

# COVID-19 vaccinations bring hope to long-term residents, staff at Reformed Church Home

Residents and staff members at Reformed Church Home (RCH) in Old Bridge received the first dose of the two-dose Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine on Jan. 5, just three weeks after the vaccine became available in New Jersey.

Evelyn Arndt, who celebrated her 104th birthday on Dec. 25, was one of the first recipients during the vaccination clinic, as well as Magdalene Holland, a 92-year-old assisted living resident who was the home's first COVID survivor, according to information provided by RCH.

The clinic at RCH was conducted by Walgreens, whose team will return in 21 days to administer the second vaccination.

RCH Executive Director and Administrator Kate Shepard, reflecting on the importance of the day, said, "The clinic could not have happened a moment too soon. Although we have been blessed with no COVID fatalities, the fact that families have been separated from their loved ones is upsetting on many levels. Whatever it takes to try and bring residents and families back together, we are going to do it," she said in the statement.

Grace Brunner, RCH Advanced Practice Nurse, shared her enthusiasm as well, saying, "It was one of the happiest days here in a long time. We are starting the year off right, as in my opinion immunization is the only way out of this devastating situation. It's the first step to recovery as a nation and to a return to a more normal lifestyle for our residents," she said in the statement.

Brunner, in close collaboration with RCH medical director Dr. Edward Mezic, and many dedicated nursing staff members, has coordinated care for residents infected with COVID-19 since the pandemic took hold last March.

Holland said the vaccination clinic went very well and was very organized.

"It [the vaccination] didn't hurt. I was asked to wait for 15 minutes so they could observe if I had any side effects. I continue to have no ill effects whatsoever," she said in the statement.

Holland was diagnosed with COVID-19 in April and spent three weeks recovering at RCH in a separate COVID wing. Upon discharge, she insisted on walking back to



PHOTOS COURTESY OF REFORMED CHURCH HOME

**Reformed Church Home nursing staff celebrate receiving the COVID vaccine with an "RCHStrong" gesture, during the vaccination clinic held on Jan. 5. Pictured are Sally Kabineh, left to right, Joanne Zientek, Vera Yarmoliouk and Gerley Tan; kneeling in front is Director of Nursing Anna Vergara.**

her assisted living apartment, refusing wheelchair transport, according to the statement.

When asked her opinion on the importance of the vaccine, she said, "We [the elderly] are at a high risk. It's there for

a reason so I feel we should take it," according to the statement.

Reformed Church Home is located at 1990 Route 18 north, Old Bridge.

For more information, visit [www.reformedchurchhome.org](http://www.reformedchurchhome.org).



**Magdalene Holland, 92, receives her first COVID vaccine dose during a vaccination clinic at Reformed Church Home, conducted by Walgreens. Holland was the first COVID survivor at the home, recovering in May.**



**Evelyn Arndt, who turned 104 on Christmas Day and is Reformed Church Home's most senior resident, receives her first COVID-19 vaccine on Jan. 5.**