

CORAL GABLES

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MAGAZINE

Cultural Season Preview

THEATER, MUSIC, DANCE, FILM, AND MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS

PLUS

CALENDAR OF THIS SEASON'S GALAS

THE 2024 GUIDE TO PRIVATE SCHOOLS

BUILDING WITH AN ITALIAN FLAIR



Helen Shaham

FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT, THE PALACE

In 1980, Coral Gables resident and Israeli native Helen Shaham founded The Palace Group with the dream of setting new standards for senior living communities in Miami-Dade. She began modestly with her first community in Opa-Locka (now sold), followed by another in Homestead, and then Kendall in the 1990s (there are currently four there). Each was more lavish – including a luxury version in Tel Aviv in 2005 – culminating in what she considers her dream community: The Palace at Coral Gables, designed to resemble the George V in Paris and offering an extraordinary array of amenities, from an indoor swimming pool to a library, personal trainers, adult education courses, an elegant bar, etc. There are now nine different communities (the most recent of which opened in Weston to rival the Gables) with some 1,600 residents, over 1,600 permanent staff, and 400 contracted staff. Shaham still personally welcomes each new resident of the Gables and Weston Palaces, and frequently participates in “family and friends” events. She even gives her personal cell phone number to all residents and families if they need to reach her.

“I WANTED TO CREATE A FACILITY THAT LOOKED LIKE A HOTEL WHERE YOU COULD GET MEDICAL CARE...”



LATEST ACHIEVEMENT

Shaham and her husband Jacob recently donated \$15 million to Nicklaus Children’s Hospital, and before that, over \$5 million to Baptist Health South Florida. In March of this year, she was honored by the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce with the Margaret St. Germain Lifetime Achievement Award. And in 2023, *Fortune Magazine* awarded The Palace Group the No. 1 Best Workplace in America for Aging Services.

WHAT SHE SAYS

“I wanted to go into a business that never dies, and that is healthcare, because people are always going to age and need assistance. And I wanted to create a facility that looked like a hotel where you could get medical care,” says Shaham. “We want to provide things that no one else has.” In terms of her overall mission, “I wanted to provide everything that interests our residents, and what they would like to do – a carefree lifestyle with all the amenities they would want at their fingertips... basically, I look at what they would really enjoy, and what I would enjoy. For instance, I had three-sided mirrors installed in the bathrooms because I know our female residents would like a three-sided mirror when they do their hair. It’s the fine details which make all of the difference.” ■