

Knitzvah: Where Crafting Meets Community and Compassion at Sid Jacobson JCC

At Sid Jacobson JCC, Knitzvah is more than just a gathering of women knitting and crocheting—it's a community united by a shared purpose: giving back.

Each stitch crafted in the group's cozy circle is not just a piece of art, but a message of care and compassion. Knitzvah has touched countless individuals, one handmade piece at a time.

The true magic of the group lies in its collective spirit. It's not just the blankets that make the group extraordinary—it's the women behind them.

One such woman is **Riona Nebel**, who found her way to Knitzvah after an unexpected retirement. What began as only a simple desire to pass the time quickly blossomed into a fulfilling journey of purpose and connection.

Riona realized that knitting for a cause wasn't just a way to give back—it was also a meaningful way to connect with others. "I knew I could knit and crochet, and when I found out I could do that to help others, it felt like the perfect fit," she shared.

What Riona didn't expect was the lasting impression Knitzvah would have on her life. Each Wednesday, Riona leads a group of 20 to 25 women in creating beautiful pieces that bring comfort to those in need.

Riona's contributions, along with those of her fellow crafters, have positively affected the lives of so many.

The group's donations to St. Francis Hospital have provided lap blankets for cancer patients in the infusion center, offering warmth during difficult treatments. Red, white, and blue blankets have been lovingly crafted for veterans, with some volunteers personally delivering the blankets to various veterans' programs. Most recently, the group made blankets to donate to Tunnel to Towers, supporting families of first responders and military veterans.

Every member brings her own skills, stories, and experiences to the table, fostering a spirit of camaraderie. The group creates a space where participants learn from one another, share laughs, and offer support. "It's not just about the knitting—it's about being part of something bigger," Riona said.

Julie Assael, Director of Senior Programs at Sid Jacobson JCC, sees firsthand the power of this community. "Riona is the heart and soul of the group," Julie notes. "She's a natural leader, always going above and beyond to ensure everything runs smoothly. She doesn't seek recognition, but we all see how much she contributes."

For Riona, the act of helping others has brought about a renewed sense of direction. "Through Knitzvah, I've found a way to make a difference and do something meaningful," she said.

Riona's story is a testament to the power of community and the reward of making a difference. It's a reminder that sometimes, the smallest acts of kindness can have the biggest impact.