

A New Jewish Home on the Upper West Side

Jewish Home Lifecare is planning to relocate our long-term care, rehabilitation and adult day health care programs and services from West 106th Street to an entirely new building on West 100th Street between Columbus and Amsterdam Avenues in Park West Village.

In an effort to address many of the issues regarding the sale of the West 106th Street campus and our subsequent move, we are reaching out to share information that will shed light on the conversation.

1. What is Jewish Home Lifecare?

We are a 160-year old not-for-profit agency that offers health services and assistance to elders and others through long-term and rehabilitative care, adult day health care and senior housing at our campuses in Manhattan, the Bronx and Westchester. We also provide home care in the comfort of our clients' homes. The Jewish Home has been located on Manhattan's Upper West Side for 125 years. We are an integral part of this community in many ways: 63% of our ethnically diverse residents are from the CB7 area; 79% of those residents are Medicaid/Medicare recipients, and over 135 of our employees live in CB7.

2. Why is Jewish Home Lifecare moving to West 100th Street?

Our facilities – many of which date from the 1880s, are obsolete and today operate at 65% of efficiency – represent an enormous cost drain and prevent us from offering the privacy and ease of mobility that a newly-designed nursing home would provide for our residents. The site at West 100th Street allows us to design a new campus that will be the first of its kind to offer long-term care that nurtures a sense of community, dignity and choice in an urban setting. It enables us to carry out our mission to support the way New York City's elders want to live when institutionalization is necessary.

3. Why is it important for Jewish Home Lifecare to remain on the Upper West Side?

The services we offer from one location are not duplicated elsewhere in the community. Bridging Park West Village, the Frederick Douglass Housing Development and the Upper West Side, with easy access to the Upper East Side, the new Jewish Home will be there to support an aging population in their homes, in our home and in the community. The new, state-of-the-art, environmentally-friendly building will feature social, medical and innovative technological services that will enhance the quality of life for residents, patients and home-based clients. By remaining on the Upper West Side, Jewish Home will continue to employ over 600 staff, many of whom have worked at Jewish Home for decades and live in the community.

4. But wasn't your plan to stay at West 106th Street?

Our original plan was to remain at West 106th Street by selling a portion of our campus which would help finance our construction of a new elder care facility on the remaining land. Due to the severe economic downturn, this plan is no longer feasible. Of the potential building proposals that were considered, the bid submitted by The Chetrit Group was the only proposal financially viable in today's economy. Their plan proposes that Jewish Home sell its entire West 106th Street property and move to a parcel of land Chetrit owns at West 100th Street in Park West Village.

5. What will happen to the Kaufman Building?

Jewish Home will retain ownership of the Kaufman Building on West 105th Street and will continue to heavily subsidize in perpetuity the rents of our employees and retirees who relocated there from the Stern building. Once our administrative offices that are also located in the Kaufman building are relocated to the new building at 100th Street, Kaufman will become an entirely residential building dedicated exclusively to affordable senior housing. By retaining ownership of the building, we are delighted that we will be able to add more affordable housing to the 106th Street neighborhood.

6. There was a zoning “carve-out” for the nursing home; will the Chetrit Group be entitled to it as well?

The Chetrit Group’s proposal has raised issues and questions among community leaders and elected officials about zoning at West 106th Street. Jewish Home is working closely with Community Board 7, the elected officials and members of the community to address these concerns. Our goals regarding the West 106th Street site are the same as the community’s – to ensure that non-contextual development will never occur.

To that end, Jewish Home Lifecare has pledged to apply for a re-zoning of the West 106th Street site to R8A/R8B at the point (target date: October 2011) when we take title to the West 100th Street parcel. With the guidance and support of Community Board 7 and our elected officials, the rezoning should be completed well prior to the time (target date: June 2014) that we convey title to West 106th Street.

7. What will the new complex at West 100th Street look like?

With public gardens, seating and activity areas surrounding the first level, including an interior café and solarium, fully accessible to community residents, the 22-story complex will be visually welcoming and offer special amenities to clients, visitors, families and our neighbors alike. The new nursing home’s floors will be dedicated to short-stay rehabilitation services and adult day health care, as well as long-term care with resident rooms clustered around central, yet intimate, living rooms to create homey “neighborhoods.” Short-stay rehabilitation patients will benefit from new technologically-advanced rehabilitation centers. We have retained Perkins Eastman, a leading architectural firm in senior housing design, to create the new campus.

Our environmentally-progressive campus will include public meeting and community spaces in which we will continue to host community activities such as intergenerational programs bringing local youth together with Jewish Home elders, along with health forums, seminars and other events.

8. When will construction begin and how will the Park West Village community be affected?

We anticipate that groundbreaking will take place in the fall of 2011, with construction completed in 24-28 months. Throughout the construction process, Jewish Home Lifecare’s present facility at 106th Street will remain fully operational.

As we have successfully done on West 106th Street, in consultation with community leaders and our elected officials we will establish a Community Advisory Board with a construction coordinating committee that will maintain a vigorous dialogue with the Park West Village community to minimize the impact of the construction process. Jewish Home also will invite community representatives to participate in a Charrette Committee that will advise us and our architects about design issues. Finally, we will establish a dedicated phone line to take calls about any construction-related issues.

Working with our neighbors, Jewish Home Lifecare will create a state-of-the-art complex that will be vitally engaged with the life of the city and a source of pride for our neighborhood.

For future updates, please refer to our website at www.jewishhome.org.