



## A Group Of Women in Their Second Stage of Life Go from Lost to Found at the JCC.

**W**hen Sandy Schweibel moved into the area a few years ago to be closer to her daughter and grandchildren, she found it hard to meet new people, missed her old friends and felt very lonely. Seeing her mother struggle to acclimate to her new neighborhood, Sandy's daughter recommended that she check out the JCC—a local community center that had become her family's home away from home.

"When you have young children, it's easy to meet people through their school and other activities, but once they're out of the house and you move to a new area, it becomes more difficult to make new friends and find things to do. It can feel very isolating."—Sandy Schweibel

Sandy followed her daughter's advice, became a member of the JCC and helped start the Canasta program. The program took off, and not only helped Sandy find the connections and social circle she was hoping for, but did the same for several other women—Nadia Massuda, Judy Brown, Phyllis Lambrinides, Joan Paul, Paula Sheinbaum and Susan Resnick to name a few. Today, in addition to Canasta, these women attend other JCC classes, trips and JCC U lectures together and can be seen laughing and chatting like old friends at the JCC several times a week.



LEFT: Visiting the Barnes Foundation on a JCC trip.  
BELOW: Playing Canasta at the JCC.



For this group, and many others like them, discovering Adult Programs at the JCC has been a life changer—as Judy Brown shares, "When my husband died, I was desperately looking for something to do where I could connect with other people. I spoke to Esther Mazor and she introduced me to the Canasta group. I met Phyllis, we made an immediate connection, and the group was so welcoming, I've come to think of them as my extended family. This place really keeps me going."

The women's relationship, while born at the JCC, has developed into true friendships that extend outside of its walls. The women meet socially for dinners, have shared Seders, and enjoy each other's company at movies and Broadway shows. They celebrate birthdays, births and holidays together and support each other in times of need.

**“**They have all come to be special friends of mine. Not long ago, when I was about to celebrate a landmark birthday, my son—who heard me talk endlessly about all my Canasta friends—called the JCC to find out how he could contact them so he could invite them to my party. And they all came to celebrate with me, which is something I'll never forget.”

**PHYLLIS LAMBRINIDES**

Esther Mazor, Director of Adult Programming, witnesses these connections on a regular basis. Esther explains "We try to offer adults of all ages opportunities to do what they love, learn new things, and create an atmosphere where people can meet, connect and feel a part of a community—it is so gratifying when we see people make deep, lasting connections because of what they experience here at the JCC".

*The New Year is the perfect time for fresh starts and new beginnings. A time to make new friends, pursue new pastimes and reconnect with interests or hobbies you love. And if you happen to be an empty nester, a widow, or someone with extra time and are seeking people to share it with, there is no better place to find new worlds and new friends than at the JCC. Happy New Year!*