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Jewish benefactors help build new Institute on Aging

by joseph amster, correspondent

With the opening this month of its new campus in San Francisco, the Institute on Aging has achieved a longtime goal: bringing many of its programs, services and offices together under one roof, and having all of that right next to senior housing.

Also under that roof: facilities and rooms dotted with names such as Osher, Rosenberg, Sockolov and Goldman.

IOA has a large part of its roots in the Jewish community. The nonprofit started in 1975 as a program of Mount Zion Hospital that was spearheaded by Dr. Lawrence Feigenbaum, and "Richard and Rhoda Goldman were the early philanthropists who helped get it started," said Dr. David Werdegar, IOA's president and CEO.

Moreover, many of the facilities in the 50,000-square foot building are the direct result of Jewish philanthropy — namely the Bernard and Barbro Osher Senior Fitness and Rehabilitation Center, the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Auditorium, the Ruth Ann Rosenberg Adult Day Health Center, the Libi and Ron Cape Alzheimer's Treatment Center, and the Robert and Audrey Sockolov Friendship Courtyard.



Ruth Ann Rosenberg stands near the main entrance.

The realization of the new building is in part the result of an \$18 million capital campaign that was launched in 2000. Additional gifts came from Lisa and Matthew Chanoff, the Rose and Eugene Kleiner Family Foundation, the Koret Foundation, and the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund.

More than 500 people attended the April 2 dedication of the new campus, which is built on the site of the old Coronet Theater on Geary Boulevard in the Richmond District.

IOA's mission is to provide health services to older adults so they can stay in their own homes and in the community, and not wind up in institutional care. The new building has 150 units of affordable senior housing for independent living; 53 of those units are reserved for frail seniors or seniors with special needs.

Werdegar estimated that the IOA's programs — from its adult day health center to its in-home care services — serve as many as 20,000 people annually. "At any given moment, there are 1,000-1,300 clients actively under our care," he said. The Bay Area Jewish Healing Center also is under the auspices of the IOA, and has been since 2005.

Werdegar said the response to the opening of the 100 affordable housing units was overwhelming, as the initial lottery attracted 2,500 applicants.

IOA, which also has facilities in San Rafael and Palo Alto, has programs for seniors 55 and older. Services include assessment, care coordination, all-inclusive care, money management and financial planning, and art programs.



The Robert and Audrey Sockolov Friendship Courtyard

Werdegar said plans are also in the works for the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Geriatrics Consultation Center.

"We are in collaboration with the geriatrics staff at the UCSF School of Medical," he noted. "It will be [for] when the family has a problem with a relative, an older adult, and their behavior has changed, their mood has changed, they seem forgetful or don't know what's going on ... Very often the family doesn't know where to turn, and we're hoping that this geriatric consultation center will be a resource for the whole community."

Werdegar also pointed to the agency's PACE program, which stands for Program for All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly. It offers a day program, home-care services, medical care and hospitalization.

"It's all wrapped up in the PACE program, and we now have lots of room to expand it," Werdegar said. "This is a new era for the IOA."