

# DOROT Generations

## DOROT's Youth Volunteer Program Remains a Generations United Program of Distinction

This October, we were thrilled when our Youth Volunteer program was named a Generations United Program of Distinction for the second time. This designation recognizes DOROT's continued efforts to create meaningful, sustainable, and high-impact intergenerational programming. The Program of Distinction seal marks DOROT as one of the most effective, innovative, and engaging intergenerational organizations in the U.S.

Youth volunteers are critical in working towards DOROT's mission of bringing the generations together and alleviating social isolation for older New Yorkers. Youth volunteerism at DOROT offers opportunities for teens to learn from another generation, engage with present-day issues, and develop their own leadership skills.

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*DOROT Executive Director Mark Meridy with Krista Bennion Feeney, violin; Myron Lutzke, cello; John Feeney, bass; Cameron Grant, piano; Daniel Panner, viola; DOROT Board member Doris Ullendorff; Maureen Gallagher; and Jackie Ullendorff.*

## Remembering Regina Ullendorff

In the spring of 2004, DOROT held a concert to celebrate the return to our 85th Street home after the completion of an extensive renovation project. In the audience for the concert that afternoon was Regina Ullendorff. Regina had played the violin for decades and possessed an intense love of music. She was so moved by the concert that she immediately endowed a series of three concerts a year in honor of her late husband, Henry "Uli" Ullendorff. The Ullendorff chamber music series "An Afternoon with Friends" was launched.

To make it happen, Vivian Fenster Ehrlich, former DOROT Executive Director, turned to her sister Bira, a violinist in the New York City Ballet orchestra. Bira looked to Maureen Gallagher, a fellow member of the orchestra, for help in organizing the concerts. With the help of her friends—all widely acclaimed New York City musicians—Maureen put on an outstanding inaugural Ullendorff concert. Regina was elated, and asked

that Maureen continue to organize the concerts. For nearly 13 years, Maureen has given her time to the series, bringing to DOROT players whom she calls "the best of the best" from nationally renowned orchestras and ensembles. Past performers include: Kurt Nikkanen, Concertmaster of the New York City Ballet orchestra; Jerry Grossman, Principal Cellist of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra; and Cynthia Phelps, Principal Violist of the New York Philharmonic, as well as Maureen herself.

Regina made sure to be involved in the planning process. She helped to curate the programs and ensured that major string pieces, her personal favorite, were prominently featured. Regina arrived to the concerts brimming with energy, and always ardently admired the music from the second row. Each concert renewed her awe at the fact that nothing—not even the finest CD—could compare to the euphoria of live music.

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## An Organization of Innovation

Dear Friends,

It was with great excitement that in September, our Board set into motion a new five-year Strategic Plan. The Plan is aimed at strengthening our abilities to ease the effects of social isolation on older adults and provide exemplary intergenerational programming. In thinking about our vision and goals, such as expanding the numbers of older adults we reach and volunteers we engage, one word comes to mind: innovation.

While we have always strived to innovate, the Strategic Plan challenges us to reassess the needs of our community and how we can best meet them. One of our community's most pressing needs, and now one of our biggest upcoming areas of innovation, is technology. Through expanding existing programs and creating new ones, we are setting out to maximize technology's positive role in the lives of our clients.

Since 2008, DOROT's Response Team has offered a variety of occasional volunteer opportunities, including technology help. Last year, approximately 25 percent of Response Team requests were related to technology. Technology's central role in society only continues to increase, and research shows that internet usage among older adults results in improved social connectedness. In anticipating a greater future need for technological support, we plan to launch the Technology Response Team in FY2019. The Technology Response Team will engage and train a volunteer corps to provide in-person assistance to older adults both in their homes and at DOROT, teaching and reinforcing lessons on how to use smart phones, email, the internet, and social media. It will offer a new entryway for seniors and volunteers into DOROT while providing this much-needed service.

I am pleased to introduce a second new initiative, the answer to another critical need in our community. For many older adults, joyous parts of the week that used to be full of family and friends are now quiet and lonely. To combat isolation during these traditionally secluded times, we are preparing an array of Sunday and evening programs at DOROT, which we highlighted on #GivingTuesday this past November. You will find more about our successful #GivingTuesday campaign and first Sunday event later on in the newsletter.

