

# METRO JEWISH HEALTH SERVICE AND CELEBS “REACH FOR THE STARS”

STAR-STUDED EVENT BENEFITTED CAMPAIGN TO BUILD HOSPICE RESIDENCES IN NEW YORK CITY

With the help of numerous famous names and faces from Hollywood, Broadway, music and literature, MJHS Foundation hosted its first annual “Reaching for the Stars” benefit on Thursday, May 12, 2011. Nearly 200 people from across the country helped kick-off the “Sixteen Lights” campaign to build New York’s most innovative hospice residences. The event also honored the memory of Howard “Kvetch” Shapiro.

Over the next five years, “Reaching for the Stars” receptions will help fund the Howard “Kvetch” Shapiro wing at the new 16 suite MJHS Hospice inpatient residence on the oceanfront in Manhattan Beach. This pioneering hospice, in addition to the new 16 suite MJHS Hospice residence in the heart of the Bronx, will care for adults with advanced illness and be the first in New York City to treat children. More specifically, both hospice residences will be a home-



Joel and Leslie Greenberg, with members of the Greenberg and Shapiro families, honor the life and work of Howard Shapiro by donating his celebrity photo collection and dedicating the new MJHS Hospice facility in his name.

The inaugural “Reaching for the Stars” event included an exhibit of celebrity memorabilia collected by the late Howard

“Reach for the Stars” benefit, a small portion of this collection was out on display, filling two large rooms. The photos, bearing autographs and often personal inscriptions, included celebrities whose work spanned many decades, from The Honeymooners’ Art Carney to media personality Joan Rivers, from Hollywood legend Robert DeNiro to comedian Dennis Miller. Together with the rest of Shapiro’s collection, it was enough to fill a museum!

“When my husband, Joel Greenberg, and I learned of the extraordinary programs and services at MJHS Hospice and Palliative Care,” said Leslie Shapiro Greenberg, “we decided to donate Howard’s collection to MJHS Foundation, so it could be used to raise funds for the Howard “Kvetch” Shapiro wing of MJHS’ groundbreaking new hospice inpatient residence.” She added, “We are also confident that Howard’s treasures will bring a smile to someone’s face, elicit a fond memory from the past, hum the theme song from a favorite TV show, sing a Top 10 hit or re-read a favorite book.”

David Nussbaum, Executive Director of MJHS Foundation and Chief Development Officer of MJHS said, “Leslie and Joel Greenberg’s support of Sixteen Lights is rooted in their strong culture of philanthropy. Their generous donation will help bring joy

- composer
- Elliot Gould, Academy Award-nominated star of films ranging from MASH to Ocean’s Eleven
- Florence Henderson, singer and actress known to millions for playing Carol Brady on TV’s The Brady Bunch
- Neil Sedaka, legendary singer and Grammy-winning songwriter

### ABOUT MJHS

MJHS is a charitable not-for-profit organization with more than a century of providing quality, compassionate and innovative health services to New Yorkers of all ages, ethnic, religious and economic backgrounds. MJHS is uniquely positioned to provide the right level of care when and where it is most needed—so the majority of its care recipients are able to continue living at home and we can help reduce hospital readmissions. The MJHS robust portfolio includes: home care, hospice, palliative care, centers for rehabilitation and nursing care, health plans, independent living and adult day health care. For more information, visit [www.mjhs.org](http://www.mjhs.org) or call 1-855-692-5058.

### ABOUT MJHS FOUNDATION

MJHS Foundation provides financial assistance for the charitable health care efforts of MJHS and its affiliated agencies. Consistent with our heritage, MJHS Foundation is dedicated to promoting and allocating the funds necessary for the provision of charitable care. Costs for the extraordinary services offered by MJHS are offset in part by grants from the MJHS Foundation, which relies on the support of generous donors like you. To learn more, visit [www.mjhsfoundation.org](http://www.mjhsfoundation.org).

### ABOUT SIXTEEN LIGHTS

Sixteen Lights: The Campaign to Build New York’s Most Innovative Hospice Residences will bring hospice care into the 21st Century. The centerpiece is the new 16-



Left to Right: Leslie Shapiro Greenberg, Joel Greenberg, and Dr. Bernard Lee, Associate Chief Medical Officer of MJHS Hospice

like setting and provide for patients physically and psychologically—making it possible for families to stay with their loved ones comfortably and for as long as they wish.

Barbara Hiney, Executive VP for MJHS Hospice and Palliative Care explained to the Jewish Voice that one of the things that will make the new facility so unique is that “it’s being set up so that it supports patients’ and families’ religious customs, beliefs, and ethnicities.” Indeed, the highly diverse group in attendance at the “Reaching for the Stars” benefit attested to the cultural sensitivity at MJHS, and their goal to be as inclusive as possible. This, in turn, makes them more versatile as an agency, and better able to serve the needs of the greatest possible number of New Yorkers.

“Kvetch” Shapiro, HIV/AIDS activist, humorist and columnist. Shapiro was also honored posthumously. His sister, Leslie Shapiro Greenberg, accepted the first annual Humanitarian Award on his behalf.

Speaking to the Jewish Voice before the ceremony, Mrs. Greenberg, Howard’s only sibling, reminisced on her brother’s sense of humor and indomitable spirit. She then recounted Howard’s project that served as the theme for the evening’s events.

During Howard’s courageous battle with a life-limiting illness, he corresponded with and collected memorabilia from a broad range of celebrities, including movies, theater, music and literature. It was his hope that the collection would be used to help and inspire others facing end of life. At the



Included now in Shapiro’s recently-donated collection is a tribute to the man himself.

to generations of New Yorkers to come.” He added, “MJHS is building hospice residences because there is a very real need for quality, compassionate hospice care in this city. People with an advanced illness deserve to live life as fully and comfortably as they’re able, for as long as they’re able—especially children, who are so much in need of love, assurance and normalcy.”

### Celebrity co-chairs for Reaching for the Stars were:

- Edward Albee, Tony- and Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright
- Marvin Hamlisch, Emmy-, Grammy-, Oscar-, Tony- and Pulitzer Prize-winning

suite inpatient residence at our Menorah campus on the ocean in Manhattan Beach. It will be the first inpatient hospice residence in New York City to accept children as well as adults. Our second residence will consist of 16 studio apartments on the grounds of Jewish Home Lifecare in the Bronx. Both residences will provide a home-like setting where we can provide for patients physically and psychologically and where families can stay with their loved ones as often and for as long as they wish. An oasis of comfort and support to people of all cultures, the Sixteen Lights residences are a shining example of the vision and pioneering spirit of The Brooklyn Ladies who founded the organization in 1907.



Hundreds of pieces of celebrity memorabilia, which constituted but a fraction of Howard “Kvetch” Shapiro’s collection, filled the reception area.