



# HEIGHTS AND HILLS

supporting brooklyn's older adults

57 Willoughby Street, 4th Floor  
Brooklyn, NY 11201

718.596.8789 • [www.heightsandhills.org](http://www.heightsandhills.org)

## UPCOMING SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS

### Understanding Dementia: What You Need to Know and Where to Go

October 19, 1-3:00 pm, and November 16, 6-8:00 pm at Heights and Hills

In partnership with CaringKind, this seminar provides information on Alzheimer's disease and other dementias; discusses the different stages of the disease and what to expect; and includes an overview of CaringKind and Heights and Hills programs and services and other relevant available resources.

**Registration is required.**

To register call CaringKind at 646-744-2900.

### Caring for Loved Ones When They Aren't So Loveable

Wednesday, November 2, 6-7:30 pm at Heights and Hills

Caregiving can be challenging, particularly if a loved one is resistant to care. Understand what may be causing your loved one's resistance, how you can encourage and engage cooperation from your loved one, and how to take care of yourself during this time.

*All meetings are free of charge. Please call 718-596-8789 for more information or to register.*

## SUPPORT GROUPS

**Heights and Hills Caregiver Support Group**  
Every Tuesday, beginning September 6, 11-12:30 pm at Heights and Hills

**Brooklyn Parkinson Group Care Partner Support Group**  
2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month at Mark Morris Dance Center

2nd Wednesday, 12-2 pm;  
4th Wednesday 1-2 pm

**Caregiver Support Group at Methodist Hospital**  
October 26 and November 9, 3-4:30 pm

at NY Methodist Hospital, Wesley House, 501 Sixth Street, 6A, Park Slope, Brooklyn

**Heights and Hills Telephonic Caregiver Support Group**  
Weekly on Wednesdays, October 5 to November 2, 7-8:00 pm

Please contact Anne Hoffman to register or for more information: 718-596-8789 x307, or [ahoffman@heightsandhills.org](mailto:ahoffman@heightsandhills.org)

## Heights and Hills

### SPECIAL PANEL DISCUSSION

#### OLD MYTHS: CONFRONTING AGING AND AGEISM

Tue, Nov 29, 6:30 pm

**\$10/\$5 for BHS and G-W Members**

To reserve tickets please go to [www.brooklynhistory.org](http://www.brooklynhistory.org).

With Baby Boomers aging, a new generation is confronted with the misconceptions older people face. Join **Ashton Applewhite** of *This Chair Rocks*, **Ellen Cole**, co-creator of *70 Candles*, **John Leland** of *The New York Times*, and **Dr. Mark Lachs**, Director of the Center for Aging Research and Clinical Care at Weill Cornell Medical College, for a discussion about positive aging. **Paula Span**, "New Old Age" columnist for *The New York Times*, moderates.

*Presented in partnership with the Brooklyn Historical Society*

Heights and Hills proudly meets all standards for charity accountability.





## MUSINGS... from our Executive Director

My annual summer fantasy is to be sitting on the beach on long, lazy days and reading trashy novels, without a care in the world. My taste in summer reading leans toward fast reads, with a plot that grabs me and takes me away from reality.

So it was with some reluctance in June that I committed to reading Atul Gawande's *Being Mortal*, a book that had been recommended to me by numerous people. An exploration of aging, frailty and death, brilliantly written by a surgeon who intertwines research and anecdotal stories of patients and his own family, it was hardly the trashy novel I had dreamed of. While the book is written from the point of view of how our current health system falls short in dealing with people coming to the end of life and medicalizing everything into a disease that needs to be cured, there were many nuggets that inform the kind of work that we do here at Heights and Hills and I found myself nodding vigorously in agreement. In no particular order and loosely paraphrased, here are some of those nuggets:

- **The importance of autonomy, defined as the freedom to be the authors of our own lives**, which Gawande describes as “the marrow of being human.” This can be as simple as eating a meal or waking up when you choose to, as opposed to having things dictated to you by an imposed schedule, or as complex as making informed medical decisions about life and death.
- **Balancing the need for safety with autonomy.** All too often, we wind up infantilizing older adults in the guise of “protecting” them. Sometimes this is done out of love, and other times it is done as the result of regulatory oversight and fear of lawsuits. Finding the right balance is a challenge for all of us.
- **A prolonged life is not necessarily a good life.** Surveys show that people nearing the end of life choose avoiding suffering, strengthening relationships with family and friends, being mentally aware, not being a burden on others, and achieving a sense that their life is complete as their top priorities, not living longer.
- **The need for purpose and meaning in one's life is critical at all stages.**
- **What makes life worth living is unique and personal**, a point beautifully illustrated by Gawande in a conversation between a daughter and her elderly father, when prior to a very risky surgery she asked him very directly “What level of being alive is tolerable to you?” Her father, a professor emeritus, answered “Well, if I'm able to eat chocolate ice cream and watch football on T.V. then I'm willing to stay alive.”

In our work here at Heights and Hills, we are always searching for better ways to serve our clients so that they can live out their lives on their own terms, with as much autonomy, dignity and purpose as possible.

As always, we can't do this work alone. Thanks go to our incredibly committed staff, board and volunteers and to our many donors who make the work that we do possible.

