

RESIDENT COUNCIL NEWS

JULY 24, 2025

QUALITY OF LIFE ON AGING STUDY AT RBJ

Older adults are the fastest growing age group in Austin. In 2024, the City of Austin launched its first ever Quality of Life Study on Aging to best understand the needs of older adults, their caregivers, and work to meet those needs. This study is an opportunity to share feedback about what it's like to age or take care of an older adult in Austin, and the results will influence changes in city budgeting and policies.

“Reflecting on your own experiences, what services or support would help you and/or your loved ones as you age in Austin?”

In June, Nirali Thakkar and Elijah Scott of Cortez Consulting joined our Resident Council meeting to explain the study and to invite RBJ residents to participate. Cortez Consulting is the local group hired by the City of Austin to conduct outreach and engagement with constituents.

There are 2 ways you can participate. First, you can complete a survey. On Wednesday August 6th, from 10 AM – 12 PM Cortez Consulting will be at RBJ conducting surveys and all residents are invited to complete a quick survey.



Nirali Thakkar presents at the June Resident Council meeting on the Quality of Life on Aging Study and plans to partner with RBJ.

The second way to participate is to sign up for a photo project called Photovoice. Cortez Consulting will be working with a small group of RBJ residents to complete a photo project that answers questions related to quality of life and needs. This will require taking photos with a disposable camera and attending 3 meetings in the month of August. In September, you will have the opportunity to be featured in a photo exhibit and reception which will be held at RBJ.

Among the many goals of this study, one is to reach as many RBJ residents as possible and minimize any barriers to participation. With this in mind, language interpretation (spoken) and translation (written) will be offered in Spanish and Mandarin languages.

MEET THE RESIDENT COUNCIL STEERING COMMITTEE



Willie Fletcher has lived at the Lady Bird since 2022. He is a very familiar face in Serafina Pantry, hosting cooking classes, and he is someone you will see out and about among neighbors. He came to the Lady Bird in search of a 55 and older apartment in a great location by Lady Bird Lake. As a resident, he always encourages good times and as a member of Resident Council he wants to make our community the safest and most beautiful it can be.



Sharon Stewart has lived at the Lady Bird since mid 2023, and moved to Austin from the North Texas area near Denton. She was drawn to the Lady Bird's beautiful gardens, parks and trees; its affordability; and by the opportunity to be part of an active and friendly senior community. She believes that with the development of the Resident Council, citizens of the Lady Bird and soon the Rebekah are bringing together resident voices which will guide and influence the quality and health of their lives, and of life in general at RBJ properties.



Janet Roberts has lived at the Lady Bird since 2022 and before that lived at the RBJ tower for 9 years. She views Resident Council as a vital part of her life and is interested in doing everything possible to help residents. She has seen growth in the past few months and thinks it is remarkable!



Ludy Zambrano has lived at the Lady Bird since 2022. In earlier years, Ludy's work responsibilities had brought her to visit residents at the RBJ Tower, so this place has always felt like home. Once retired, she was looking forward to a friendly, supportive, and active community. At the Lady Bird, the gardens were a magnet and the trail along the lake sealed the deal. As part of Resident Council, Ludy wants to help residents be heard and get their needs met.

**WE ARE LOOKING FOR RESIDENTS TO JOIN THE
STEERING COMMITTEE! MORE DETAILS PAGE 4.**

FOR THE RECORD: LAST MONTH'S REVIEW

Welcome to *For the Record*, a new section of Resident Council News dedicated to keeping our members updated on the monthly Resident Council meetings. Here you will find a summary the past month's meeting minutes.

Recap from June Resident Council Meeting:

City of Austin Quality of Life on Aging Study: Staff from Cortez Consulting presented on a city study aimed at improving services for older adults and their caregivers in Austin. RBJ residents will participate in upcoming activities, including a photo project and a survey. See page 1 article for more information.

UT RBJ Health Needs Assessment: Dylan Lowery presented the preliminary results of the UT School of Nursing survey. The data revealed issues around mental health, food insecurity, social needs, and community cohesion. During a discussion, residents emphasized the need for improved security to address some of those issues.

APD Crime Prevention Recommendations:

Dylan Lowery presented recommendations from APD after a safety assessment of the community. APD recommendations included improved lighting, door alarms, stairwell security, and improving navigation of the building through signage and color coordination.

You can find the full meeting minutes of the June Resident Council meeting by visiting the Resident Council webpage:

3 Easy Steps

1. Visit www.rbjseniorhousing.org
2. Under "Programs" click Resident Council
3. On this page you will find all Resident Council materials including meeting minutes and issues of Resident Council News

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Parking Garage Improvements Complete!

Thanks to all residents who helped make the project a smooth one. Compliments also to both DMA and RBJ teams for working together to send out communications in multiple ways. We hope this will improve visibility and safety in the garage.

Great Attendance at RBJ Concert!

