

Bickur Cholim Spirits

To the good fortune of the community, Bickur Cholim has been revitalized. It has opened a new convalescent facility at the Angelus Convalescent Center, Amber Street, East End, diagonally across from the former facility on Negley Avenue.

Through the years, the Convalescent Home has moved three times, with the Society itself remaining as constant in performing its "mitzvahs" as the coming of spring and renewed hope.

It is fitting that this year, almost two decades after the first convalescent facility, Bickur Cholim will occupy a reserved wing in one of the most up-to-date convalescent homes in the area.

There is something vital about Bickur Cholim. It has life. It breathes the air of the humanity.

First established in 1912 as a society dedicated to helping (its Hebraic name conveys the idea of the society for visiting and caring for the sick) and nearly 40 years later with the founding of a convalescent facility. Bickur Cholim has a special Jewish dimension in terms of its attitude.

Bickur Cholim has always sought to help the "whole man", especially at a time when he has lost his physical, and often emotional, strength.

"We have established the new Bickur Cholim Convalescent and Nursing Home Wing in the tradition of our past service to the community," according to Ronald Kottler, president of the Convalescent and Nursing Home Board, which is independent as an arm of the Bickur Cholim Society.

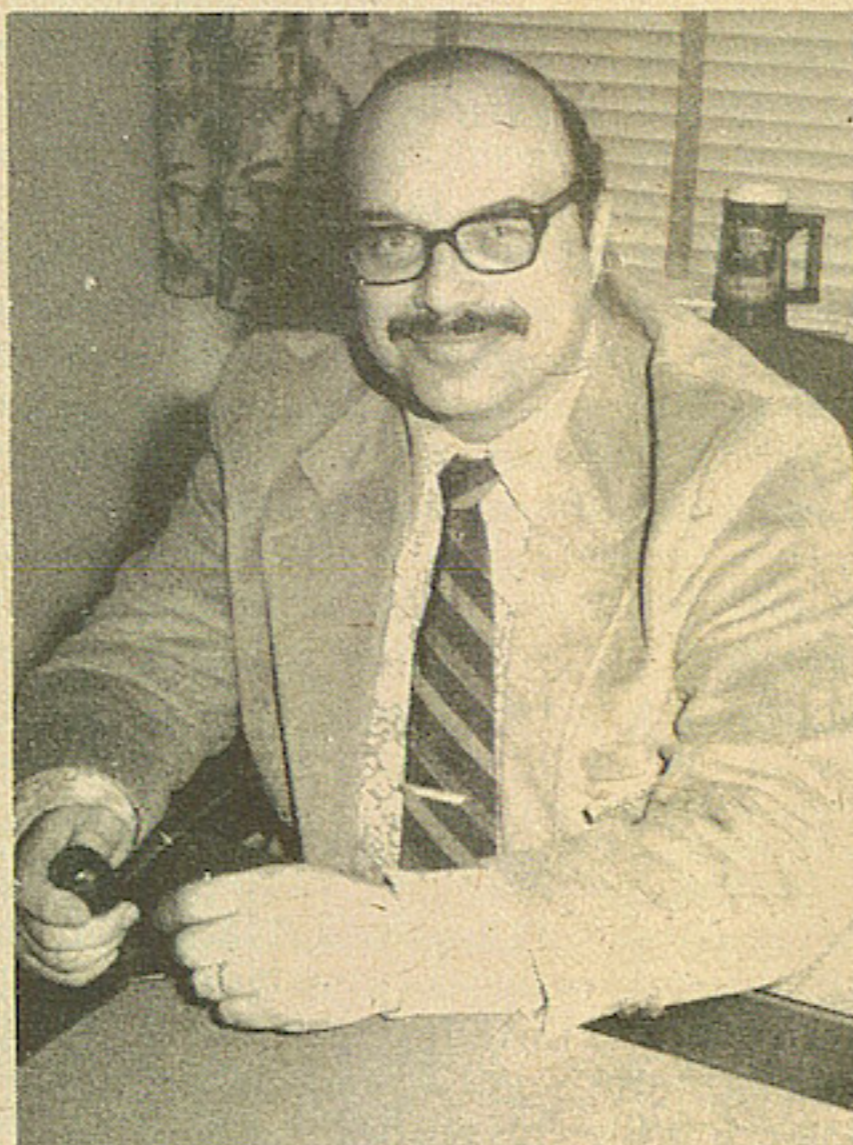
Mr. Kottler, who has been with the Society for five years, explained that the Nursing Home Wing, with suitable facilities for 20 patients, will provide extended care service through highly trained personnel working under the administrator, medical director, director of nursing, physical therapist, and activities director of the Angelus Center.