Judy Willig, LCSW

P.S. I am now happily reading a novel (not trashy) that has sucked me in.

# Heights and Hills 45th Annual Spring Benefit



Over \$125,000 raised to support programs that promote successful aging!

On Monday, May 9th the Brooklyn Historical Society was filled to capacity as Heights and Hills celebrated 45 years of service to the community. Over \$125,000 was raised to support the growth of programs that promote successful aging. **Eliza Winans Rossman**, a social worker who has served older adults through her own profession and as a valued member of the board for over 16 years, was honored for her service, leadership and commitment to older adults in Brooklyn. Many thanks to all our friends, sponsors and supporters and to Brooklyn Brewery, Heights Chateau, Opalia Flowers and BloomAgainBKLYN for their generous donations to the event.

Planning for next year will start this fall. Please email [springbenefit@heightsandhills.org](mailto:springbenefit@heightsandhills.org) if you would like to be part of the planning team.



PHOTOS: 1) Heights and Hills Treasurer **Deborah Juantorena** and honoree **Eliza Winans Rossman**, 2) Board member **Tracy Jackson** and **Noah Mallin**, 3) Guests enjoying themselves at the benefit, and 4) **Judy Willig** at the podium.



## Lovgren Award for Professional Service

Every year since 1979, the Park Slope Civic Council has honored individuals for outstanding service to the community. The award is named for George Lovgren, a Park Slope Activist. This year Judy Willig was honored for her service to the older adult community of Park Slope.

**Congratulations Judy!!**

*From left to right, **Judith Lief** co-president Park Slope Civic Council; co-owners of the Community Bookstore, **Stephanie Valdez** and **Ezra Goldstein**; Heights and Hills Executive Director, **Judy Willig**; and **Gilly Youner**, co-president Park Slope Civic Council.*

## StoryCorps Legacy: A New Collaboration

Our newest collaboration launching this month is a partnership with **StoryCorps Legacy**, a project in which some of our staff and volunteers will be trained to interview and record our clients' stories on CD's, which clients can then share with family and friends and a copy of which will ultimately be archived in the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress.

## Park Slope AGE-FRIENDLY BUSINESS DISTRICT

The spring 2013 edition of “at home” featured an article posing the question: *Asset or Drain?* in which we cited some data that demonstrated the contributions that older adults are making to the local economy here in Brooklyn, and we came to the conclusion that **older adults are critical economic drivers in our local communities.**

This year, with some funding secured by Councilmember Brad Lander, Heights and Hills has embarked on a project to create an “age friendly business district” in Park Slope. Partnering with New York Academy of Medicine, Councilmember Lander’s staff, volunteers from the Park Slope Center for Successful Aging and from Good Neighbors of Park Slope, we have begun a project to educate merchants about the needs of older consumers and encourage age-friendly practices. Led by James Bernard, a seasoned community organizer, volunteers have reached out to over 60 businesses thus far in the Park Slope commercial district who have responded to a survey that is focused on age-friendly practices in four spheres: Marketing, Ambience, Design and Experience. Businesses that meet or exceed a basic number of age-friendly practices will be deemed “age friendly”, will receive a decal to place in their store windows and will be featured on a dedicated web page. **This is a win-win project: merchants will get more business, and businesses will begin to think about accommodating the needs of older customers!**



*A win-win project...  
Stay tuned as we have  
our official launch in  
late fall.*

## Board Comings and Goings

At its June meeting, Heights and Hills’ Board of Directors elected a new slate of officers as we welcomed some new directors and said goodbye to some long-time directors. **Jeffrey Helfgott** takes the reins as the new President. Jeff, Director of Information Technology at Frederick Goldman, Inc., joined the board in 2010 and has most recently served as Treasurer. **Sarah Jones**, Vice President Counsel Legal and Compliance at Credit Suisse Securities, is our new Vice President. **Deborah Juantorena**, Vice President of US Commercial Operations for Pfizer Inc., now serves as Treasurer, and **Michelle Gasparil**, Vice President and Counsel at Credit Suisse Securities, rounds out the slate as our new Secretary.

We welcome **Tracy Jackson**, who last year answered a call for volunteers through our friends at Park Slope Parents and became a committed volunteer at the Park Slope Center for Successful Aging and wanted to get more involved with our organization. We also welcome **Rick Anderson**, principal of R.L. Anderson & Associates who came to know Heights and Hills through our partnership with BloomAgainBKLYN.

At the same meeting we said thanks and good-bye to two long-standing board members: **Paul Schlesinger** and **Susan Leitner** who each joined the board in 2001. Paul served as Treasurer from 2005–2007 and Vice President from 2007–2009 and Susan served as Secretary from 2010–2013. Both Paul and Susan helped to guide Heights and Hills through our rapid transition in 2008 from a small grass-roots neighborhood organization to the strong and solid organization we are today – serving one third of the borough of Brooklyn.

And, of course, special thanks go to **Mary McNeil**, our outgoing board President, whose term has come to an end. Mary came to Heights and Hills in 2007 after having served as a long time Meals-on-Heels volunteer. She believes passionately in Heights and Hills’ mission and put that passion to work by guiding the board through our first formal strategic plan and focusing on making Heights and Hills sustainable.

### HEIGHTS AND HILLS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jeff Helfgott  
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