

THE FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE LUNCHEON

A COMMUNITY OF CARE AND HOPE

BY ALLISON CAGGIA

For more than a decade, the Friendship Circle Luncheon has brought together families, care partners, and community members to support Sid Jacobson JCC's Adult Day programs, which offer essential care for individuals living with Alzheimer's, dementia, Parkinson's, and other neurodegenerative disorders, and support for the loved ones who walk beside them.

What began as one woman's determination to help her mother has grown into one of Long Island's most meaningful annual gatherings, sustaining a legacy of care and compassion for countless families.

"When my mom was diagnosed with dementia, I saw firsthand how much joy and stimulation she found in the JCC's art program," recalls Friendship Circle Luncheon



founder **Denise Silverberg**. "But when I asked to enroll her more often, there weren't enough funds to support it. That's when I reached out to my friends for support, and the very first luncheon raised the money to expand these programs. We went from 150 people at that first event to nearly 500 attendees today."

The Friendship Circle Luncheon is more than a fundraiser—it's an opportunity to raise awareness. As co-chair **Gabby Goodman** explains, "When people attend, they're not only moved by the stories they hear, but many go on to connect their own loved ones to the programs." Fellow co-chair **Andrea Stein** adds, "Even in the darkest times, these services offer hope and dignity. Families leave knowing they've done the best for the people they love."

Funds raised have made it possible to expand services to younger populations with early-onset diagnoses, as well as to launch new programs that meet the evolving needs of the community.

At its core, the Friendship Circle Luncheon is about compassion, resilience, and connection. As Silverberg notes, "The JCC will never turn anyone away. This luncheon makes sure every family has somewhere to turn, and that no one feels alone."

SID JACOBSON JCC'S

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HONORING SJCC'S SOCIAL WORKER, JULIE ASSAEL, LMSW

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19 • 9:30 AM
STARTING LINE AT SJCC

FAMILY-FRIENDLY BLOCK PARTY FEATURES

Bouncy House • Food Trucks • Arts & Crafts • DJ • And so much more!



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[SJCC.ORG/5K](https://sjcc.org/5k)



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