In the midst of these exciting developments, we are ensuring that our existing programs continue to focus on excellence. Friendly Visiting made over 500 matches last year, and Door to Door Travel Companions assisted older adults with over 1,200 medical and other essential appointments. Lasting Impressions: DOROT's Legacy Project expanded to Westchester, engaging college students in the gathering of legacy stories. We received this note from an 89-year-old DOROT client who participates in all three programs mentioned above:

*"I was used to doing so much during the day, and I wasn't doing anything anymore. I had begun to stay at home, and was becoming a bit isolated. The DOROT volunteer came into my life and opened the door. And that is such a gift, such a miracle. When the volunteer comes on Monday mornings, we can do whatever we want, because I hold her arm and we go out. I don't know if you can understand to what extent DOROT has changed my life."*

At DOROT, innovation means that we never stop generating creative, effective, and programmatically excellent ways to address the evolving needs of our community. I am confident that we will continue to meet these needs, anticipate new ones, and make a difference in the lives of older adults and volunteers.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark L. Meridy". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Mark L. Meridy

# Remembering Regina Ullendorff *Continued from page 1*

The Ullendorff chamber music series quickly became a beloved program at DOROT, presenting a unique opportunity to attendees: exceptional and highly accessible live music. Per Regina's request, concerts are held in the afternoon rather than the evening to remove the burden of nighttime travel. The Ullendorff series eliminates the accessibility issues of large concert halls such as long staircases and prolonged periods of sitting. DOROT volunteers escort clients to and from the performances when needed, and every concert in the series is free of charge.

For older adults, accessible concerts provide unequalled opportunities for meaningful experience and social interaction. When Mr. B. was introduced to DOROT, he had significant memory-impairment. Similar to many other DOROT clients, music had been a formative part of his life; he had been a member of the New York Philharmonic for years. Eventually, Mr. B. reached a stage of dementia where he was unable to go places independently, and the inaccessibility and formality of concert halls became prohibitive. He deeply felt the absence of live music experiences. Upon meeting Mr. B. and considering what DOROT could offer him, social workers invited him to attend a Ullendorff concert. For Mr. B., talented performers playing in an intimate and informal setting was perfect. He had no trouble getting to and from the concert, nor sitting through its entirety. At the conclusion of Mr. B.'s first Ullendorff concert, he was filled with joy. His wife, who accompanied him, was just as thrilled; it had been years since she saw him that gratified.

As summarized by DOROT social worker Lisa Sutz, "Live concerts bring people together for a shared experience, one that accesses a deep emotional part of us that goes beyond



*Audience members enjoying the concert*

articulation. They are an invaluable way to bring meaning into the lives of older adults."

Regina's daughters, Doris and Jackie, both live in Manhattan and represent the Ullendorff family at nearly every concert. Doris, who also serves on the DOROT Board of Directors, volunteered in Lasting Impressions' *Drawing and Life Collage* course last summer. The class members often worked in pairs, an older adult together with a volunteer. One week, the older woman with whom Doris was paired asked for her name. Upon her reply, the woman inquired, "Are you related to the Ullendorff concerts?" After Doris confirmed that indeed, she was, the woman went on, "I can't tell you how much I love coming to them. They bring more substance to my life than you know." Doris agrees that the concerts are a thing to cherish: "Not considering my family ties, you wouldn't want to miss the afternoon if you were able to go. It is one of my great pleasures to attend the concerts."

After Regina passed away last year, the concerts went on. In the fall, we held a particularly special concert in her honor. When Regina lived in New

York, she studied the violin under Albert Polnarioff. He came to her home for lessons, teaching her husband and daughters as well. Throughout her years of playing, Regina assembled a copious library of violin and chamber music. Last year, her family generously offered the collection to Maureen, who shared it with Krista Bennion Feeny, Concertmaster of the Orchestra of St. Luke's. Upon surveying the music, Krista found something precious: a collection of compositions written personally by Polnarioff for Regina.

Before an audience held in rapt attention, Krista played those very pieces at the October Ullendorff concert. Guest musicians also performed a soaring Vivaldi sonata and a magnificent Schubert quintet. An afternoon of beautiful music was how Regina wanted to honor her husband, and it was just the way for us to honor her. The recognition of her legacy moved the room to tears.

