

# The Scarsdale Inquirer

Founded in 1901

VOLUME 100, NUMBER 50

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2021

REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION

## Reingold appointed to NYC mayoral transition team

By TODD SLISS

**A**s the president and CEO of RiverSpring Living, Daniel Reingold directly impacts the lives of 18,000 older New Yorkers, in addition to their families and their communities. Through his 32-year career working in long-term care and aging, which includes the well-known Hebrew Home at Riverdale, Reingold, who lives in Scarsdale, has built a reputation as an advocate for the elderly, which is one of the many reasons New York City's Mayor-Elect Eric Adams has appointed Reingold to his transition team.

Reingold called it "an honor and a privilege." He added, "I think New York City is the greatest city in the world and if we can get it back on its feet to where it used to be, which I think we will, and I can have a role in doing that, that would be great."

Reingold is a 1972 graduate of Scarsdale High School — "The best class ever in the history of Scarsdale High School," he said, quoting former teacher Eric Rothschild — and after living in New York City for 20 years he moved back to Scarsdale to raise his family. The 67-year-old joined RiverSpring Living after a 10-year career in law representing nonprofits, including Hebrew Home.

"I wasn't campaigning actively because I'm really not permitted to do that as a nonprofit [executive], but I was doing the things that I could do to support [Adams'] positions," Reingold said. "I think there are folks that I work with, from the standpoint of public policy, that when they were asked who might be a good person to be on the transition committee around issues of aging and health care, my name came up. And I guess they properly vetted me and saw that

*Continued on next page*



SCARSDALE INQUIRER/JIM MACLEAN

Daniel Reingold of Scarsdale, SHS Class of '72, at RiverSpring Living in Riverdale, where he is CEO.

# Advocating for the aging

*Continued from previous page*

I was supportive of the mayor-elect. The next thing you know, I got a phone call.”

Reingold called it “the nature of the beast” that has gotten him involved in city politics over the years. Without taking an actual political stance, as the CEO of a large nonprofit Reingold engages with policymakers to make the city a better place through his expertise. Zoning is often a call to action in building new facilities for the aging and working at the state level with Medicaid and other agencies.

“As the election unfolded, I was, as a partisan matter, very much in support of Mayor-Elect Eric Adams for a number of reasons,” Reingold said.

Reingold credited Mayor Bill de Blasio for uniting the left and right against himself and for “almost single-handedly destroying

the City of New York.” When he looked at the candidates, Reingold thought about something his friend, Congressman Richie Torres, once said: “It is possible to be for progress and still be a progressive.”

“Eric Adams is exactly that,” Reingold said, citing Adams’ experience as a state senator, with the police department and as a borough president. Even the fact that Adams, like Reingold, meditates, brings “a certain inner calm.” When he had a few chances to meet Adams, Reingold became more convinced he was the right candidate.

Though he is unsure at this time what his role will be and what the time commitment is in the transition team, Reingold is “optimistic that the role will be substantive and not ceremonial.”

“My assumption is that there will be meetings — either conference calls or

Zoom meetings — to review possible candidates for mayoral appointments,” he said. “I’m hoping there’ll be an opportunity to advise the administration on policies that will support aging and good health care in our city. And that is the role I hope I’ll be able to play.”

Reingold is excited for the opportunity to continue being “a good citizen” and being “involved and engaged in our communities,” just as he has done in his hometown. More recently he became active in helping preserve Greenacres Elementary School by going to board meetings and advocating for the passing of a bond to save the school.

Both of Reingold’s parents were social workers and, after he graduated from Hobart College, Reingold got a master’s degree in social work from Columbia University. After working in child welfare, Reingold got his law degree at Cardozo Law School, knowing he could use that expertise to further advocacy issues for the

*Continued on next page*



SCARSDALE INQUIRER/JIM MACLEAN

Daniel Reingold chats with a resident at Hebrew Home at Riverdale.

# Advocating for the aging

*Continued from previous page*

benefit of those in need. He spent 10 years representing nonprofits, including Hebrew Home. When there was an opening for CEO in 1990, Reingold was offered the job, calling it “a great move.”

When the recession hit in 2008, Reingold remembers the financial devastation it caused so many families. And then in March 2020 he watched the world get turned upside down in a different way as the COVID-19 pandemic hit close to home and work.

