



**LIONS GATE**  
WE ARE *Better* TOGETHER



WINTER 2026

## Tiffany Wiles Honored With *Excellence In Care Award*

Lions Gate is proud to announce that Tiffany Wiles, CNA, was selected as a recipient of the 2026 Excellence in Care Award presented by LeadingAge New Jersey & Delaware. This distinguished honor recognizes individuals from member senior communities who demonstrate extraordinary talent, expertise, and dedication in delivering exceptional service to residents.

True to form, Tiffany was humble upon receiving the Award: "I am truly honored to receive this, but I could not do what I do on a daily basis for our residents if it were not for my co-workers. This is as much their award as it is mine."

LeadingAge New Jersey & Delaware is a regional association that primarily represents not-for-profit senior care providers across both states. It supports senior housing, assisted living, nursing homes, and life plan communities with the aim of improving the care and quality of life for older adults through advocacy, professional education, and collaboration.

Tiffany began working at Lions Gate in the dementia neighborhood. She quickly distinguished herself through her innate ability to provide person-centered, compassionate care. From the very beginning, Tiffany demonstrated patience, attentiveness, and a deep respect for the residents in her care. Residents respond to her calm and warm demeanor. Families consistently express appreciation for the kindness she provides to their loved ones.

Her impact, however, extends well beyond day-to-day caregiving. When Lions Gate opened its rehabilitation center, her positive attitude and strong clinical skills were instrumental in getting it off the ground. Tiffany continues to help set the tone for the staff culture, ensuring that it is grounded in teamwork, professionalism, and quality resident care that continues to guide the center today.

Tiffany leads by example, and is respected for her strong work ethic, reliability, and willingness to go above and beyond to support residents and her fellow staff members. She consistently contributes to a positive workplace culture built on collaboration and mutual respect.

Tiffany's continued dedication and commitment to exceptional care have not gone unnoticed. Previously, she was recognized as Employee of the Year and Employee of the Month. As noted by Cristina Palella, Healthcare Administrator, "Tiffany has never looked for awards. She has a genuine desire to make a meaningful contribution and to make each resident's day a little brighter and more comfortable."

Meredith Becker, COO, summed it up best, "This Award marks a proud moment for both Tiffany and our community. It reaffirms and reinforces Lions Gate's commitment to providing the finest care for our residents. We are grateful for LeadingAge New Jersey & Delaware's recognition of the difference Tiffany makes in the lives of our residents every day."

Mazel Tov, Tiffany! We are so proud of you!



L to R: James W. McCracken, President/CEO, LeadingAge New Jersey & Delaware; Tiffany Wiles, CNA, and Meredith Becker, COO, Lions Gate.

# Lions Gate Earns **Comfort Matters®** Accreditation For Memory Care

On January 14th, Lions Gate's Safe Haven Memory Care neighborhood received accreditation from Comfort Matters®, a nationally recognized leader in dementia care. The accreditation reflects our community's commitment to providing thoughtful, person-centered care for residents living with memory-related issues.

Only 40 senior care communities out of more than 30,000, have received the Comfort Matters® accreditation. Lions Gate is one of just two in New Jersey, and the only one in the southern half of the state.

For families, this accreditation provides reassurance that Lions Gate is committed to delivering Memory Care focused on the unique needs of their loved ones.

The accreditation was presented to David Thompson, CEO, and Meredith Becker, COO, by Tena Alonzo, Director of Education and Research at Beatitudes Campus in Phoenix, Arizona, and a founding practitioner of the Comfort Matters® Care Program.

Ms. Alonzo explained, "Communities must demonstrate a deep, organization-wide commitment to the philosophy, including staff education, care practices, environmental design, and leadership support."

Meredith Becker noted, "The accreditation is a recognition of our two years of work coming to fruition and being officially recognized." David Thompson added, "Earning this recognition confirms that our Memory Care team doesn't just follow best practices, it lives them every day." Ms. Alonzo acknowledged that without the efforts of Dave, Meredith, Michelle Litwack, RN, Assisted Living Health Services Director, as well as Safe Haven caregivers, the accreditation would not have been earned.