Regina exposed DOROT to the transformative impact of live music. Thanks to her vision, the Ullendorff chamber music series ensures the DOROT community can continue to revel in the joy of live music, just as Regina did.

# SAVE THE DATE

# DOROT's Thanksgiving Banquet

**DOROT'S 42ND  
ANNUAL SPRING BENEFIT  
WEDNESDAY, MAY 16, 2018  
6:30 PM**

*Honoring Harriet and Joel Shaiman*

*Recognizing the graduating seniors of  
DOROT's Next Generation Teen Council*

**Museum of the City of New York  
1220 Fifth Avenue**

**Pat Fingeroth, Benefit Chair**

Harriet and Joel Shaiman, along with their children Aaron, Sydney, and Benjamin, have been committed DOROT volunteers for nearly two decades. Harriet is currently serving her fourth year on the DOROT Board, on which Joel previously served in the early 2000s. All three Shaiman children participated in visits with DOROT seniors during their childhood and young-adult years, both as a family and as students at The Heschel School. Aaron and Sydney held leadership positions on DOROT's Next Generation Teen Council and participated in DOROT's Summer Teen Internship Program.



Harriet and Joel are longtime volunteers with and supporters of many Jewish communal organizations. Harriet, a former health care consultant, also volunteers on pro-bono consulting projects for small nonprofits in New York City. Joel, after a successful career in the investment management industry, was ordained as a rabbi in 2013 and now works with individuals who are in the process of converting to Judaism.

Harriet and Joel embody DOROT's mission and we are proud to honor them at this year's Annual Spring Benefit.



Photo credit: Alan Awakim

*Harriet Shaiman enjoying the Thanksgiving banquet with a guest*



*Banquet attendees dance to live Klezmer music*



*Michael Raskin and Bruce Raskin of the Jewish Lawyers Guild*

# Banquet and Meal Delivery

# Sunday on the Upper West Side with DOROT



Photo credit: Alan Awakim

*Kol DOROT, our senior chorus, performs for guests at the Banquet*



**DOROT's Thanksgiving Banquet is generously supported by The Jack and Pearl Resnick Foundation and Newman's Own Foundation. DOROT gratefully acknowledges the donation of the Thanksgiving Banquet meal by the Jewish Lawyers Guild. The Thanksgiving Meal Delivery is supported by Bryna and Joshua Landes in loving memory of their uncle Marvin Sochet. The Chanukah gift is funded by Samuel and Holly Merrin.**

For many, weekends and evenings are times to relish favorite activities, rejoice with friends, and embrace family. However, for countless older New Yorkers, opportunities to enjoy these times are few and far between. Accessibility hurdles may prohibit them from participating in pastimes that once provided great delight, or they may no longer have loved ones to share time with. Older adults are often left alone during weekends and evenings, vulnerable to social isolation and its devastating health consequences.



*A concert-goer with violinist Linda Rosenthal*

That is why this year on #GivingTuesday, DOROT focused our campaign on fundraising to begin a new initiative: Sunday and evening programming. By offering increased opportunities for engagement, we hope to extend the reach of our mission of alleviating social isolation for older adults. Thanks to the support of the DOROT community and a generous matching grant from The Omer Foundation, we raised a remarkable \$32,000 on #GivingTuesday to support these expanded programs.

DOROT's annual Piatigorsky Foundation concert, held on a recent Sunday, was the perfect way to mark the beginning of the initiative. The event, generously sponsored by the Ernst C. Stiefel Foundation, brings renowned musicians to DOROT for an outstanding classical music concert. Violinist Linda Rosenthal and pianist Maxim Pakhomov enchanted a full audience with works by Brahms, Handel, Chopin, and Bartok. To the guests' delight, the concert concluded with a lively *Fiddler on the Roof* medley. After Ms. Rosenthal and Mr. Pakhomov put away their instruments, seniors had the chance to spend time with the musicians, asking questions and sharing their deep appreciation of the event.