When many were forced to work at home, Reingold didn’t have that “luxury.”

“We were ground zero, not only because I was running a nursing home, but also we were in Riverdale and the first case was 100 yards down the road at SAR Academy where the guy that got it in New Rochelle was, and then we were in the throes of the political nightmare of Governor [Andrew] Cuomo and President [Donald] Trump.”

Instead of lamenting the fact that he had to go to work every day and put himself at risk, continuing the positive impact he and his staff have on a daily basis made him feel “lucky” to have a career full of “purpose and meaning.” From a position of helping people age with dignity to “saving people’s lives,” Reingold said he felt empowered and “humbled” by the challenges the pandemic has presented.

“Before we even knew how bad things were going to get — even after we knew how bad things were — we kept coming in,” he said. “It was an enormously fulfilling experience to me. Interestingly, a lot of people since COVID had started talking about how many people have left the workforce, and many of them are talking about wanting to do something with more purpose. I feel very fortunate that I may have given up a very lucrative and wealthy legal career, but being the CEO of a meaningful and prominent nonprofit organization has been absolutely one of the most rewarding things I’ve ever done in my life.”

Navigating the pandemic was daunting. Reingold remembers a March 12, 2020, conference call with then-New York State Department of Health Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker and being “dumbfounded” by what he was hearing — that patients were being sent into nursing homes. Armed with nothing but a blue paper medical mask, Reingold gathered his team and said, “We’re on our own. Not only should you not expect the government to come to our help, but they’re actually making decisions that are going to be deadly. We’re on our own.”

What truly had Reingold flabbergasted was Cuomo’s decree that the facilities were not allowed to test people for COVID-19.

“Looking back on it now with cynicism, I realize that they didn’t want to know how many people had COVID because it was not going to advance his story,” Reingold said. “And so we were left with no gear and no ability to test. It astounds me that I didn’t get COVID at the time when people were wearing hazmat gear. I was just putting on a blue surgical mask and walking the floors and coming in at night.”

Despite being handcuffed by executive orders and regulations, Reingold watched “heroism” on a daily basis by the nurses, housekeepers and food service workers in his facilities.

“My pride in the team here, my pride in health care workers who have been doing this and they’re continuing to do it every day — that’s what we did,” Reingold said, adding that now he feels out not only were they on their own, but they were being “tripped up” by obstacles put up for “political reasons.”

Reingold said he blames Cuomo for the “deaths of thousands” of elderly people who didn’t have to die.

Between the prominent nonprofit and his own reputation, Reingold can continue to have an impact.

Reingold opened the country’s first elder abuse shelter, Weinberg Center for Elder Justice in 2005, wrote the country’s

first policy to establish sexual expression rights and guidance in long-term care and created Project HOPE (Healthcare Offers Permanent Employment) at Hebrew Home, which provides educational and job skill development opportunities to high school students with learning disabilities. Nationally he has testified before the U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging, attended the 2015 White House Conference on Aging and appeared numerous times before governmental and public policy bodies.

Reingold also understands the symbiotic relationship between New York City and the suburbs.

“We are tethered to the City of New York, both in terms of our proximity, and how many of us are commuters to New York,” he said. “Much of the economic success of Scarsdale is hinged on what happens in New York City. But even more than that, New York City is home to probably a million and a half people who are older adults and we are in many ways a laboratory for what this country is going to look like as more and more of us baby boomers turn 65. And there’s 10,000 a day turning 65.”

New York is in a unique position to create a model for what Reingold calls an “age-friendly city,” which is something former Mayor Michael Bloomberg had been working on, with Reingold on a committee. That fell to the wayside the last eight years, though Reingold credited de Blasio for changing zoning to allow for the construction of more low income and affordable housing. Reingold called it “a collective benefit to older adults because so many older adults live below the poverty line or are poor and don’t have safe housing.” It also allowed RiverSpring Living to build two 177-unit “beautiful” subsidized apartment buildings for low-income older adults, including some who were able to be removed from the homeless shelter system, in the East Bronx.

“It gives them safe, dignified and beautiful housing,” Reingold said. “In that way, I think Mayor de Blasio did advance the age-friendly agenda in the City of New York and ... I expect Mayor Adams will continue to do that.”