The concert held in the Community Room on July 16 was a huge success with 27 residents in attendance. Thanks to Christ Church of Austin for putting on the performance, providing cookies, and gifts to residents. The next concert is scheduled for August 20th.

SUBMIT YOUR SELF-NOMINATION TO JOIN RESIDENT COUNCIL STEERING COMMITTEE

We are looking for residents to join the Resident Council Steering Committee. This group takes on additional responsibilities to help plan, coordinate and support the ongoing work of Resident Council.

Specific duties include:

- Approximately 8-12 hours of work between the monthly meeting and separate planning meetings during the month. Planning meetings are typically held on Thursday afternoons.
- Working with Steering Committee and RBJ Support Staff to plan monthly agendas.
- Be a resource and positive representation of Resident Council.

After receiving your nomination, RBJ staff will reach out to help you complete a simple questionnaire. Final recommendations will be made to the RBJ Senior Housing (Austin Geriatric Center) Board of Directors who are responsible for appointing the Steering Committee members.

To nominate yourself, contact Dylan Lowery via email dlowery@rbjseniorhousing.org or text message (737) 343-5747.

GET YOUR FREE FAN WITH SUMMER FAN DRIVE

Heat is the #1 weather-related killer in the U.S., and children, older adults, and even pets are among the most at-risk groups.



The week of June 23 brought blistering and record-breaking temperatures across the northeast and southeast. CBS News reported that on Wednesday June 25 temperatures in the southeast were “10 - 20 degrees” above average, and with the heat index some areas are seeing temperatures that feel like 110. As summer temperatures rise, a simple fan can help protect your health and reduce energy costs.

- A fan can lower the temperature in a room by up to 8 degrees.
- Using a fan instead of A/C can help reduce your electric bill.

Family Eldercare launched their annual Summer Fan Drive in May, and as an RBJ resident you are likely eligible to receive a free box fan.

Need a Free Fan?

The nearest fan distribution center is located at the East Austin Neighborhood Center - 211 Comat Street. Also visit www.summerfandrive.org for more information.

RESIDENT COUNCIL CHARTER

The Resident Council is a tenant-led group whose mission is to improve the lives of residents living at The Lady Bird. All residents who hold a lease at The Lady Bird are members of the Resident Council and can attend and participate in Resident Council meetings, events, and activities. In addition, a steering committee of five appointed residents take on additional responsibilities to help plan, coordinate, and support the continuity of Resident Council.

Our Duties / Why We Are Here

1. Communicate problems and other needs of the fellow residents to the RBJ Senior Housing Board of Directors.
2. Identify property improvements that may be needed.
3. Make recommendations to the RBJ Senior Housing Board of Directors for the types of services the nonprofit should be providing for residents.

Group Agreements

Group agreements are essential for creating a safe, productive, and collaborative environment. Resident Council members are expected to uphold our group agreements during meetings:

1. Raise your hand to speak.
2. Respect differences in opinion.
3. Try to be brief with your remarks to allow others time. Avoid interruptions.
4. Ask questions if there is something you do not understand.
5. Be open to new ideas, possibilities, and ways of thinking.

NEW METHOD TO COLLECT FEEDBACK



RBJ staff introduced a new way for residents to submit their feedback and suggestions for improvement.

- Open the camera app on your smartphone
- Allow the barcode to come into focus, but don't take a picture.
- Wait for the link to appear on your screen and click it.

IN OTHER NEWS...

BLUE LAPIS LIGHT PERFORMS AT RBJ IN SEPTEMBER

Austin's acclaimed aerial dance company will be performing high up on The Rebekah in their latest performance, "Urban Dreaming." This fundraising event will take place over 2 weekends in September. Tickets will be on sale to the public, but RBJ residents get a free performance! Stay tuned.

AGING IS COOL PARTNERS WITH RBJ BEGINNING IN AUGUST

In August, new activities will be featured on the monthly calendar including dance classes, art, and learning! RBJ has partnered with Aging is Cool to bring these new options to help residents socialize and enrich their day.

REBEKAH OPENS AND MOVE INS BEGIN

After many years, finally the date is set! The doors to The Rebekah re-open on Monday July 28 and the first residents are set to move in. You will still see crews working for the next couple of months, but besides the final touches this project is complete. Staff will be offering regular tours and we hope you will love it!

RBJ HIRES ADDITIONAL SERVICE COORDINATOR

Welcome Cesar Siavichay-Diaz to the RBJ Resident Services Team! He joins our social worker Elana Carter, and adds much needed support to the Resident Services office. Stop by to say hi!

THE NEWSLETTER OF RESIDENT COUNCIL

Newsletter Committee Members

Chuck and Marsha

RBJ Staff Support

Aly Tharp, Dylan Lowery

Issue III.

We want to hear from you!

Submit your letters, feedback, and essays to Dylan Lowery. Email to dlowery@rbjseniorhousing.org or deliver material to Resident Services office.