



# The ROGERSON RECORD

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## From The Desk Of President James F. Seagle, Jr.



Two control freaks were in the news this week. One was Alexander Haig, Four Star General, Advisor to President Nixon and Secretary of State under President Reagan. After an illustrious career cavorting with the rich and powerful, he will be remembered for one particular utterance. There had been an attempted assassination of President Reagan and under the bright lights of the White House and the scrutiny of the entire world he famously exclaimed “I am in control here!” He was actually fourth in line to succeed the President. The news about him was his obituary, but the other devotee of control being reported on is very much alive. She is Dr. Ellen Langer, famous research psychologist at Harvard whose studies about the human need to feel control are legendary in gerontological circles.

Haig had his moments but it’s hard to relate to someone who, for instance, directed the actions of the reportedly deranged Richard Nixon during his final days in

office. On the other hand, what Langer surfaced in her studies is far more interesting to us normal people as we go about our everyday lives. In the late 60’s she studied two groups of elders in a skilled nursing facility. Separated by floors but with the same morbidity (chronic disease) and age profile, Dr. Langer had the administrator give each group a “pep talk.” On one floor, patients were told that this was their home and that the staff was there to care for them. Also, she told them that a number of programs will be provided for them and that each would receive a plant which the nurse would help them to maintain. On the other floor the message was subtly different. The administrator said that this was their home and they should treat it as such. Then she told them that they could choose to participate (or not) in activities that would be offered. Finally, she invited them to select a plant if they desired for them to care for in their rooms. Subtle differences in messages can sometimes be powerful, especially when you convey a sense of control. The floor with the “tender loving care” message, after three years, had twice the mortality (death) rate as the floor where residents were given a choice and therefore a feeling of control.

Being somewhat of a control freak myself, I resisted believing the outcomes reported from the study. After reading it, attending some of Dr. Langer’s lectures and finally recruiting her to write

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## Let’s Get Physical Rogerson Staff Gets Fit For Free



**Debbie Cawley, Administrative Assistant, pumps some serious iron while Nichole Kurker, Healthy Rogerson Program Manager, offers some professional pointers.**

Although spring is around the corner, snow and ice still shroud the occasional sidewalk around Boston. And although some stalwart folk might enjoy navigating the treacherous New England sidewalks, some enterprising Rogerson employees are taking advantage of always-stable indoor conditions to get fit for free.

Fit for free? Yes! Rogerson Fitness FIRST<sup>SM</sup> gyms — located in Rogerson Roslindale, Rogerson Egleston, and Rogerson Brookline ADHPs, in addition to Rogerson House, Council Tower and Springhouse — are open to all employees.

Lately, it seems the women of Rogerson are taking the most advantage of well-equipped gyms at their worksites. Mary Moynihan, Director of IT, shares her fitness philosophy, “I try to work out at least three times a week...I really like the convenience of the gym here. If I go home from work first, I never feel like leaving again to go work out. But this way, I just go downstairs right after work, then I feel great when I’m done.”

Each gym space has a selection of cardiovascular and strength training machines, and other funky fitness equipment like balance disks, rollers, and fitness bands. And not only do you have access

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## Employee Profile

### Chitra Sharma

Interview by *Islande Icart*, Development Assistant

Meet Chitra Sharma, Controller of Rogerson Communities. It's a title that has a bit of a science fiction, master-of-the-universe ring to it, but the world of a controller is, in fact, very much based in reality. Chitra juggles a medley of responsibilities, including managing financial reporting for Rogerson sites, overseeing payroll and 403B benefits, filing various taxes in a timely fashion, and managing staff accountants and payroll personnel.

In fact, Chitra thinks Rogerson is so nice, she's worked here twice. In 1998, she came to work in the finance department as a staff accountant, and left in 2004 for the wild and woolly world of public accounting. Then, two years ago, Steve Kyner (Rogerson's recently retired Vice President of Finance) called to see if she was interested in coming back. "To be honest, I was a little skeptical....When you leave a place, you don't think you'll come back," she explains. "But I missed Rogerson for the time I was away, and was very pleased to come back. I like the Rogerson mission, and the interaction with everyone I come in contact with."

The people (and a promotion) at

### Getting to Know Chitra

<b>Favorite Restaurant</b>	<b>Sintra</b>
<b>Favorite Movie</b>	<b>Finding Nemo</b>
<b>Favorite Vaca Spot</b>	<b>Costa Rica</b>
<b>Favorite Book</b>	<b><u>Echoes</u> Maeve Binchy</b>
<b>Hobbies</b>	<b>Gardening, Sewing</b>



Rogerson Controller Chitra Sharma smiling in her second floor office at One Florence Street.

