50 beds) in the long-term care unit. Likewise, the community has watched the waiting list for long-term care at WHV continue to grow. Therefore, it's perfectly understandable why our community would have this perception, especially those who believe they are growing closer to needing long-term care.

Talking about our bed reduction is not easy—prima-

licenses was critical to keeping WHV's long-term care operation open.

**JF:** Why did WHV reduce beds?

### Annual Meeting Planned

Wexner Heritage Village will hold their 2009 Annual Meeting on Nov. 17, noon - 1:00 p.m., at Creekside at the Village, 2200 Welcome Place, Columbus, OH 43209. Light hors d'oeuvres and refreshments will be served. Creekside at the Village is located just behind Wexner Heritage House. RSVP by Nov. 13 to Debbie Marks, 614-559-0331 or dmarks@whv.org

**DR:** Quite simply, we reduced beds because we are committed to providing a high level of quality care. We show it, for instance, in our staffing ratios. Furthermore, we will not make any adjustments to our business that sacrifice providing the high-

only for those who truly require it, and we are creating a system where seniors will exhaust options such as home care and assisted living before considering the nursing home.

**JF:** How do you plan on  
See SOCIETY, page 2