

Q&A with Grand Street Settlement

Q: What does “community” mean to you?

A: To us, community is family. It is a second home where our seniors walk in and immediately feel seen, safe, and cared for. It’s a place where transformation happens quietly—through connection, trust, and the simple comfort of knowing you belong. Our center is more than a hub of services; it is a space filled with warmth, laughter, and the kind of support that can change the course of someone’s day, or even their life.

Q: What personal experiences have shaped your commitment to cancer prevention and why?

A: At BEST NORC (Naturally Occurring Retirement Community), we see every day how prevention can protect independence, dignity, and quality of life. Many of our seniors face high risks—falls, dementia, chronic illnesses—and often have limited access to healthcare. That reality fuels our commitment.

We want our seniors to stay strong, stay informed, and stay connected. Cancer prevention is part of that promise. We are deeply grateful to Mount Sinai for standing beside us, especially for those who are frail or isolated. Their partnership allows us to reach seniors who might otherwise be overlooked.

Q: A moment in your work when you felt you truly made a difference

A: There are many moments, but one stays with me [staff member]. I was walking down the street when I saw one of our seniors—someone living with severe dementia—wandering alone. She looked confused and frightened. I immediately contacted our case worker, then reached out to our RN and health coach. They came right away, spoke to her gently, calmed her, and helped reconnect her with her family. In that moment, I felt the power of what it means to be a team. We weren’t just providing a service- we were protecting someone’s dignity, safety, and sense of belonging. Moments like that remind me why our work matters so deeply. We are here so seniors can live their best lives, without feeling like a burden, and with the confidence that they are cared for.

Q: One quality you’re most proud of, or something your community has said about you

A: I [staff member] am most proud of the unity of our team. We come from different cultures and backgrounds, yet we move with one purpose: to make every senior feel welcomed, respected, and supported. Our multicultural, responsive approach is not just a program—it’s a reflection of who we are. Our seniors often tell us, “This place feels like home.” That is the greatest affirmation we could ever receive.

Q: One thing you wish more people understood about your community and its challenges in cancer prevention

A: In many cultures, cancer is still a taboo topic- something people avoid discussing, especially during holidays or family gatherings. This silence can create fear and prevent early detection. We are working gently and consistently to change that. We want cancer awareness to feel like knowledge, not shame; empowerment, not fear. And we are grateful to Mount Sinai for giving us the opportunity and support to bring these conversations into our community with compassion and respect.