



# How the JCC Helped Save My Life.



With over 9,000 training sessions every year, our tireless JCC trainers are on the frontlines helping make our community stronger and healthier.

For the members who walk through the doors of our fitness center with a purpose of discovering who they want to be, they learn quickly that our family of trainers is much more than someone who leads you through a series of workouts. They know your name, they know your family, they know your history; they know you!

For Louis “Lou” Berens, the role the JCC played in his life may have literally helped save his life.

Diagnosed with pre-diabetes at the age of 50, before a full diabetes diagnosis, Lou, who has a family history of the disease, was able to manage his in large part with medication and diet. He was active, playing golf, doing yard work and taking walks during lunch at work. He was existing, living with a disease that affects more than 29 million people in the United States. “Up until the time I retired in 2014, I was just maintaining the status quo; I wasn’t getting any better or any worse.”

With the extra free time he had after retiring, Lou joined the Mandell JCC and started training with Mike Logan; a combination of cardio and weight machines. Mike worked with Lou to build a program that helped tackle his disease. “Mike really listened to me and understood what my body needed. I built my endurance up to where I was working out 5 days a week.”

“For Lou, a little encouragement went a long way,” says Mike Logan. “If he saw progress, he was ready for more.” In 2017, Louis expanded his workouts to include Pilates

Reformer classes and the popular Les Mills BodyPump. The following year, for convenience, Louis became a member at the Mandell JCC Fitness Center at Saint Francis, where he added a spin class, mat Pilates and yoga to his routine. His confidence in trying new programs and exercises made

all the difference in his health. “At my last checkup, my doctor told me I have fallen below the A1C diabetes threshold of 6.4. I owe so much of this to my workouts at the J. That moment I started working with Mike changed everything for me. He got me on a path that helped save my life.”

It’s a reality that is not lost on Mike, “Someone like Lou makes me feel like my job is so much more than just a way to earn a living. To have the opportunity to help someone improve their life and get healthier is pretty special. And I made a friend along the way.”

For that friendship to form, Lou needed to be a member at the J. “My wife and I had a great initial experience at the JCC. We had gone to a couple of the area gyms to get an idea about what was out there. When we first went to the J, we were blown away. We were greeted so warmly at the front desk and were given a tour of the building. As we walked around and encountered other staff and members, we just had this feeling that this

was a special community. We felt so welcome, so we joined immediately. And, it’s been life-changing.”

For more information about the J’s personal training or to schedule an appointment, contact Personal Training Director Kathy Armstrong-Crouch, 860.231.6337 or [kcrouch@mandelljcc.org](mailto:kcrouch@mandelljcc.org). Or stop by the Member Services Center.



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