



# NANCY WALDBAUM,

THANK YOU FOR A CONVERSATION I WILL FOREVER REMEMBER

BY PRASHANT GUPTA | PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY NANCY WALDBAUM

**THE OPPORTUNITY TO SIT IN FRONT OF NANCY WALDBAUM** and interview her gave me one of those 'somebody pinch me' kind of feelings. The feeling comes not from her legendary background nor from awe of her esteemed status as President of Sid Jacobson JCC's Board of Directors. That sweet feeling is a whole different emotion. It comes from fond memories of the '80s and '90s, growing up in Forest Hills and going grocery shopping at the nearest Waldbaum's. We didn't even know how to pronounce the name. We would pronounce it 'Vallbums.'

Here we are in 2024 and I'm getting to interview a community stalwart whose family created a very integral part of my childhood.

Nancy Waldbaum, a person I was genuinely interested in getting to know and one whom all my readers should know about. Anyone can Google "Waldbaum's" and discover that it was founded in 1904; it was a pioneer in the concept of supermarkets and one of the largest in the country. But what makes this feature all the more special is that she is a true native of the North Shore, having been born at North Shore Hospital and attended East Williston High School.

When Nancy Waldbaum became Board President at Sid Jacobson Jewish Community Center, she expressed her passion for continuing the Center's work to recover from the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Coming from a family dedicated to philanthropy, this pursuit and passion were instilled in her and applied to the work she implements in her life and at Sid Jacobson JCC to this day. She has long served in charity work for organizations like Northwell Health, the Manhattan Jewish Experience, and Variety Pre-

schoolers Workshop. She is currently involved with the Jewish National Fund's upcoming culinary institute.

Nancy Waldbaum has served on Sid Jacobson JCC's Executive Board since 1992, beginning her long tenure at the age of 24. Amassing 31 years on the JCC's Board of Directors, Nancy has witnessed various leadership and staff changes and has taken those lessons into her position as President. "I've watched," Waldbaum said. "I've watched what we've done well, I've watched what we've done exceptionally, and I've learned from our mistakes."

As a great community leader and visionary, she has a strong outlook on where she wants to take Sid Jacobson JCC, including creating an overarching endowment fund to protect the Center and its members in the event of a future emergency comparable to the COVID-19 pandemic. "I want us to have an endowment to protect us so that our children, our grandchildren, our great-grandchildren will have the opportunity to use our programs, to use our facility, to get what they need from us," Waldbaum said. "Whether they're cancer survivors looking for resources, individuals who are neurodivergent, or kids going to camp or preschool, we serve so many populations that need us so desperately."

Among the many other questions I asked, a few come to mind so vividly. It all felt like it was someone I had known for a long time and someone whom the whole community must get to know on a deeper level.

I was ecstatic to learn that the first Waldbaum's that opened in Queens was located in Flushing. I happened to be born in Flushing. How wonderful to know that her association with this region didn't just start with being on the board of Sid Jacobson JCC. Learning all that I did about The Waldbaum Foundation, I can honestly





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say it makes for a perfect Thanksgiving story to feature someone who has dedicated her life to improving other people's lives and uplifting the grace and glory of Sid Jacobson JCC. Having listened to her intently, I concur with their motto, "You Belong Here."

In closing, I'd like to express my gratitude to the team of Sid Jacobson JCC for facilitating this incredible interaction. And to you Ms. Nancy Waldbaum, a Happy Thanksgiving from ROSLYN LIVING. Please do share a box of those chocolate chip cookies you bake better than anyone else!

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