

# Older Adult Programs

Agewell Pittsburgh • JCC South Hills

May 2023



## Featured Club of the Month: Book Club

The book club is our longest running club, having been formed eight years ago. After a few initial meetings where the group read and discussed one book, the members decided that they wanted to have a group that was relaxed and had no pressure to read a specific book each month, because many of them were already in other book groups. Instead, this group of avid readers chose to come together once a month to share thoughts on books they read independently and give reading recommendations to the group. The club is now coordinated by Gail Counihan, our Member Services representative.

Each month Book Group has a lively discussion even if only one person has read a particular book! The members take turns summarizing a book they have read and give a quick review of the book, the writing, the plot, the characters or whatever struck them most about the book. From there the discussion flows as other members ask questions, talk about other books by the same author, or other similar books. If the member owns the book being discussed, they usually share it at that

point with other members. Some books have made their rounds through the club, with new insights and opinions being shared each month.

Members of the club enjoy being exposed to new authors, genres they might not have picked, and books they may have missed in their reading journey. And they enjoy being in the company of other readers. If you are looking for some reading ideas, this is the place to be.

## Featured Class of the Month: Tai Chi

Tai Chi is an ancient form of mind-body exercise developed in China which combines physical exercise with meditative concentration. It is based on Taoist philosophy which espouses living in harmony with nature. Tai Chi embodies a vast wealth of knowledge about functional exercise, mindfulness, and wellness such that the curious-minded person will never finish learning and benefiting from its practice.

More and more medical research documents the many health benefits of Tai Chi. Often called “meditation in motion”, Tai Chi is a relaxing, calming

form of exercise that builds strength, flexibility, and endurance. Done slowly and gently with attention to the quality of movement, Tai Chi improves balance, coordination, and agility. It is recognized for helping prevent falls, lowering blood pressure, balancing blood sugar, strengthening the immune system and elevating mood. As it quiets the mind, it helps to release tension and relieve stress.

Our beginner and intermediate Tai Chi classes are taught by Sandy Fiori. Sandy has been teaching at the JCC for nine years, after training with Dr. Paul Lam, a leader in creating Tai Chi for health improvement. To Sandy, creating community within the class is an important part of the Tai Chi class. The class is based on the traditional Sun style form of Tai Chi with symmetrical movements to balance the body structure and improve bilateral coordination. The wavelike flow of movement helps to lubricate the joints. Moving in harmony with the breath helps to relax the mind and integrate the body as a whole. Reduced tension and discomfort will help elevate mood and build self-confidence and vitality. Improved balance will help prevent falls; a common problem associated with arthritis. The class is taught standing, but it can easily be modified to be done sitting or standing with a chair for support.



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## Staff Spotlight

Gail Counihan has worked at the South Hills front desk for six years. Prior to working here, Gail had been coming to the JCC so often that she was encouraged to become a staff member. Monday through Thursday as a Customer Service Representative, Gail is at the desk greeting both potential and current members, answering member questions and registering members for classes. She also helps both the Membership and AgeWell departments with enrolling new members and facilitates the AgeWell Book Group.

Gail enjoys her work with all members and is particularly happy for “the enrichment and continued growth of JCC community activities. So many people have stopped by the front desk to let me know how grateful they are for our services.

The JCC has always been a welcoming environment for both members and staff. I always listen to the experiences of the older population as there is a lot to learn and I love helping people.” Gail says “I am an avid health enthusiast. I exercise both at the JCC and at home and have a library full of health books and cookbooks. I have been known to occasionally eat my home-made salad at the front desk, and I get lots of positive feedback and curiosity about my creations! Outside of work I also enjoy listening to music, especially jazz, and find great solace in knitting and take courses to broaden my skills. And most importantly, spending time with my new granddaughter!”



## Member Spotlight

Members Steve and Deborah Boisvert have been active JCC members since January of 2017. Most days you can find one or both of them in a class or the fitness center, since they both take Balance, Tai Chi, and Yoga classes, and while Deborah takes SilverSneakers classes Steve works out in the fitness center.

While there is community and support within the classes, Steve says he sound found the same to be true in the fitness center where he uses the strength circuit machines and an elliptical machine.

Before joining the JCC they had never belonged to a gym. “We joined for the physical aspect. What surprised us, however, was how naturally and easily social ties form that add to both our performance and enjoyment.

We appreciate all the staff for the kindness, efficiency, and adaptability to everyone’s needs and abilities they exhibit. We enjoy greeting Gail and Brian at the desk, and sighting the adorable children passing by helps make our day. The members are open and welcoming, and everyone together contributes to the genuine sense of community and caring one finds across the board at the JCC.”

## May Clubs and Special Events

### Decades History Club

Wednesday, May 3 • 1:30 pm.

### Theater Club

Monday, May 8 • 12:15 pm

### Book Club

Tuesday, May 16 • 1:30 pm

### Garden Club

Thursday, May 25 • 12 pm

### Mahjong Club

Weekly meeting on Tuesdays • 1pm

### Intergenerational Family Dynamics Group

Wednesday, May 17 • 12:30 pm

### Medicare 101 Plus

Thursday, May 4 • 1 pm

Speaker Joel Gold from PA Medi will be discussing the basics of Medicare and Advantage Plans.

### Bereavement Group

Wednesday, May 3 • 11 am

### Summer Art Class Interest Session

Tuesday, May 23 • 11 am



AGING UNBOUND: MAY 2023

May is Older Americans Month. AgeWell at the South Hills JCC opened in February of 2023, with the goal of helping community members age 60+ maintain a healthy and independent lifestyle. Celebrate your age this month by taking part in one of many clubs and classes AgeWell has to offer.

## Senior Center News

**Last month over 700 lunches were served on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Lunches can be grab and go or enjoyed with other members in the Social Hall.**

**Need help registering for lunch or programs? Visit the AgeWell Senior Center. Office hours are:**

**9 am-12 pm Monday and Friday • 9 am-2 pm Tuesday-Thursday.**