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So Much J.O.Y!

by E. G. Merkel

The whimsical artwork of Sara Reizen can be seen in numerous Just Older Youth (J.O.Y.) Center social media posts. It embodies the joy members at the J.O.Y. Center feel each week and the joy the new Board of Directors (President, John Cooper; Vice President, Eva Merkel; Secretary, Averil Kimble; and Treasurer, Dawn Cale) wants to spread to many more of our Upper Keys seasoned citizens.

If you missed it, the J.O.Y. Center moved to two days of programming at its new location at the Plantation Key Community Center (53 High Point Road) last year. From Yoga to ukulele, Mah Jongg to line dancing, crocheting to Five Crowns, there is a lot of variety for everyone. The newest courses include Belly Dancing and Tai Chi. Classes are free, but donations keep J.O.Y. afloat.

With more than 53% of Upper Keys residents aged 50 or older, the need for a place to find enrichment and community is growing. Having a place to learn, socialize, and have fun is crucial for mental, physical, and spiritual health. Having such a location where you have chosen to age in place is a gift. The dream for "the teen center for people over 50" in the Upper Keys is to have a permanent location open seven days a week. The commitment to make this happen is building momentum!

Three major areas of focus for J.O.Y. Center growth are:

1. Increase membership. In 2024, 551 individuals had 4,713 experiences at J.O.Y. Most members, 66%, said they heard about J.O.Y. from a friend. We need more friends!
2. Recruit enthusiastic volunteers. Most of the classes offered have come from someone volunteering to teach. Many hands make light work. We need more hands!
3. Expand community partnerships. More classes and events offered over more days need more space and more funding. Imagine having a county commitment to having a space for our growing population wanting to age in place. We need more partners!

J.O.Y. needs YOU!

Come in for a visit on Tuesdays or Wednesday from 8 am to 5 pm at 53 High Point Road, Plantation Key. Check out the newly revamped website for specific class times at justolderyouthinc.org. Check out their Facebook and Instagram pages.

Might you have a specific skill just waiting for a noble purpose? J.O.Y. has a place for you.

Drop J.O.Y. an email at justolderyouthinc@gmail.com or call 786.883.6548.



Tuesdays

8:30 AM - 4:00 PM

Original Chat Room - Rm A

Belly Dancing for Seniors - Rm B

Gentle Flow Yoga - Rm B

Stretch & Stress Relief - Rm B

Crocheting Rm A

Tai Chi Quan Rm B

Book Club (held once per month)

Tech Support - Rm A

Original Chat Room - Rm A





Wednesdays

8:30 AM - 4:00 PM

Original Chat Room - Rm A

Tech Savvy

Gentle Flow Yoga - Rm B

Line Dancing - Rm B & ZOOM

Mah Jongg - Rm A

Ukulele Beginners - Rm B

Ukulele JOY - Rm B

Tech Support

5 Crowns - Rm A

Original Chat Room