

Baking for a Cause: Joyce Miller's Sweet Impact

Joyce Miller never imagined that a simple hobby would grow into such a significant act of generosity.

After dedicating herself as the primary care partner for her mother, who battled Lewy Body Dementia, Joyce sought new ways to stay engaged following her mother's passing. That journey led her to Sid Jacobson JCC.

Joyce first joined Sid Jacobson JCC through a Mah Jongg class, which soon led her to explore the gym, where she became a regular at exercise classes, and at walking club every Thursday.

Thursdays became a special day for her—filled with games, friends, and, soon, a newfound passion: baking.

"I always wanted to bake, but I needed people to eat what I made. So, I started bringing my baked goods to Games Day at the JCC," Joyce said. "One day, someone put a cup next to my treats, and people started dropping in a couple of dollars—completely unprompted. That's when I decided that if they were going to contribute, I would put that money to good use."

Joyce chose to give every dollar to Sid Jacobson JCC's Randie Waldbaum Malinsky Center for Israel.

Her generosity, combined with the giving spirit of the community, resulted in over \$1,000 raised to support Israel and aid in the recovery efforts.

"Ever since October 7th, Joyce turned her hobby into a fundraiser for Israel and has collected over \$1,000 for our Center for Israel," **Julie Assael**, Director of Senior Programs, reflected. "She's a true gem—welcoming newcomers with kindness, participating in so many of our programs, and, of course, sharing her homemade delicious treats."

Joyce's connection to Israel isn't rooted in personal ties, but she feels a deep responsibility to support the Jewish homeland.

One of her most meaningful baking moments came after she discovered a project that shared the favorite recipes of Israeli hostages. Among them was a crescent cookie recipe from **Edan Alexander**, who had attended the same New Jersey high school as her nieces and nephew.

"I read his backstory, and had to try the recipe," Joyce recalled. "I then brought it to the JCC, and that day, we raised even more money. It was my small way of making sure his story wasn't forgotten."

The JCC has become a second home for Joyce—a place where she's made lasting friendships, explored new interests, and remained active.

"Joyce comes to the JCC every day with a huge smile and a great attitude," **Audrey Kurland**, Associate Executive Director, Adult Programming, observed. "She brings energy and life to everything she participates in—from exercise classes to walking club to Games Day. She's truly a treasured member."

While Joyce never envisioned this humble act turning into something so impactful, she now sees it as a testament to what a small act of kindness can become.

“You do what you can,” Joyce concluded. “Everyone does a little something, and together, it turns into something big.”