Rogerson was one of the biggest selling points of coming back to work here, in Chitra's view. "When you look at the longevity of so many employees here, it really says a lot about the quality of the organization," she says.

Working in the Finance department proves plenty challenging on a day-to-day basis. "In a typical day, you think you can get through your routine, then you get hit with a curve ball...but I think that's what makes the job interesting," Chitra explains. "Sometimes I feel that there aren't enough hours in the day to accomplish what you need to get done...but I tend to give 120 percent to everything I do. And in this economy, I think I'm blessed to have a job that I enjoy doing."

And if you think this controller's realm is limited to calculators and computers, think again: Chitra is also a seamstress and gardener. "Last summer I grew tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers...I can make dresses, blouses, curtains," she says. Watch out, Rogerson, it seems we have a Renaissance woman in our midst!

### From the Desk (Continued)

a chapter for a book I was editing, I still found the results a little bit out there. It was not until we planned and executed the closing of the original Rogerson House on the Jamaica way that I confirmed for myself the value of enabling a sense of control in others.

All the experts said that we needed to close the outdated facility, but some scary studies contended that uprooting this population of very old and frail men could result in physical losses and death. Conventional wisdom was on this side and I was given many anecdotal stories about mom or grandpa expiring soon after such a move. On the other hand, there was some pretty good data confirming that if done correctly, moving elder and frail people should not be injurious. The key, these studies reported, was that the individual to be moved felt some control of the process. In fact, where several different options were presented and the elder felt they had a true choice and that the move would be to an equally good or better setting, healthy outcomes were reported.

In closing the home and relocating residents, our program had at its core the involvement of the residents. We took six months to complete the process which included, at minimum, visits to three possible relocation sites. Many men moved to less restrictive settings, such as our new affordable housing programs. Some moved closer to family and a few from the infirmary went to skilled nursing homes. As part of the program we agreed to follow the residents for one year, and if during that time the new home was felt unsatisfactory, to assist in another relocation.

After sitting on the "death grenade" potential in this situation, I was astonished at the result. Each year, with this population of men average age 85, we experienced between ten and twelve deaths. But, from the point at which we announced closing until the last resident moved six months later, nobody died. In the next six months after relocation, amazingly nobody died. Death took a holiday. Finishing out the year of post-move follow-up, one man died. Where normally there would have been fifteen to eighteen deaths, there was one. My guess is that these guys got re-interested in living and they certainly felt in control of this significant relocation process.

Now, we don't want to start moving people around willy nilly to decrease mortality, but we can certainly adopt elements of the Langer study in all approaches to elders. Tender loving care may be what we want to give but it's not what is needed. The longer I work with elders, the more certain I am that their engagement and ability to be involved in choice and the sense of control that follows is what will keep them going.

By the way, they're doing a Hollywood movie about Dr. Ellen Langer. I wonder how long until they get around to Al Haig?

## Sesquicentennial! Rogerson Goes Green

Rogerson's 150th anniversary is here, and as part of the celebration, Rogerson is "going green." Whether it's onsite at a Rogerson residence or in the bustling Development office, Rogerson is changing its ways, and becoming more sustainable by the minute.

Council Tower in Roxbury is first to get a green facelift, thanks to major HUD stimulus program funds. Over \$2 million is committed to replace elements of both the common areas and individual apartments with sustainable materials and energy efficient appliances.

The next project to go green? Farnsworth House. The JP residence is under final review to also receive retrofit grant funds. "I've been certified as a 'green' property manager," said Dean Collotta. We're going to replace all the windows, toilets, refrigerators, and air conditioners with Energy Star-rated



Council Tower is in line for green retrofit improvements. (Photo by Kramerphoto.com)

appliances. We're currently painting with no VOC (volatile organic compound) paint — which improves air quality; we've replaced all our janitorial and paper products with green or recycled products; and we're encouraging our residents to 'go green,' as well. We're going to singlehandedly save the environment," he joked.

Another way Rogerson is going green: launching a new e-newsletter, which debuted last month. This virtual communication has replaced the original printed version of *Inside*.

"The new e-newsletter lets us reach an even broader audience," said Anne Morton Smith, Vice President, Development & Community Relations. "We also use no paper, ink or postage in the process. And the big bonus: recipients can forward it to friends (or potential donors) with the click of a mouse."

Do you have a new idea about going green at Rogerson? Share it with your supervisor today.



## News & Events



Beacon House Residents Bi Cun Long and Taiwan Kwan celebrate Valentine's Day at Beacon House with sweet treats.



Day program participant Sister Marion Carey rubs shoulders with faux Patriot Mike Vrabel on a recent Rogerson Roslindale ADHP outing to Patriot Place in Foxboro.

## The Rogerson Review

Books and movies that show elders and those with disabilities living meaningful and engaged lives are all around!

