

COMMUNITY

A haven, a home an Oasis

A 50th-anniversary celebration for Dodge Park Rest Home on Randolph Road in Worcester and the companion official grand opening of Oasis at Dodge Park across the street the afternoon of September 13th gave the community a chance to say thank you to Owners Micha Shalev and Ben Herlinger for the sensitivity they have made a cornerstone of their management style.

In the aftermath of the fanfare—the food, the music, the speeches—there lingered appreciation for the efforts Mr. Shalev and Mr. Herlinger continue to exert on behalf of caregivers' loved ones. Oasis at Dodge Park—Alzheimer's care, dementia care, assisted living and adult day care in a brand-new multimillion dollar facility on grounds that once housed the Odd Fellows Home—is nothing short of a godsend for those whose family members have taken up residence there.

Judy Atkins Bath's mom Nancy Atkins, 84, born and raised in Holden, a former homemaker whose previous active life included mothering three daughters (Janet, Judy and Susan), church, work and volunteerism in such environments as Benson's Clothing, The Heather Shop, Holden District Hospital and the Holden Public Library) and jigsaw puzzles, moved in from another facility shortly after Oasis at Dodge Park began accepting occupants. Ms. Atkins' husband Don had died years earlier.

Hampton Perkins' mom Sally Grigaliunas—"Sally G," he says—arrived at Oasis soon afterwards. Like Ms. Perkins, Ms. Grigaliunas, 81, was formerly "very independent," Mr. Perkins said.

Ms. Bath and Mr. Perkins are glad their mothers have found a good home.



Sally Grigaliunas
with her son
Hampton Perkins at
Oasis at Dodge Park.



The Great Room at Oasis at Dodge Park.
Below, the patio area.



"I think it's really great," Ms. Bath told *The Rambler*. "I think they have just about everything covered. There is lot of entertainment that gets the residents smiling and happy. Staffing is great, there's a buzzer alarm, staff tries to find out what residents want to eat, grilled cheese, hot dogs if the main entrée doesn't work.

"Mom was diagnosed with dementia eight to ten years ago. For her it is progressing very slowly in my eyes. I don't see huge decline. She lived with me for almost two years and then at the other facility for three and this opened up and it was time for a change.

"When I interviewed with Micha I was totally impressed with him and the facility. A lot of these places are run as a business but [Oasis] also cares about families.

"Oasis offers residents their own medical team so I opted to do that even though we had had a PC forever. They

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are on top of medical changes, anxiety, I no longer have to pick her up and deal with the trauma that goes with that.

“They have every T dotted and every I crossed. Dietary, activities, Diana who opens the door for you.”

Mr. Perkins shares Ms. Bath’s assessment of Oasis.

“Very clean, very professional, more of treating residents like a family, family-oriented, they treat everyone equal,” Mr. Perkins said. “I don’t want to say it’s like a hotel but it’s not your typical rest-home facility, it’s relaxed, people come out of their shell. Residents come in withdrawn and after a few weeks they are opening up. It’s a good place for people with memory loss, dementia.

“My mom has early dementia, stroke-induced. She was a very independent lady, always. She has been at Oasis since February. She is one of the early pioneers. She was very independent in her prior life but now mentally she can’t function at times.

“I am retired. I visit her every day and my sister Sheree and my wife Pamela visit.”

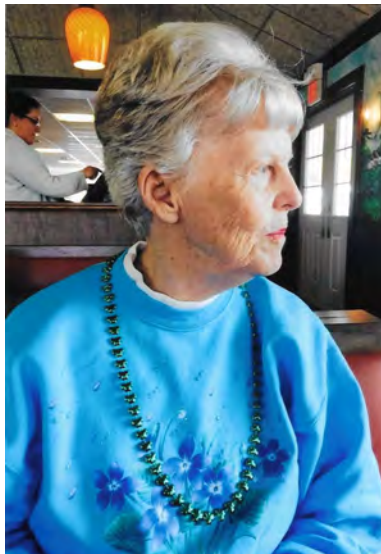
THE VISION for Oasis at Dodge Park was there from the beginning, Mr. Shalev said.

“When we bought Dodge Park Rest Home we realized that a 60-bed alone [was] not sufficient to sustain operations as we wanted. Especially with the rate of reimbursement to rest homes in the state of Massachusetts which is crappy and (which) pushed a lot of good operators out of the business.

“We knew that the building across the street [would] be available for sale and we negotiated with the seller Randolph Realty for a long time until we agreed on a price. We wanted another operation but we wanted to be close to Dodge Park. We did not want to spend all day driving back and forth and we wanted the ability to be at both buildings pretty much at the same time during the day.”

JEANNE GIFFORD of Boylston recalled with fondness her mom Elizabeth Paulin’s brief time at Oasis at Dodge Park as a first resident before passing in July at the age of eighty-six. “It was wonderful,” Ms. Gifford, one of ten children, said. “Mom and I were colleagues. I’m also a nurse (Ms. Gifford followed her mother’s footsteps to the Carney Hospital School of Nursing in Dorchester—Labaure Hospital today—and now works in a nonclinical setting). She described her mother as “a very insightful, beautiful woman” who had lived with her husband in southern Maine until a broken hip complicating Alzheimer’s “changed everything.” Jeanne Gifford learned of Oasis from Mr. Shalev’s wife Sarah. Oasis, she said, is a “very inviting facility, laidback, with a lot of kindness and the nursing care is exceptional. Mom was in the right place. What a privilege and an honor it was for me to nurse my mom at the end with the help of staff at Oasis including the kids who were so concerned about my dad too. I appreciated that. I am so grateful.”

She is not alone. Many families welcome Oasis at Dodge Park.



Nancy Atkins: A Life

Clockwise from the left, with comments provided by Judy Atkins Bath who also supplied the photos:

- Wedding Day, August 15, 1953.
- Wells, Maine, 1966, “at her parents’ cottage with her three girls, she loved Maine, Moody Beach.”
- With Don at eldest daughter Janet’s wedding (Nancy then 50 years of age). “Dad took great pride in his clothes and appearance and in my mom’s too.”
- With Harry, 1989, “the first of eight grandchildren in eight years...four boys, four girls.”
- “Christmas, 1984, mom loves holidays, especially spent at home..”
- May, 2016, at Pinecroft Dairy—“a favorite place.”

