

KENDALL GAZETTE

Ask Helen



A Senior Living Community Means Never Having to Weather the Storm Alone

BY HELEN SHAHAM

Q. *My wife and I are in our mid 80's and live in a condominium. Every year when the hurricane season arrives we become very stressed. From depending on the goodwill of our neighbors to install our shutters to the possibility of losing electricity & water, we start feeling overwhelmed when the first storm of the season appears on the horizons. This year I told my wife that I have had it, and I want to move to a senior living community where, I believe, everything will be done for us, and our fears and anxiety will be alleviated. My wife is not sure I am right... Am I?*

A. Yes, you are right! This hurricane season is proving to be a very busy one. The toll of a storm, especially at your age, can affect physical and emotional health and well-being.

A senior living community such as The Palace Suites will certainly help alleviate the stress and uncertainty that typically begins once a hurricane alert is issued by the National Hurricane Center.

Our top priority is the safety of our residents. Our staff undergoes extensive training, including a thorough review of our disaster plan

prior to the beginning of each hurricane season. "In addition to providing generators and installing shutters on all windows, we require all staff to be on duty during a hurricane," says Spring Strong, The Palace Suites Executive Director. "Staff members are encouraged to bring their immediate family to the community to weather the storm together with us. We don't want them to be here and worry about their family members at home... And as long as everyone is here we have lots of helping hands to do any thing that comes up..."

It is not uncommon to find all senior management team members involved in every aspect of hurricane planning and preparedness. In the past, in order to help employees to get home to check on their houses, company COO, Benny Zin, has driven The Palace bus, shuttling employees to and from work due to limited gas supplies and public transportation.

The management team takes a proactive approach, carefully monitoring each hurricane's progress, utilizing the latest weather data resources. At The Palace, communication is key. We maintain contact with residents' families and provide periodic updates to them.

Throughout 2005's Hurricane Wilma, one of our goals was making residents as comfortable as possible while maintaining a sense of normalcy. Residents continued to enjoy a full calendar of social activities. From Happy Hour entertainment to traditional games of bingo and bridge, there was very little interruption to their lives.

Our executive chef continued creating delicious signature meals residents have come to expect instead of the typical nonperishable

foods usually eaten during hurricanes.

Following a storm, every effort is made to restore equilibrium to the community. Our maintenance crews quickly survey the damage and make necessary repairs to ensure resident safety. Because The Palace handles all clean-up and repairs, our residents are able to avoid the numerous scam-artists who prey on hurricane victims.

There is absolutely no doubt that a senior living community will provide you with peace of mind during the hurricane season. The overwhelming stories of older adults unable to leave damaged homes, refill prescriptions or maintain a healthy diets were important lessons of Hurricane Wilma. At a senior living community, both you and your wife will be surrounded by a dedicated team whose priority is your safety and well-being. Rest assured, you'll never have to weather the storm alone again.

Helen Shaham and her husband Jacob have been operating retirement communities for nearly 30 years. The Palace Suites in Kendall is a luxury Independent Living Community for active seniors. In addition, The Palace at Kendall campus is home to two Assisted Living Residences and a Nursing & Rehab Center. They also operate The Palace Gardens Assisted Living Community in Homestead, Homestead Manor Nursing Home and The Palace @ Home, a Medicare Certified Home Health Agency. Their two newest projects are The Palace at Weston – luxury living for those 55 and over, and The Palace Tel-Aviv, a continuing care retirement community in Israel. They have two communities under development – The Palace at Weston Senior Living and The Palace at Coral Gables. More information can be found on the company website, www.thepalace.org or by calling 305-270-7000.