Following the concert, Ms. G. shared how hard Sundays often are for her. Ms. M. agreed, adding, "As you get older, the whole weekend feels longer." Through programs including outings, intergenerational activities, and more concerts, DOROT will continue to combat the social isolation afflicting older New Yorkers like Ms. G. and Ms. M.

# Welcoming a New Chair of the Westchester Committee

Since 2004, the DOROT Westchester Committee has been instrumental in fostering awareness, volunteerism, and support for DOROT. After six years, Joan Taback Frankle recently stepped down as Chair of the Committee, turning the position over to Emily Cohen. On May 31, we will be honoring Joan at DOROT's Annual Westchester Spring Event at the New York Botanical Garden.

## Thank You, Joan!

It was at a DOROT Westchester event in 2007 where Joan Frankle realized that she and DOROT were a good match. Having recently lost the last grandparent in her family, she was looking to keep a connection to the "greatest generation." With this in mind, Joan signed up to be a Friendly Visitor—a role she retains to this day. Joan later joined the Westchester Committee, eventually stepping into the role of Chair.



During Joan's time as Chair, DOROT Westchester expanded its role in the community by adding programs, fundraisers, and cultivation events, involving greater numbers of volunteers, and addressing the needs of more seniors. DOROT's staff in Westchester grew, enabling more robust outreach to seniors and volunteers. As an ambassador for DOROT, Joan introduced people to the organization and collaborated with staff and Committee members to increase DOROT's presence in Westchester.

## Joan summarized what made her time chairing the Committee particularly special:

*The best part about my DOROT Westchester Committee work was being able to participate in DOROT on both a personal and an organizational level. There are so many opportunities available to enhance the life of a senior who may be socially isolated and lonely. I hope that by volunteering with DOROT, I am a role model for my sons as they continue to find their own paths towards service in their communities.*

In thinking about what she would most like people to understand about DOROT, Joan did not hesitate: bettering the life of a senior is easy to do. Building a relationship with someone who is homebound or isolated is extremely impactful, and not as daunting as it may appear to be. Joan firmly believes that DOROT volunteers get back what they give, and that brightening someone else's day in turn brightens one's own.

"Joan has played an extraordinary role in expanding DOROT's visibility in Westchester. We are most grateful for her leadership," shared Mark Meridy, Executive Director of DOROT. "We look forward to honoring her in May."

Joan is a Vice President at Westchester Reform Temple, where she focuses on its Caring Community and the Music Committee. She is the Recording Secretary of the League of Women Voters of Scarsdale, a coach to a high school student for Project Morry, and serves on the Board of STEP, Scarsdale's Student Transfer Education Program. Other committee work includes the Auburn Theological Seminary Lives of Commitment and the Westchester Community College Foundation Salon Series. Joan is enjoying her frequent Friendly Visits with Mrs. S., her most recent match.

## Meet Emily:

Emily Cohen has been involved with DOROT since 2005. She was introduced to DOROT at a UJA-Federation of New York social action roundtable, where she was in attendance as the Chair of her congregation's Social Action Committee. It didn't take long after this introduction for Emily to join the organization as a volunteer, participating in events and bringing DOROT into her temple. In early 2006, Emily joined the Westchester Committee.



## When asked what excites her about assuming her new position on the Committee, Emily shared:

*We are now facing real opportunities for expansion in Westchester. We're developing robust partnerships and leveraging the incredible strength of our volunteer leaders. The DOROT Board has a renewed commitment to our success, and Cippi Harte has been pioneering innovative programming and making the needs of isolated seniors more known to the community. I'm excited to be a part of all this in a leadership role.*

One of Emily's fondest DOROT memories to date is a project that she and Stephanie Tessler, a founding member of the Westchester program, organized several years ago. On an autumn Sunday, Westchester youth group members gathered at a local synagogue. With donated fleece, the teens spent the morning assembling no-sew blankets for older adults, to be distributed during an upcoming Winter Package Delivery. The reception to the blankets was overwhelmingly positive.

Emily will serve as the Chair of the Westchester Committee while remaining on the Boards of Congregation Emanu-El of Westchester and the Holocaust and Human Rights Education Center. Emily is also an active community volunteer.

Added Mark, "I am excited to work with Emily to make DOROT even stronger in the Westchester community. Just like Joan, she brings a passion and commitment to our mission."

