

## VALUED VOLUNTEERS

Joyce Graff and Betty Lew are the dynamic duo behind the Brookline Senior Center's weekly quilting group, the Brookline Bees.

Before volunteering at the Brookline Center, Joyce spent 50 years advocating for patients and families with rare diseases, including founding the non-profit VHL Alliance (Von Hippel-Lindau disease). Through her childhood and her advocacy career, quilting was always her refuge. "I've been doing it since I was a kid. Quilting nourishes me and lights me up," she says. When the group's former leader stepped down, Joyce was invited to take the helm.

After retiring from her career as an administrative assistant, Betty was looking for opportunities to fill her time. She hadn't sewn in more than 25 years, but when she saw the Brookline Bees were making hot pads, she decided to give it a try. "Everyone was so welcoming, friendly, and helpful. I knew after the first class that I would be continuing," she recalls.

Together, Joyce and Betty make a great team. "Whatever Joyce needs me to do, I will. She is very patient and I have learned so much from her," says Betty. Joyce returns the compliment, "What I love about Betty is that she's a very good coach and my organizer-in-chief!" Along with expert quilter Jude Bennett, they lead a group that is social, educational, and productive. Each year, the Brookline Bees raffle off a quilt made by all participants, and Joyce also leads popular mending workshops.

When the pandemic hit in 2020, the Bees quickly moved their sessions to Zoom. "People really needed the socialization at that time," says Joyce. The recorded sessions are still available online through Brookline Senior Center YouTube channel as well as the Brookline Interactive Group for anyone who wants to learn.

In addition to their volunteer work at the Brookline Senior Center, Joyce has served as Rotary Club District Governor, while Betty volunteers at her church and crochets blankets for refugees and children in foster care.

If you have a skill to share and would like to be one of our valued volunteers, please reach out to Valerie Graf, Volunteer Coordinator at 617-730-2743 or [vgraf@brooklinema.gov](mailto:vgraf@brooklinema.gov) and learn about volunteer opportunities at the Brookline Senior Center.



**Betty Lew and Joyce Graff**

### SHOP PROGRAM (STUDENTS HELPING OLDER PEOPLE)



A collaboration between the Brookline Senior Center (BSC) and Brookline High School (BHS), the SHOP program has been a community service program at BHS for many years. High school student volunteers are matched with seniors to do their grocery shopping for the school year. In turn, seniors help the students fulfill their community service requirements. Frequently, these become meaningful multigenerational relationships. Some students have shopped for the same person throughout high school and consider their senior an important part of their life. Brookline High School will be recruiting students for the new school year to grocery shop for seniors starting this month. If you are a senior who would like to have a student shop for you, contact Valerie, Volunteer Coordinator, at 617-730-2743 or [vgraf@brooklinema.gov](mailto:vgraf@brooklinema.gov)