

# Connect 2: Lifeline For Homebound Holocaust Survivors

Connect2, New York City's friendly visiting program for homebound Holocaust survivors, hosted an appreciation dinner for its volunteer visitors and survivors on the Upper West Side. Connect2's Manhattan branch volunteers shared their inspiration and strengthened their commitment to visiting.

Program Director Sheva Frank welcomed everyone to the gathering and announced that in the past year and a half, almost 1,500 visits were made by the Manhattan branch alone. In all, Connect2's 100 volunteers have made almost 4,000 visits since the programs installment in 2002.

Connect2's name illustrates the goals of this unique, friendly-visiting programs, which brings caring neighborhood volunteers into the apartments of frail Holocaust survivors. Connect2 connects lonely seniors to the community by providing friendly visits and regular telephone contact.

In addition, Connect2 volunteers assist seniors with reading mail, shopping and other needs.

Connect2 volunteers come from all walks of life. Many of them are teenagers excited by the chance to reach across the genera-

tions and establish a unique friendship with a lonely senior. Others are local community members, particularly retired individuals, who want to make a difference in the lives of those in need.

Connect2 helpers are screened and trained prior to beginning with home visits. In particular, the volunteers are trained to identify a Holocaust survivor's other social needs to that the Connect2 can bring in an outreach caseworkers to help the senior access additional benefits and services when necessary.

Every Holocaust survivor is personally assessed by a program director to determine their needs. Michla Posner, Connect2's assistant director, travels across New York City to meet these seniors. "When I leave a survivor's home after a visit, I feel privileged to be able to [have] spent time with these special seniors. Hearing the survivors' stories has given me a deeper perspective on life."

At the dinner, new volunteer Ari Wiener, sang a moving song about the importance of remembering the Holocaust. He shared a few inspiring words about with relationship with the survivor he visits, saying, "He has

enriched my life by allowing me to enter his."

Connect2 is a joint project of the Jewish Community Council of Greater Coney Island and Shorefront Jewish Community Council. It is funded by a grant from the Conference of Jewish Material Claims Against Germany.

If you know of a Holocaust survivor who would like to be a part of this program, or if you would like to volunteer for Connect2, please contact Sheva Frank at 718-449-5000 extension 216.

For more information, email [s.frank@connect2.org](mailto:s.frank@connect2.org) or log onto the website [www.connect2ny.org](http://www.connect2ny.org).