**For more information about the Annual Westchester Spring Event, please contact Audrey Stein at (917) 441-3746 or [astein@dorotusa.org](mailto:astein@dorotusa.org).**

# Malachy McCourt Shares Wisdom at December Lecture



*Malachy McCourt signs a copy of his book for an enthusiastic DOROT volunteer*

In November, DOROT's Legacy Lecture Series welcomed Malachy McCourt, author of "Death Need not be Fatal" and several other bestselling books. He came for a reading and discussion, though not one of conventional sorts; the author regaled the audience with his wit, inspired with his tales of trial and triumph, and comforted with the recitation of Irish poetry and folk songs. Mr. McCourt held attendees in awe as he mused about the end of life not with fright, but with clarity. His engaging anecdotes on embracing life and looking death in the face left neither a dry eye nor an empty seat in the audience.

Both DOROT clients and staff alike couldn't get enough of the guest speaker. Even after significantly extending the length of the program, the audience had far more questions and comments than time permitted. After the presentation, Mr. McCourt was flooded by those looking to continue the conversation or ask for his signature. For days, DOROT received calls from attendees wishing to express their deep appreciation and gratitude.

"Mr. McCourt's intrepid ability to confront getting older had a clear impact on our clients," shared Wendy Handler, Director of Lasting Impressions: DOROT's Legacy Project. "His unique perspective and generosity with his stories set him apart and reached our clients in a way that's hard to detail. It was a privilege to witness the outpouring of love for our guest."

*Lasting Impressions: DOROT's Legacy Project offers DOROT clients creative ways to convey their individual legacy stories to ensure that their beliefs and values, life lessons, important memories, and hopes for the future are recorded for loved ones and generations to come. For more information about Lasting Impressions, please contact Wendy Handler at (917) 441-3724 or whandler@dorotusa.org.*

## Generations United Program of Distinction

*Continued from page 1*

"Generations United is one of our strongest collaborators in creating meaningful intergenerational relationships," shared Judith Turner, Senior Program Officer of Volunteer Services and Intergenerational Programs. "Just like DOROT, they know the importance of these connections for seniors and teens alike."

We highly value our partnership with Generations United, and are honored to retain the Program of Distinction designation. In addition to this renewal, DOROT remains the proud recipient of the 2017 Eisner Prize for Intergenerational Excellence, further recognition of our pioneer status in intergenerational programming.



*Shai Rosenfeld, Coordinator of Youth and Family Volunteers, welcomed Girl Scouts Troop 3722 to our recent Winter Package Delivery. Not only did the troop volunteer, but they donated proceeds from their annual cookie sale to DOROT to assist isolated older adults in their community. We are inspired to see the next generation helping those who came before them. Thank you, Troop 3722!*



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## DOROT Generations

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## IN MEMORY OF ALEX TURNEY



*Alex never missed a chance to dance*

If being a tango aficionado, a Holocaust survivor, and a loving father, grandfather, and great grandfather wasn't enough, **Alex Turney** was a remarkable presence at DOROT. Over the years, Alex participated in nearly every program DOROT offered, from Door to Door to many Thanksgiving Banquets. It has been said that Alex "collected volunteers;" one-time volunteers who visited him were so enthralled by his intellectual depth, resilience, and wit that they reliably signed up to volunteer again.

Said Mark Meridy, Executive Director of DOROT, "Despite the many hardships he faced, he entered every room with vigor and positivity. It was impossible not to be inspired by his curiosity and sensitivity to others. Alex—philosopher, performer, and lover of life—will be deeply missed at DOROT."

In addition to everything else, Alex was a member of DOROT's Generations Society. For years, the Generations Society has recognized the supporters of DOROT who have chosen to make a planned gift to the organization. Some members of the Generations Society are older adults who wish to help others experience the compassion they themselves found at DOROT, while others have supported our work over the years and chose to continue their legacy of assisting older adults by including DOROT in their estate plans. Bequests—both large and small—provide unparalleled financial stability and make a profound difference in DOROT's ability to work towards our mission.

***For more information about planned giving and its many benefits, please contact Audrey Stein at (917) 441-3746 or [astein@dorotusa.org](mailto:astein@dorotusa.org).***