Our fantastic Accreditation Team

The Comfort Matters® program is an innovative approach to Memory Care that focuses on fostering residents' individuality, dignity, and emotional well-being. When people feel safe, comfortable, and understood, they are better able to engage and interact with the world around them.



Dave Thompson, CEO, handing a congratulatory t-shirt to Sulda Joseph, CHHA

At its core, this method shifts the focus of Memory Care away from a pharmacological approach toward a holistic model that supports the whole person. Instead of asking only what behaviors are occurring, caregivers are trained to look for the underlying causes.

Caregivers are trained to truly know residents, their personal histories, preferences, emotional needs, and their ways of communicating. Daily schedules are flexible, allowing residents to eat, rest, socialize, and participate in activities. Residents are not asked to adapt to a community's routines; instead, staff members meet residents at their emotional and cognitive level.

What brings comfort, reassurance, or joy to one resident may not work for another. Comfort Matters® encourages caregivers to respond with empathy, flexibility, and creativity, looking beyond traditional models of care. The goal remains the same: to support and enhance each resident's quality of life.

The Comfort Matters® accreditation recognizes the consistency, training, and attentiveness that residents and families expect and experience every day. Meredith expressed the importance of the accreditation. "It puts Lions Gate in a different category than what other communities may be able to offer because we have now officially gone through the training process and have been acknowledged for the work that we're doing."

# Grand Opening Of Susan G. Love Salon

Lions Gate marked an exciting milestone on February 16th with the grand opening of the Susan G. Love Salon, made possible through the extraordinary generosity of Michael Freedman.

The Salon brings to life a vision first imagined by the late Susan Love, whose leadership and attention to detail left a lasting impact on the community she so devotedly served. After Susan's passing in 2021, Michael made a heartfelt commitment to honor her memory by completing the project she had long hoped to create.

From the moment you enter, the Salon makes an immediate impression. Designed to feel like an upscale suburban beauty shop, the space is bright, welcoming, and thoughtfully appointed. A particularly meaningful feature is the artwork created by Susan's late father, Donald Love, displayed prominently within the Salon. His work adds a personal touch that beautifully weaves Susan's family legacy into the space. Residents can enjoy hair styling, coloring, and other classic salon services in an environment that feels both elegant and familiar.



L to R: Meredith Becker, COO; Dave Thompson, CEO; Roberta Budman; Judy Love; Ashley Mandel; Michael Freedman; Jared Mandel; Michael R. Mignogna, Voorhees Mayor

As Susan's daughter, Ashley Mandel, shared, "My mom always wanted a true salon for the residents, a place where they could go to feel good about themselves." For Ashley and her father, Michael, seeing that vision realized has been deeply meaningful.

The Susan G. Love Salon stands as a beautiful tribute to Susan's legacy and to Michael's remarkable generosity, reflecting Lions Gate's continued commitment to enriching residents' lives in ways that support both how they feel and how they live each day.

## MLK Day Of Service

In honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Lions Gate partnered with Congregation Kol Ami to host a day of service that brought generations together in the spirit of connection and community. The event welcomed more than thirty residents from the Assisted Living and Memory Care neighborhoods for an afternoon of games, crafts, trivia, and conversation.

The mitzvah of service was carried out by Congregation Kol Ami teens. They quickly jumped into work and play alongside residents. Before long, it was hard to tell who was enjoying the day more, the teens or the residents. Watching individuals separated by one, two, or even three generations laugh and create together was a beautiful example of *l'dor v'dor* - from generation to generation.

Jennifer Quinn, Director of Activities for Assisted Living and Memory Care, explained the importance of the day. "Martin Luther King Jr. wanted us to come together, to be one, and to work together to build community."

Each teen came with their own motivation. Noah

thought playing games with the residents was a nice thing to do. Zach wanted to make people's day better.

Jessica wanted to honor her grandmother, who used to live at Lions Gate. And Brennan, initially there for a midterm project, found the experience to be much more than an assignment.

Michelle Litwick, RN, Assisted Living Health Services Director, shared how meaningful the interaction was. "This is important because it helps the communities come together, and it gives the younger generation time to spend with our residents. Seeing them interacting and helping is very fulfilling. It's great for the residents - they really need that support from the younger generations."



