



An historic day, as the Residential School for Jewish Deaf Children is honoured by Nightingale Hammerson Care Home - 20 April

Former pupils of the historic Residential School for Jewish Deaf Children (RSJDC) joyously met and greeted one another when they visited Nightingale Hammerson Care Home in Clapham.

They were there to see Wandsworth Mayor, Cllr Adrian Knowles, unveil a plaque marking the site of the school which stood there from 1899 to 1965. Many of its pupils spent their childhood years at the school, from as young as 2 years old, until they were 18.

Over 70 guests, including many JDA members, came to this wonderful event with their partners and relatives.

Also there were JDA Executive Director Sue Cipin and staff, former RSJDC teachers Liz Wieneke and Norma Lebian, Nightingale Hammerson Chief Executive Leon Smith and Shanee Buxton, Head of residential Oak Lodge School for Deaf children, which now shares part of the original RSJDC site.

Unveiling the plaque in the Gerald Lipton Centre, Mayor Knowles, a fluent BSL signer whose late parents were both Deaf, said: "I am the son of two Deaf people and I've become the Mayor of Wandsworth!"

"Oak Lodge, next door, preserves Deaf education on the site and is one of the charities that I support as Mayor."



▲ **Back:** JDA Executive Director Sue Cipin and Nightingale Hammerson Chief Executive Leon Smith.
Front: Former RSJDC prefects: Anthony Spielsinger, Colleen Daniels and Linda Smith with Mayor Knowles.

Mayor Knowles went on: "Even though the Deaf School closed some 48 years ago, I am delighted to have unveiled this plaque today. What pleases me most is that I am here with many of my late parents' friends.

Mayor Knowles' parents, Phyllis and Geoffrey, had become close with RSJDC pupils when Phyllis attended a National Deaf Group drama club in the 1940s and when she joined the Spurs Deaf Club.

Mayor Knowles gave a special mention to his friend David Hirshman, who was a former RSJDC pupil.



▲ **Remembering school days together in the wonderful gardens.**



◀ **Mayor Knowles signs with Rachel Holder (Deafblind - supported by Rebecca Clements) about the old days.**



◀▲ **After the ceremony, everyone sat down to a jolly tea hosted by Nightingale Hammerson.**

'The RSJDC has been given its place in history'



▲ Miriam Solomon and Harold Fallman talk to the assembled guests about their years of education at the Residential School for Jewish Deaf Children.



▲ Mira Goldberg with the RSJDC photo collage she organised at JDA. 'That's me as a little girl in the school play!' she points.



▲ Lydia Handscomb and Albina David enjoy the photo exhibition, pointing out the people they knew.



▲ Marie Littman and Elaine Cohen reminisce together over their old school photographs.

Former RSJDC pupils Harold Fallman and Miriam Solomon spoke to the guests about their memories of the school. Miriam said: "I was thankful that there was a school for Jewish Deaf children. It was a really good school with Jewish values, dedicated teachers, a cook and domestic staff.

"It was warm, with good food and its own laundry. I learnt basic Hebrew and attended Hebrew lessons with short services on the Sabbath. The lawns and gardens at the school are still lovely. I am very glad that the site is still in the Jewish community."

Harold and Ruth Fallman said that meeting and bonding with their old friends was a very emotional experience. "Nightingale House is great with lovely gardens. It was good to see the beautiful commemorative plaque."

JDA member Harry Newman lived at the former school from a very young age. Harry's school friends looked after him as a little boy, and they are all still close friends at JDA. Sue Cipin says: "It shows what a bond existed between the children, and that bond has remained through their lives."

The school closed in 1965. Mira Goldberg was one of ten remaining children there.

She was sent from Iran by her parents when she was two years old, to have a better education. She lived at the school until she had to leave at 18 years old.

When the school closed, JDA arranged a visa for Mira so she could stay in England and gave her a home above its former centre in Stamford Hill. She lived there together with JDA members Harry Newman and Israel Itzkowitz.

Mira, who is now a Trustee of the JDA, heads up our BSL Tuesdays information, advice and advocacy service for Deaf and Deafblind people in Barnet, which is filling a gap in support services in the borough.

Sue Cipin says: "Everyone from RSJDC was thrilled that the school has been given its place in history. We also now have a photo collage of the old school days at JDA, thanks to Mira Goldberg, as a permanent reminder of the school and this milestone event."