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# JEWISH COMMUNITY VOICE

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## ENRICHING SENIOR LIVES

### Carrying on Susan Love's legacy at Lions Gate

With the untimely passing of Susan Love, CEO of Lions Gate, we paused to remember a friend to many, and advocate for all in the senior living community. She worked diligently to inspire a loving and supportive atmosphere at Lions Gate, and was dedicated to creating a community defined as a "family of friends."

Isn't that an intriguing vision of what that next stage of your life could be? For most of us, when our kids grow up and move out, we reinvent ourselves as empty nesters. We have our work life, and our social life, and we just hum along as if that's going to continue on forever. We don't often give much thought to how we will reinvent ourselves yet again in retirement. But Susan thought about it. She envisioned this stage of life as one where your children and grandchildren have your heart, but you have this second "family" comprised of new friends that you live and socialize with. Her vision was to create a community where your best friend is just down the hall. Where you can walk the campus together on a sunny afternoon, and enjoy an ice cream in the Bistro afterward. Where you can go to Shabbat services together on a Friday evening, and attend a live concert together in Commons Hall on a Sunday afternoon.

Susan wanted everyone to experience what it feels like to live in a community of friends where you feel loved and supported. Not every senior thinks

to create that "second family" aspect to enrich their life experience. And not every senior living community is able to cultivate a culture of friendship and kindness, where you're not just a name on a roster. That's the meaningful vision Susan Love had for Lions Gate, and that's the vision we will build on going forward.

When the pandemic hit, Susan's vision for the community never wavered. What did change was how she leveraged the creativity of the Lions Gate staff. She knew that she had to double down on preserving Lions Gate's existing culture of a bonded, connected community in this time of crisis. So she asked the staff for their insights on how to keep everyone connected while staying apart. The staff came up with all sorts of amazing ideas, and Susan was smart enough to give the green light to as many as she could. When families couldn't come to campus to visit residents, Susan approved the idea to set up a Facetime Café. When in-person Shabbat services were cancelled, Susan approved Rabbi Rayna's plans to live-stream services on Friday evening and Saturday morning on the Lions Gate television channel. When the fitness center was temporarily closed, Susan approved the

programming director's idea to stream at-home yoga and stretching classes on the Lions Gate television channel so people could stay active. When residents were missing their weekly grocery shopping trips, Susan approved the dining staff's idea to host a Pop-Up Market right in the building.

It is this pivot toward new ideas that I look forward most to continuing. Susan made the right call to embrace change in a time of tumult, and by bravely valuing new ideas

she preserved what makes the Lions Gate community so unique—its steadfast heart.

Lions Gate is a Life Plan community, and "plan" is exactly where we place our emphasis. We have a lot of plans in the works now that we've been able to make the vaccine available to all residents and staff. In my opinion, the vaccine is the key to keeping everyone safe, and we made sure everyone who wanted a vaccine got one. We had a simple sign up, and the nurses went door-to-door. Everyone received a vaccine without having to leave the comfort of his or her home, and the second dose went just as smoothly. Now we can move forward with plans to re-open the dining room to all. I think the important thing is to build on all the changes that we instituted during the pandemic, not just toss them

aside.

"All of the programming we now do over the Lions Gate television channel has really changed the way we approach activities," said Kim Clemons, Lions Gate programming director. "Now that we have the channel filled with fitness classes, documentaries, travelogues, and movies for at least eight hours a day, residents find they really like that new option. The fitness center and the pool are open, but some people have found they love adding a yoga class into their exercise routine right from their living room. I have plenty of live Lions Gate University classes scheduled throughout the week, but for those that want extra learning opportunities throughout the day, the documentaries and travelogues on our television channel have been very popular. Going forward, I think it's about building the depth of the programming that can take place on the Lions Gate television channel while expanding the breadth of the live programming in Commons Hall. Whether it's adding additional Taste of Lions Gate cooking demonstrations or working with the resident Music Guild to host more classical music concerts, I want to give our residents as many opportunities as possible to do more together."

That's why the tagline in all of our advertising is now "We are Better Together." Susan's vision was finding new and interesting ways to bring people

together to help them enjoy this stage of their life with their "family of friends." The more innovative we can be in bringing people together, the better. That's what Lions Gate is all about.

So as I sign off here on my first column in The Voice, I just want to close by saying that enduring friendships have always been the foundation of life at Lions Gate, and we will continue to foster these connections into the future. Susan had a clarity of vision that friendships really define your day-to-day happiness, and I concur. I can see it on the faces of everyone who lives here. It's what makes Lions Gate special. Collectively, we all thank Susan for building something quite unique and beautiful here. Every resident who moves in here and finds a new best friend has her to thank for that. Her heart has become the true heart of Lions Gate.

Interested in learning more about Lions Gate? We'd love to share with you all the amenities Lions Gate has to offer and talk to you about the many ways Lions Gate would be a good fit for you. We'll meet with you in whatever way you're most comfortable—an in-person tour of our campus, a FaceTime call with a virtual tour, a one-on-one meeting at your home, a Zoom chat with you and your extended family, or any other option you would like to suggest.

Call Donna at (856) 679-4682 or go online to set up an appointment at [DCoonley@lionsgateccrc.org](mailto:DCoonley@lionsgateccrc.org) ▲



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