The Movie [The Notebook](#)

The Reviewer Jenny Piaskoski, Therapeutic Recreation Coordinator, Rogerson House

The Verdict [The Notebook](#) is an emotionally-stirring romantic dramedy based on the novel of the same title by Nicholas Sparks. It features an elderly couple, Noah and Allie, who reminisce about their life together through a series of stories written by Allie in her notebook. Allie suffers from dementia and is often unaware of who Noah is, but the notebook serves as a biography, in which Allie has prefaced: "Read this to me, and I'll come back to you." [The Notebook](#) is a beautiful story that displays the power of love and the miracles it can create.

Want to see this movie? Check out your nearest video rental store, Red Box location or Netflix!

### Fit For Free (Continued)

to all of the equipment, you also have access to a personal trainer. Nichole Kurker, Healthy Rogerson Program Manager, will meet with you one-on-one to devise a unique plan to help you achieve your own fitness goals. "There are tons of benefits to working out — it's good for your health, and good for how you feel about yourself," Kurker says.

There must be something in the air on the third floor of Rogerson Admin, because Laurie Trilling, Vice President of

Operations, and Heather Orodener, Director of Housing Management, are also hitting the gym at work; and Paula Butler, Administrative Assistant to Operations and Real Estate Development, is gearing up to begin her own program.

Whatever your level of fitness, the Rogerson Fitness FIRST<sup>SM</sup> gyms have something to offer to help get you feeling better than you have in years. And by the time summer rolls around, you may even be happy it's bathing suit weather.

**SHOUT OUT:** Special thanks to the Rogerson Roslindale ADHP participants who fold [The Rogerson Record](#)!

## HR Focus

**Chelsea Jurena**  
Human Resources Associate



The most current information from The Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that in 2009 there were 1,078,140 cases of non-fatal occupational injuries and illnesses in major industries.

Accidents can happen very easily and it is important that you keep in mind the following safety tips when performing your job.

First, always be aware of your surroundings. A wet floor, an upturned carpet, or a dropped item could all contribute to a trip or fall. If you see a potential hazard, please take action to clean it up or fix it right away. If you are unable to do so, please notify your supervisor immediately.

Second, always practice safe lifting techniques when picking up or moving a heavy item. It is important to have a secure

grip on the item and always lift with your legs, not your back.

Lastly, always take care when using potentially harmful items. Whether you use cleaning chemicals, needles to administer client medications, or even the paper shredder, be sure to take the necessary precautions to prevent injury.

In the event that an accident does occur, you must report it immediately to your manager. Rogerson Communities is required by law to report any workplace accidents to the State of Massachusetts. Your manager is aware of the proper

procedures to follow regarding a workplace accident, but you must report it right away. All accidents should be reported, regardless of severity — even if they do not result in an injury. Keeping HR informed about incidents can help us to create a safer workplace.

If you have any questions regarding these safety tips or how/when to report an accident, please contact a member of the Human Resources Department. And remember: always think safety, no matter what the task!

## Healthy Rogerson

**Open Up To Organic**  
Teresa Boughner

It is easy to get confused (and possibly overpay) for items simply because they are labeled “organic,” but there are a few guidelines that can help.

Meet the “dirty dozen”: apples, bell peppers, cantaloupe, carrots, celery, green beans,

imported grapes, kale, lettuce, nectarines, peaches, pears, strawberries. According to *Consumer Reports Food & Fitness Special Issue* (Spring, 2010) these fruits and veggies, when conventionally produced, tend to contain more pesticides than the organic versions of the

same foods.

If you buy organic meat, poultry, eggs and dairy products, you can avoid supplemental hormones and antibiotics that can increase your antibacterial resistance. However, there is no need to purchase organic



seafood because at this time there are no “certified organic” standards.

To get the freshest fruits and veggies, buy from a local farmer’s market; and choosing in-season fruits and veggies will keep costs down.

For more info about eating green, go to [www.foodnews.org](http://www.foodnews.org) or [www.eatwellguide.org](http://www.eatwellguide.org).



Rogerson Egleston Adult Day Health program participants go for the gold: they held their own version of Olympics, including an opening ceremony and Balloon Volleyball (above.) Three game MVPs were named — each was awarded a special certificate, medal, and (most importantly) bragging rights.

## New Hires & Promotions

**Janice Kania**  
LPN  
Rogerson House

**Denise Evans**  
CNA  
Rogerson House

**Timothy Stewart**  
CNA  
Rogerson House

Check out properties and programs that are currently hiring: [www.rogerson.org](http://www.rogerson.org).



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**Story ideas? News items? Comments?**

**Email [news@rogerson.org](mailto:news@rogerson.org) or call 617-469-5847.**

Jeanne O'Rourke, Managing Editor