"Bickur Cholim will provide up to 20 days of skilled nursing home care for medically indigent Jewish patients," Mr. Kottler said. The Nursing Home Wing, and The Angelus, are non-sectarian. "Because of funding limitations, the Bickur Cholim cannot provide long-term or custodial care, but will work with families and other agencies in assisting patients finding appropriate care. It shall be the responsibility of the family of the patient or the placing agency to arrange for the discharge of patients."

One of the features of the Nursing Home Wing will be its separate, modern entirely kosher kitchen.

Mr. Kottler has the strong professional background to direct the new Nursing Home Wing program. A University of Pittsburgh graduate with a master's degree in Social Work, 1960, he has been administrator of Staunton Clinic of Sewickley Valley Hospital and Pressley Ridge School, Ridge Campus, North Side. He is the former vice president of the North Western Pennsylvania chapter of the National Association of Social Workers and was Senior Clinical Social Worker for the Bay Pines (Fla.) VA from 1960-65.

By virtue of being president of a United Jewish Federation affiliate, which Bickur Cholim is, Mr. Kottler is a UJF board member. He is also a member of the North West Allegheny Hospital Corporation.



RONALD KOTTLER
President,
Convalescent & Nursing
Home Board

"The Nursing Home Wing is the first step in what will be an intensive campaign for Bickur Cholim and the sick and needy it has cared for since its

founding," said Mr. Kottler, whose family has been long associated with the society.

The Society comprises a Men's Club and Afternoon and Evening Ladies Group, who are responsible for giving food to the ill, milk programs, camp tuition for the needy and medical care to the indigent, as well as other social action programs in the Jewish tradition.

The Bickur Cholim Convalescent and Nursing Home Wing, is the fourth site for the convalescent facility since 1950.

By way of background, the first site was located at 4906 Baum Blvd. "It was started as a result of the energies of many dedicated men and women who solicited nickles and dimes to begin this much needed community program" according to Ronald Kottler. In fact, Mr. Kottler's mother and aunts, have long been members of Bickur Cholim.