MLK Day of Service at Lions Gate

## Staff Spotlight: Milly Hernandez

Milly Hernandez has worked in Memory Care and Assisted Living at Lions Gate for the past eight months, bringing with her over twenty years of experience in senior communities.

After several other careers, she knew where she belonged. “I decided that I wanted to go back to being with seniors because I know that’s where I make a difference, and I know that’s where they need me.” For Milly, it comes down to fulfillment. “I am working where I’m happy. I enjoy helping the residents; I like being there for them.”

“I am a housekeeper,” she says, “but to me, it’s more than that. It’s not just pulling trash. It’s seeing the residents and making sure they get good care and whatever they need.”

Her approach is simple: notice, connect, and act. “I am an observer of what the needs of the residents are,” she explains. “That’s important to me. I try to connect with whomever I need to connect with to make things happen for them.”

She recalls one moment that captures that philosophy. A resident she knew well seemed different, staring at a paper and repeating the same questions. “I know him - he’s sharp - but

that day he was just staring at that paper,” Milly says. She immediately alerted leadership, and the resident was assessed right away. “Anything I see like that... any mental health changes...I report it right away.”

Milly was among the staff trained as part of Lions Gate’s Safe Haven neighborhood Comfort Matters® accreditation process. She sees that training as part of a larger commitment, “We’ve learned a lot. We’ve grown,” she says. “They’re trying to make excellence grow here, and I think it’s wonderful. It’s a great place for the residents and for the staff.”

What stands out most to her is Lions Gate’s teamwork. “It’s not only one department. They’re trying to work with different departments to see how we can provide better service to the residents.” She adds that leadership is always looking for ways to improve residents’ comfort and happiness.

Over the years, her compassion has deepened. “I feel like they’re like my family and my friends,” she says. “If I have compassion and a good spirit when I come to work, I can hear the residents ‘speak’ even when they’re not saying anything.”

She speaks with pride about the environment at Lions Gate. “The residents are well taken care of. I have not worked in a better place than this.”

At the end of the day, it’s the emotional connection that matters most. “I’m proud to work here. I’m happy to work here for the residents,” Milly says. “It gives me satisfaction to go home every day knowing that I touched somebody’s heart, that I helped them, that I was able to just be there for them when they need it.” That, perhaps more than any job title, defines her work.



Milly Hernandez



Lions Gate Resident Ilene Hersh and Milly

# Black History Month – The Underground Railroad Of Burlington County

On February 10th, more than 25 Lions Gate residents gathered in the media room to see and hear Deborah Price's moving presentation, *Why We Walk*, in recognition of Black History Month.

Ms. Price, curator and executive director of the *Underground Railroad Museum of Burlington County*, combined personal experiences and history in a captivating presentation. Her goal was for the residents to understand "walking" as more than just movement, but a symbol of resilience, remembrance, and the continuing pursuit of justice and understanding. Using the Underground Railroad and those who assisted former slaves, including abolitionists, churches, Quakers, Indigenous Peoples, and free Black settlements, Price illustrated the critical role of Burlington County on the road to freedom, including vital waterway routes along the Delaware River.

One of the central themes of the presentation was acknowledging not only well-known figures, but also the "silenced and voiceless," whose contributions were often overlooked by history. Price told the residents about some of the lesser-

known individuals in civil rights, science, medicine, the military, and the arts, stressing that history is built not only by famous leaders, but also by everyday people whose courage shaped the nation.

Price encouraged the residents to reflect on their own roots and family histories. "How can you go home if you don't know your address?" she asked, urging them to preserve their personal stories by telling them to their grandchildren.

The program underscored a powerful truth – Black history is American history – a shared story of struggle, perseverance, and progress.



Deborah Price

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## New Programs At Lions Gate

At Lions Gate, there is an ever-changing abundance of activities, programs, and classes that residents can take advantage of. Among our new offerings are the following:

### Magic Moments

Magic Moments is more than entertainment for Memory Care residents. It's a therapeutic concept called "sensoring." The projects are designed to help trigger memories through smells, sounds, touch, etc.

