

Dear Hadassah Friends,

A new year starts. For some, it starts with a champagne toast. For Tampa Ameet it starts with a new Board. Back in 1912, Hadassah started with two nurses. In this month's message I'm going to tell you about two modern day Hadassah nurses. But, first, thanks to Elaine Vidars for hosting our Annual Chanukah Party on Tuesday evening, December 27. There will be no general meeting in January, but we will again be the guests of Memorial Hospital for luncheon in February. Michele Norris has planned a lovely cocktail party for Keepers of the Gate and Major Donors in our chapter with honored speaker Barbara Goldstein, Hadassah Israel Chair. And now for those nurses:

Nurse Practitioner Caryn Scheinberg Andrews immigrated to Israel six years ago from Baltimore. As a lecturer in the Hadassah-Hebrew University Henrietta Szold School of Nursing, Dr. Andrews (PhD, RN, CRNP) has taken up the cause of creating a cadre of advanced practice nurses. In the U.S., we are used to seeing Nurse Practitioners in doctors' offices, hospitals and clinics. But in Israel, they have been slow to adopt this most useful strategy. With a growing physician shortage, in part due to a mandatory retirement age of 67-70 years old, professional nurse practitioners will have a significant role to play in health care delivery, especially in underserved areas of Israel. Dr. Andrews's research shows better outcomes, less patient utilization, and a more cost-effective bottom line. NPs "reduce unnecessary emergency room visits, 30-day readmission rates, and waiting time for healthcare visits." An Advanced Practice Nurse earns a post-master's certificate with six months of part-time didactic education, followed by a residency. You may be aware that Keepers of the Gate can direct their yearly contribution towards Nursing.

The second nurse you should know about is now Dr. Polina Stepensky. She immigrated to Israel from the former Soviet Union and fulfilled her life's dream of becoming a physician, funding her medical education by working as a nurse. Here's how it happened. When Dr. Stepensky arrived in Israel with three years of medical school training in the Ukraine, she realized that the competition for medical school entrance in Israel was too stiff for her. With no English and limited Hebrew, she was advised to enroll in nursing school. By the time she graduated as a registered nurse, she had upgraded her Hebrew, taught herself English and scored so high on the psychometric exam, Israel's SAT equivalent, that she was offered a place at the Hadassah-Hebrew University School of Medicine. Dr. Stepensky specialized in bone marrow transplant and hemo-oncology. She is now conducting bench to bedside research in genetic diseases and welcomes pediatric patients from Russia who come to Israel for the best care. There's so much more to say about Dr. Stepensky, but you can read more in the June 2016 issue of Hadassah Magazine.

When I need a "push start" for my Hadassah tasks, I think of these two nurses who undertook their education, no matter the difficulty, looking to push the boundaries of medicine in Israel. They heal, teach, and comfort every day. I can educate myself. I can help educate my Hadassah friends. I can improve the world each and every day. I am so proud to be your new President. Remember, if it all started with two, Those two can be YOU and ME!

Etty Segal

President, Tampa Ameet Chapter of Hadassah