



### **Shirley and Marvin Block**

Serving others is Shirley Block's soul. She and her husband, Marvin, a retired dental and public health faculty member, relocated to Chapel Hill in 1972 with their three children when Dr. Block joined the UNC faculty. From Rochester, New York, and an alumna of Cornell in Ithaca, NY, Shirley and her family had lived in Germany, where Dr. Block served in the U.S. Army, before moving to Minnesota and then to Chapel Hill. Following their relocation to Chapel Hill, Shirley became Head of the Carolina Friends Lower School for fourteen years. Shirley volunteered for three years to work with students who needed extra help with academic subjects at the Rashkis School.

Shirley and Marvin were among the first residents of The Cedars and observed that many of the wait staff were students and some of them had young children in school. Shirley and a group of residents formed a Scholarship Committee to raise money to help employee/students with tuition. Every student who has worked at the Cedars for at least one year can receive scholarship help. Money is raised in an annual sale of arts and crafts, baked goods, created by talented Cedars and in a raffle of items donated by local merchants. Every child of Cedars employees received money for school supplies, \$40 each for 96 children. The Scholarship Committee is now thriving under new leadership.

PORCH for hunger relief is another volunteer organization which Shirley supports with time and energy. On the third Monday of each month, she and other Cedar Members put out flyers indicating the types of food needed by hungry members of the Chapel Hill- Carrboro community. She is available during the day at a collection site at The Cedars for food donations or monetary donations. The donations are delivered to St. Thomas More School for distribution to eight church pantries. The food is taken to St. Thomas More, bagged and delivered. This is a community effort with cooperation with markets, farmers, and others. Many Cedars members donate checks and cash which are used to purchase fresh foods.

In addition to Marvin's responsibilities at the Dental School, he became involved in the community. Dr. Block was one of the original members of the committee that founded the Senior Centers in Chapel Hill and Hillsborough. He served on the Board of Directors of the Senior Centers for many years. He was also the chairman of the Human Services Commission of Orange County and many other community organizations. Several years ago, Shirley and Marvin were among the founders of the Kehillah Synagogue on Mason Farm Road which now has over 160 members and a five-star pre-school which is open to the public.

When asked about her most important achievement, Shirley responds "helping school children." She had a classic answer to special memories of Chapel Hill and that is she is still making memories. Since moving here, the growing population has brought many changes which include more offerings in the performing arts. In 2013, she was given an NC State Leading Edge Award for Community Service. Shirley says that "throughout our 67 year marriage, we have been a team. Whenever one of us has taken on a community effort, the other has offered to help." Shirley and Marvin Block are the essence of community service.