Jennifer Quinn, Director of Activities for Assisted Living and Memory Care, explained the thinking behind the program. "Different senses trigger different responses – the smell of oranges can bring someone home, lavender creates a calming effect, and baked goods remind them of family. We're trying to bring all of these feelings and memories back for our Memory Care residents."

The organizer, Blimie Wertzberger, creates a kitchen baking setting to make colorful, fragrant soap that looks like macaroons. Whether it's the feeling of baking in a kitchen or the smells and colors of the soaps, these experiences bring residents back to baking cookies or being at home. Jennifer noted, "It's good for them, because it helps to keep their senses alive."

### Local History Treasures with Mia Johnson

For Independent Living residents, A new Lions Gate University series, Local History Treasures, is being presented bi-weekly by Mia Johnson.

The class focuses on, as Johnson described, "illuminating some of the more hidden histories of the surrounding state of New Jersey. We talk about things that are more connected to the people who live at Lions Gate." Topics already explored include New Jersey's role in the Underground Railroad and tech pioneer Bell Labs.

Kim Clemons, Independent Living Program Director, was excited for the series. "Mia explains the background and history of each subject. Exploring the hows, whens, whos, and whys allows the residents to gain a deeper understanding. She encourages discussion, hoping that attendees will share their own information or stories, this series should contribute to the residents' continued learning," said Kim.

# Board Member Interview: Alison Platt-Tarnopol



Alison Platt-Tarnopol has been involved with Lions Gate since its planning stages. She has been a fixture in Jewish philanthropy for decades, following in the footsteps of her father, the late Bernie Platt, and her mother, Judy Platt. Alison is a former President of Lions Gate's Board of Directors and currently serves as a Federation appointment to the Board.

## When did you first hear about Lions Gate?

Probably twenty-some years ago. My father was the chairman of the building committee.

Also, I became the rehab director when I was a physical therapist at the Jewish Geriatric Home, when Lions Gate was being planned. So it was probably during that time, when I was very involved with JGH and the associates of Dubin and Gesher House. I was there at the beginning. I helped set up the original rehab gym.

## What does Lions Gate mean to you?

I love Lions Gate because in every part of it, Independent Living, Assisted Living, Memory Care, Skilled Nursing, or Rehab, I know seniors in our community are truly being well taken care of. It is so important to me for two main reasons. First, the number one person in my entire life was always my grandmother. Second, there is a famous quote that resonated with me, but I truly believe this, "We stand on the shoulders of those who came before us." I feel it is so important to honor our seniors and ensure that they're cared for when they cannot care for themselves. The whole concept of Lions Gate is wonderful for our community. When my family, friends, or their parents have needed it, it was there. It is a shining jewel in our community.

As a retired physical therapist, it's so wonderful for me to see all of our residents who use walkers, wheelchairs, or other assistive equipment able to participate both on and off campus. The beauty of Lions Gate is that no matter where someone is in the aging process, there will always be quality care, a plethora of social and educational activities, and a team of staff and volunteers throughout the campus who genuinely care about inclusion and the quality of life of the residents of the Lions Gate community.

## What do you get out of your involvement with Lions Gate?

I love hearing residents' stories and histories. It's wonderful for continuity – learning where people have come from and what they've built with their lives.

## What do you believe Lions Gate means to the community?

It means a great deal...a combination of excellent care, a wonderful environment, and being the only kosher community in the area. People still say, "It has to be Lions Gate."

## What have you learned about yourself from being involved?

I've learned to be a very good listener, not just at Lions Gate, but with all of the committees that I've been on. I used to be very reactionary. I've learned not to react immediately. I take a step back, listen carefully to what's being said, and thoughtfully discuss it.

## What would you like to see Lions Gate do in the future?

I'd like to see Lions Gate grow to accommodate more residents. Expansion would be wonderful. At the same time, I really feel that residents can get everything they need at Lions Gate, whether it's here on campus or through the Federation's other agencies.

## Is there anything else about Lions Gate or your involvement that you would like people to know?

Just that we're here and we want to keep our residents relevant and thriving. Also, I'm honored to be this year's Love Impact Award recipient in the area of Older Adults. An award honoring the late Don Love is especially meaningful since much of my journey with seniors included Susan Love. From working together at JGH to my Board Presidency while she was CEO of Jewish Senior Housing and Healthcare Service, she was a dear friend and mentor.

