



FAVARH - THE ARC OF THE FARMINGTON VALLEY

# Spotlight on Staff

HERBIE BORENSTEIN

FAVARH RESIDENTIAL DSP

Herbie Borenstein began his work as a Favarh Direct Support Professional at Bear Woods Apartments in March 2021. Herbie points to his work as a volunteer running and cycling coach for Special Olympics that began more than 30 years ago as a motivating factor for becoming a Favarh DSP in his retirement. His life-long inclination to serve and help others stems from his upbringing. "My parents were Holocaust survivors. Helping others is a passion I feel obligated to do."

Herbie grew up in Brooklyn, NY and had what he sites as an idyllic beginning in a small family with his parents and an older sister. After majoring in physics and atmospheric sciences at SUNY Albany, he decided to continue his studies in meteorology at Purdue University where he became very involved with computer software development that predicted the weather. He went on to lead a very successful career with multiple companies including a subsidiary of Travelers, Gerber Scientific, General Dynamics - Electric Boat Division, Computer Sciences Corporation, and Xerox. As Senior Managing Director, he ran a \$600 million business with a couple thousand employees, traveling to 54 countries, and living in England for a number of years. He and Cynthia, his wife of 39 years, settled in the Hartford area to raise their two children, Adam (34) and Cassie (29). They're now proud and doting grandparents to Max (4).

Herbie says, of all that he has accomplished in life, he is most proud of his children. "They are both successful in life and are good citizens." He describes them as sensitive, caring and charitable. Having seperately traveled outside of

the country on business, both his son and daughter witnessed extreme poverty like they had never encountered before. He believes those experiences had a profound impact on their sense of place in the world.

Herbie grew up in a religious home where his parents observed the Sabbath and kept a kosher kitchen. Although he finds it difficult to speak about his parent's experience during WWII, he pushes through the emotions and shares their story. "My mother became imprisoned in a Nazi concentration camp. My father was engaged with the Underground Resistance and then hidden for the last two years of the war by a Polish-Christian family in a barn underneath the floor boards, where he couldn't see the light of day." Their story of survival, finding each other after losing everyone and everything in the war, falling in love, coming to New York by boat as immigrants, and his father working the rest of his life, opening a successful men's clothing shop in Brooklyn in 1958, and raising a family; it's a story of triumph and light over death and darkness.

Herbie certainly is a unique member of the Favarh team who brings uncommon life skills, experiences and joy to his work as a Direct Support Professional. And he has a compelling perspective on the work we do. His advice to his colleagues, "Never belittle yourself. Everyone brings something to the table. Whether you're doing it because you need to work or because you want to make a difference, make sure you are passionate about this. Then it's easy." He describes working at Favarh as bringing joy and life to others. "It's a virtue. It's a 'mitzvah.'"