For the first 40 years of the Bickur

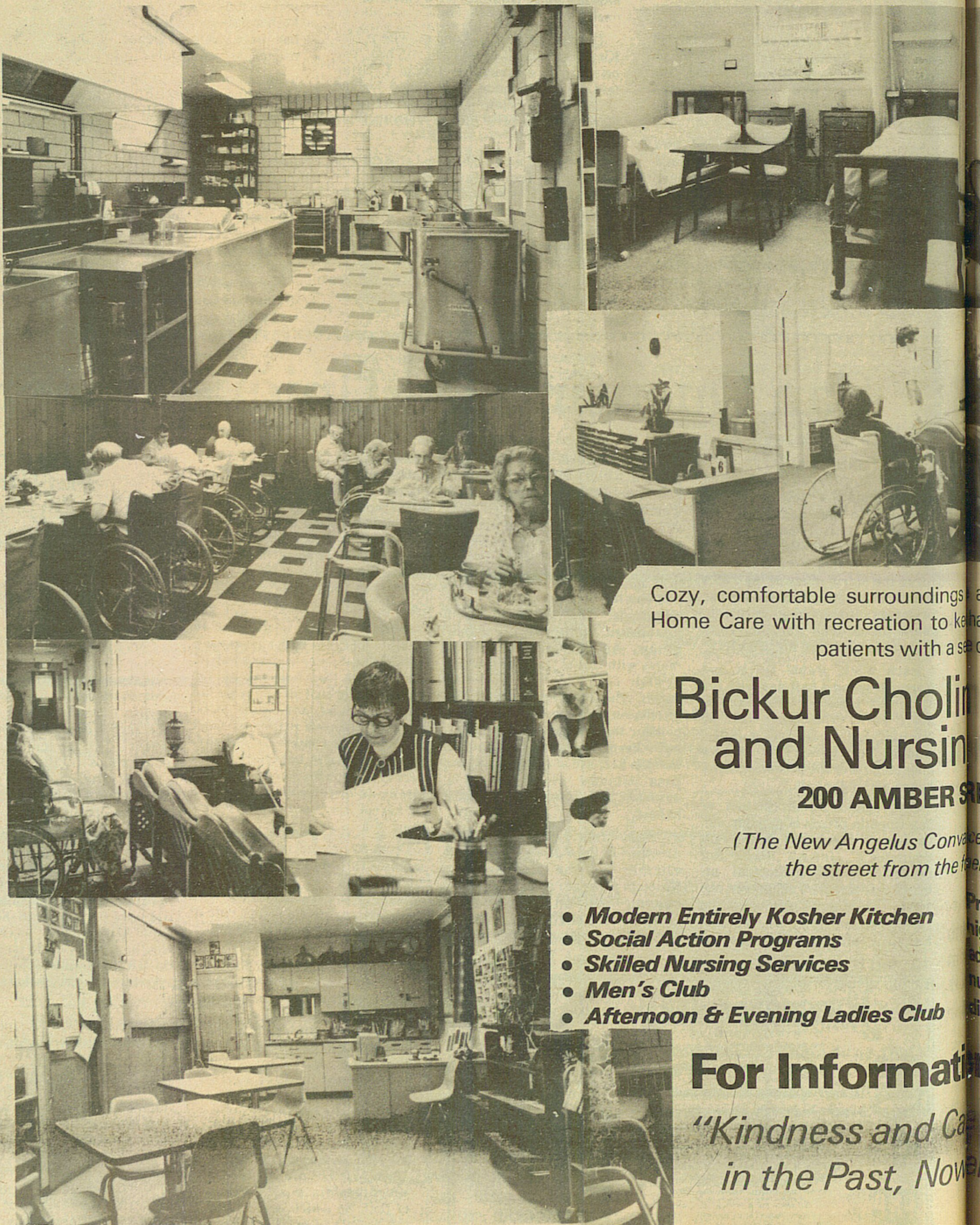
Cholim Society, which was founded in 1912, by Rabbi Moses Sivitz and a handful of dedicated workers, the women of the organization quietly went about their work with baskets on their arms helping needy families, visiting and often taking convalescents to their own homes until the home on Baum Boulevard was opened with 16 beds.

"It was started on sheer courage alone since there were no funds available other than solicited donations and pledges of aid," said Mrs. Morton Johan back in the mid 60's when she was president of the Convalescent Home Board.

The second site was purchased in 1957 at 208 S. Negley Ave. The bed capacity was raised to 20 beds. It was at this site, Mr. Kottler explained, that the Home became a professional agency with an active and friendly visiting program by members of the Society.

To conjure up the atmosphere of the Negley Avenue Home, a reporter at the time wrote:

"The smell of kosher cooking was in



Cozy, comfortable surroundings a Home Care with recreation to keep patients with a smile

Bickur Cholim and Nursing

200 AMBER STREET

(The New Angelus Convalescent Home is just a few blocks from the street from the former site)

- Modern Entirely Kosher Kitchen
- Social Action Programs
- Skilled Nursing Services
- Men's Club
- Afternoon & Evening Ladies Club

For Information

"Kindness and Care in the Past, Now"

Soar on 'The Wing'

air. In the distance there was the sound of a Jewish lullaby being played on a phonograph and several women sat listening intently, smiles on their aged faces.... Heirloom candle holders for many days, some chipped and dented, but precious to their owners, covered the top of a small table in the corner of the living room.

A tiny woman with snow white hair and a twinkle in her eye motioned me to the side. She took my hand and pulled me closer to her.

"Are you Jewish?" she whispered. When I nodded negatively, she smiled and said, "It doesn't really matter, you know. Just so we are all kind to one another."

Kindness has been the spirit of Bickur Cholim, its tradition. Members are confined themselves to working within the walls of the Convalescent Home. They would shop for groceries for their families, chauffeur relatives of patients, visit with patients once they returned to their homes. Notes of appreciation from families were often

the only payment received.

In December of 1962, the Bickur Cholim Convalescent and Nursing Home became an affiliate of the United Jewish Federation.