# Special Presentation: *Through Our Jewish Eyes - Three Generations, Three Voices*

Lions Gate is proud to host *Through Our Jewish Eyes - Three Generations, Three Voices*, a three-part program presented by StandWithUs, focusing on the life experiences of three generations of Jewish women.

StandWithUs is an international, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization, dedicated to combating antisemitism and supporting Israel through education. Founded in 2001, it works with students, educators, and communities to provide information about Israel, promote civil dialogue, and address misinformation. Further, StandWithUs also provides programs on college campuses, in K-12 schools, and within broader community settings, offering educational resources, leadership training, and tools to help individuals of all ages respond to antisemitism and anti-Israel bias.

The series presents three Jewish women at different stages of life – a teenager, a young professional, and a mother – to share their personal stories and perspectives on Jewish life today. Together, the women offer a thoughtful look at identity, community, and resilience across the generations.

Each session is devoted to one of the women and begins with a multi-media presentation followed by a question-and-answer session with the residents.

In the first presentation, Michelle Waksman, StandWithUs Mid-Atlantic High School Manager, shared her journey from college to the working world and how she built her career while proudly maintaining her Jewish identity. Holly Saltzburg, StandWithUs Mid-Atlantic Community Outreach Manager, described the exchange that followed. “We were able to give the residents a young adult’s perspective, and then they were able to give us theirs and talk about what it was like when they were that age. Some of the antisemitic stories were identical.”

Holly was struck by the connection between the speaker and the residents. “The camaraderie was really unbelievable — the support, the dialogue, the back and forth. We learned from them, and we were able to share with them. It was powerful to



Michelle Waksman giving her presentation

hear Michelle talk about the challenges of being a young Jewish professional, finding a job, coming into her own, and deciding how she wanted to use her Jewish voice, and then to hear the residents respond with their own experiences.”

The second session will feature a look at what it is like being a Jewish teen in today’s world and being secure in one’s Jewishness. The third session will give the perspective of a mother raising the next generation of confidently Jewish children in today’s world.

The series, developed by Julie Paris, StandWithUs Mid-Atlantic Regional Director, and Seth Friedman, StandWithUs Mid-Atlantic Region Board member, is a perfect fit for Lions Gate because it reinforces the concept of Jewish community. It illustrates that there are more similarities between the generations than differences. Each presentation, and the series as a whole, affirms the idea that everyone belongs to one community regardless of their age or stage in life.

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## New Year's 2026 - Viva Las Vegas

More than 100 Independent Living residents rang in the New Year at Lions Gate with a celebration that brought the glamour and excitement of classic Las Vegas right to our campus. The music, laughter, and great entertainment transported everyone back to the Strip of Las Vegas' golden age.

The evening began with a lively happy hour. Poker and blackjack tables gave revelers the chance to try their luck. An Elvis impersonator, complete with a Rhinestone white jumpsuit, ensured that everyone was in a good mood. For many of the attendees, it was a fun reminder of trips to Vegas, showrooms, nights out, and the timeless appeal of good music and even better company.



L to R: Seated - Lilyan Cralle, Keesie Spector, Rochelle Galen, Florence Siegel, and Barry the Dealer  
Standing - Betty Witsen



Elinor Kase with Elvis!

After the happy hour, everyone enjoyed a memorable dinner, featuring a delicious lollipop lamb chop entrée, giving the evening an elegant, celebratory feel. The meal set the stage for the night's main attraction. After dinner, the residents gathered in Commons Hall for exciting entertainment by Frank Sinatra, Tom Jones, and Engelbert Humperdinck impersonators, who brought the sounds of classic Vegas to life, performing favorites that had residents singing along, clapping, and swaying to the music.

It was a great night in Rat Pack-era Las Vegas. The combination of live entertainment and shared memories created a fun, festive atmosphere. As the hour drew late, everyone prepared for a special countdown. They all raised their glasses for a champagne toast. The moment was filled with cheers, laughter and well wishes for the year ahead.

The Las Vegas theme brought sparkle and nostalgia, but the true highlight was the sense of community shared throughout the evening that Lions Gate prides itself on.