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A SPECIAL HOMECOMING: PHILLIPS BETH ISRAEL NURSING CLASS OF 1966 RETURNS 45 YEARS AFTER GRADUATION

June 27, 2011 -- On Sunday, June 26, after gathering for brunch at Pete's Tavern in Gramercy, 29 members of the Class of 1966 of Beth Israel's School of Nursing came to visit what had been their school and living quarters as students -- Beth Israel's Petrie Campus.

Forty-five years after receiving their diplomas, major changes have taken place in nursing education and the profession and the hospital! One had come from as far away as Israel; many came from the northeast and around the country -- California, Colorado, Florida, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, Texas, among others.

"We had a special bond between us -- all fresh from high school and for three years we studied and lived in dorms housed in what is now the Karpas Pavilion," said Ina Levine Jabara, RN, MICU Nurse Manager, who gave her classmates a tour of Beth Israel. Most of the women began their careers as nurses at the hospital, but Ms. Jabara is the only one who continues to work at Beth Israel.

Miriam "Micki" Goldberger LeVine, who was class president, quickly reverted to her role as group organizer and leader, guiding people back to Stuyvesant Park, where they posed for photos in the same positions as in their yearbook graduation picture. The group remembered those who could not be present, especially five who have passed away.

Grateful for the fine education they received, the Class of '66 has decided to establish what will be called the Janus Award, named for the mythic god that long ago inspired their yearbook theme of looking back and looking forward. The prize will be presented annually to a Phillips Beth Israel School of Nursing student who has successfully overcome challenges of the freshman year.

Before parting ways, each received a tote bag with remembrances from their alma mater and a compilation of bios submitted by classmates, a copy of which was also donated to Phillips Beth Israel and the Alumni Association.

"We had a wonderful day of renewing friendships," said Ms. Jabara, "and despite the intervening years, the love and strong connection with one another was abundantly clear."