"As a result of a comprehensive study conducted by the Federation in conjunction with Montefiore Hospital," Mr. Kottler said, "Bickur Cholim agreed to move into the Hospital to provide extended care programs within the Hospital complex, with the ultimate goal of building an independent facility on Hospital ground to care for 100 patients."

Bickur Cholim opened its program at Montefiore on February 1, 1967, and operated continuously until June 1, 1967, when it was forced to cease operations due to high costs, changes in health priorities and plans.

Now to the present. "The skilled nursing needs of the Jewish Community desiring a strictly kosher meal program and the need of providing just the basic skilled nursing services were not available for a while," according to

Mrs. Morton Johan, secretary of the Convalescent and Nursing Home Board, long active with the Society.

"Bickur Cholim again felt the need of the Jewish Community and although it could not sustain an independent facility it elected to once more provide quality care through its new arrangement with the Angelus," Mrs. Johan said.

Bickur Cholim's future is, indeed bright. With its convalescent facility affiliation with The Angelus and renewed vigor, the Society and its separate branches move into a new era. Again, as in the past, people are making the difference.

In the past, men like Rabbi Moses Sivitz and Rabbi A.M. Ashinsky were aided by individuals who understood the needs of the community. Bickur Cholim is again fortunate in the dedicated workers it has attracted who recognize current needs, and those of the future.

Ronald Kottler, is being assisted by long-time society members Mrs. Morton Johan, who is currently secretary and David Bakan, D.D.S. who is treasurer.

The Bickur Cholim Society has a presidium consisting of Mrs. Leonard Sharpe, Mrs. Sam Bovitch, Mrs. Dorothy Buncher and Mrs. Jerome Mallet.

The organization is made up of three groups. The Ladies Evening Group has Mrs. Jacob Wanetik, treasurer; Mrs. Joseph Antin, Financial secretary and Mrs. Herbert Levine, corresponding secretary.

The Afternoon Group has Mrs. Louis Mandell as treasurer; Mrs. Jacob Morris, assistant secretary; Mrs. Leonard Gettleman and Mrs. Sam Bovitch, financial secretaries; Mrs. Edith Speer, corresponding secretary.

Mrs. Bernard Leff and Mrs. George Adler are Society Counselors. Officers of the Men's Club are Mr. Kottler, president; Leonard Sharpe, treasurer and Jerome Mallet, vice president.

Miss Katie Alpern, first president of the Society, is one of the Society's 892 members.

Rev. Mordechai Hallman will serve as the "Machgiach" for the Kosher kitchen.

The staff of The Angelus includes Mrs. Rose S. Tarasi, administrator; Rocco F. Tarasi assistant administrator, and Louis W. Tarasi, administrative assistant. The Angelus employs 65 persons.

The ideal of visiting and caring for the sick has strengthened Bickur Cholim over the years. May the organization and its new facility keep up their strength in performing acts of kindness and care for the community in the years to come.

In the fall most women's fancies turn to thoughts of volunteer work. There are, of course, many worthwhile organizations to join but especially the Bickur Cholim Society. The words, Bickur Cholim means "To care for the Sick and Needy", and there is nothing more important in life than this service. There is a saying that when it rains, it rains on everyone, and so it is with illness. We all experience its incapacitating effects sometime in our lives. It is certainly a good thing that we cannot look into the future and know what is in store for us. In that respect, it is a comfort to know that should illness strike, there are nursing homes available. This Wing is unique, because it is the only nursing home in this area with a self-contained Kosher kitchen, serving home-cooked meals observing all Dietary Laws. Of course, it is non-profit.

Contributions of any amount will be gratefully accepted as the volunteers dispense their Tender Loving Care to those in the Bickur Cholim Wing who depend on this interim convalescent service. Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy are available for those who need these services.

The Bickur Cholim Convalescent and Nursing Home Wing announced a new service recently for families requiring short term care for loved ones while on vacation.

For information concerning the Bickur Cholim Convalescent and Nursing Home Wing, please call 362-6300.



an important part of Convalescent care. Hands and minds active and provide sense of accomplishment.

Bickur Cholim Convalescent and Nursing Home Wing

362-6300, EAST END.

(Convalescent Center is diagonally across from the main facility on Negley Ave.)

Providing extended care service through highly trained personnel, working under the supervision of an administrator, medical director, director of nursing, physical therapist and activities director of the Angelus Center.

Call 362-6300

Care for the Community
and in the Future."