JCC of Indianapolis – Space is No Deterrent for a Great Pilates Program

The JCC Indy runs top of the line programs for the community at large – and one of their most popular is the Pilates group and personal training programs offered in a combined 920 square feet. The JCC Indy’s Pilates Director, Cherri Jaffee shares how they were able to create such a strong program in such little space.

OSF: How long has the JCC been offering Pilates?
JAFFEE: 6 years, since May of 2002.

OSF: Did you start with Mat Pilates or Reformer?
JAFFEE: We started both mat and reformer classes at the same time. We drew on our mat participants to seek out our initial reformer clients and held many open houses, brought Pilates equipment to the “gym” during the most active usage times. When we had the reformer demos on the fitness floor, we had instructors demonstrating if there was no one that wanted to try it, but usually there were 3 or 4 waiting to try.

OSF: How big are your Pilates studios?
JAFFEE: Our two Pilates studios are 570 sq ft and 350 sq ft. These are where we train with the reformers. The mat classes are held in our large aerobics studio and can accommodate up to 30 participants.

OSF: How do you store your equipment to keep it out of the way, secure and in good condition?
JAFFEE: We store our equipment for the mat classes in the aerobics studio. The smaller props are locked up in cabinets. In the small reformer studios, every space counts. We have a rolling cart to store balls, cleaners, weights, bands and foam cushions sitting in a corner of the room. We have a small cabinet for clients to set their purses on with storage underneath for shoes. We have wall hooks for their coats that also store additional springs for the machine. One small desk stores the paper work, phone and computer. Mats are stored along the wall, but are not rolled. A decorative screen in the corner hides the swiss balls and other larger props. A tiny corner table houses the cd player as well as a small lamp.

OSF: What lessons learned can you share for other non-profits that are looking to start or expand on a Pilates Program?
JAFFEE: Make sure your instructors’ certifications are extensive and that there is enough time to prepare your interns for getting to know your method of teaching. Also, dedicate a quiet space for your reformer studio and have an adjacent area for them to wait before lessons and for scheduling their next lesson.

OSher Marin JCC

The Osher Marin JCC is well known for their cutting edge swim programs. As a matter of fact, the JCC has one of the most popular swim programs in the area! Using Red Cross standards, the swim program recently updated protocols and refined swim levels to provide a better assessment of students and help the instructors stay on the same page when working with students. Instructor monthly meetings are critical says Katrina Ramser, a swim instructor at the JCC. “We meet monthly as a staff to go over different topics, share ideas and develop practice swim lessons.” This attention to detail and sharing of information and ideas has added to the huge success of their program. “We used to have five swim lesson levels, but now we have four levels with the biggest gap between levels two and three. We are focusing more on gliding in the earlier levels and streamlining in level four.” OSF