

**MILLION-DOLLAR GIFT LAUNCHES RESEARCH INSTITUTE AT
MENORAH PARK**

**Shopping for Solutions for Aging Baby Boomers? “Buy Local,” says
New Institute**

Syracuse, NY—June 7, 2010—Menorah Park has received a \$1 million planned gift to launch a regionwide incubator to stimulate, coordinate, and disseminate research and training in the area of aging.

IMPARA: The Rodney and Marjorie Fink Institute at Menorah Park for Applied Research on Aging, has a mission “to promote the study of aging, in partnership with other institutions, agencies, and health and spiritual care providers in our region. As we deepen the pool of knowledge, we simultaneously apply our findings to the delivery of care and to the systematic training and support of those delivering it: current and future professionals across the continuum of care, the allied workforce, families, and other members of the community.”

“This is an idea whose moment has come,” said Barry Weiss, chairperson of IMPARA’s advisory committee. “When this region’s Baby Boomers hit 65 in just a few short years, they are going to need new treatments and methods and advanced systems of care, along with a workforce of health care providers that is up to the task of delivering them.”

“Menorah Park’s interest in creating IMPARA is twofold,” said Menorah Park CEO Mary Ellen Bloodgood. “The best way to continue our tradition of excellence is to position ourselves at the heart of the community of top researchers and clinicians. IMPARA stands to vastly improve the community itself by fostering collaborations and creating synergies.”

The Menorah Park campus on East Genesee Street in Syracuse is a community providing a continuum of care and services—residential living, adult day service, home care and skilled nursing care—that ensures maximum independence and dignity for residents, families, and staff.

According to Dr. Sharon A. Brangman, Division Chief of Geriatrics at Upstate Medical University, and President of the American Geriatrics Society, “The shortage of geriatricians and other members of the health care team that care for older adults is at a critical level. Considering the alternative, most people do want to grow older, but want to do so with the support and resources that allow them to maintain their function and independence for as long as possible. These are resources we will all need for ourselves before long.

“I’m all about finding mega-solutions to these problems,” she added.

Buy-in from Brangman and other key figures in the academic community such as Dr. Eric Kingson and Dr. Thomas Dennison from Syracuse University led to participation from the area’s major hospitals, universities and colleges, and other agencies and institutions serving the needs of the older population. The local Office of Aging and the Departments of Health and Social Services have also endorsed the project and offered their support.

Unique Need, Unique Strategy

The undertaking breaks new ground in several respects. Although there are institutes on aging in major urban areas with highly developed resources of research universities and teaching hospitals, IMPARA's plan to work for and within the capacity of a regional community is unique.

"The decision to 'think local' is both a strategy and a constraint," said IMPARA Director Judith Huober, who first served on the task force and then became the institute's first employee. "Syracuse has only a pair of Board-certified geriatricians. They can't support basic-sciences and medical aging research like New York or Boston can.

"What we do have is a dedicated general nursing workforce and strong capacity in other professional and allied health professions, along with considerable capacity for training. This reality drove our decision to focus on applied research and to link research to training. It also steered us toward the kinds of care we work with every day at Menorah Park, our home institution: nursing, rehabilitative services, psychosocial care and management, chaplaincy and pastoral care training, and so on."

"It's true, added Bloodgood. "Syracuse is not New York, not Boston, not Philadelphia. We have conducted site visits to institutes there, and while we have learned a lot we have also understood the imperative to grow our own solutions."

"As an incubator for research and training, IMPARA focuses on creating capacity in synergy with others, an essentially behind-the-scenes, supportive function," said committee member Nancy Smith, former executive director of the Health Advancement Collaborative of Central New York (HAC-CNY) and former deputy director of the Institute on Aging at the University of Pennsylvania. "Our main value derives from adding value to that of others."

Huober believes this creates both a unique niche for IMPARA and access to funding streams that are less overburdened than those serving basic science and medical research. She pointed out that community recruitment at top levels (geriatricians, geriatric psychiatrists, etc) will also benefit from an active research community in nonmedical geriatric disciplines and a greater degree of allied health support for geriatrics-related research and training.