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JCC of Central New Jersey Board of Directors approves Saturday opening.

On May 4, the JCC of Central NJ Board of Directors approved a change to the Shabbat policy allowing for the opening of the JCC on Saturdays. This policy change is meant to enhance the JCC's relevance to current and prospective members and allow them to participate in the social and recreational services the JCC provides.

This policy change resulted from an extensive, collaborative process by a Shabbat Task force who worked from November 2008 to present, exploring the relevancy of the policy.

The new hours will take effect beginning June 20, 2009 and will enable the JCC to be a place where Jewish individuals and families can choose to enjoy their Saturdays together with other Jewish individuals and families as they participate in the social and recreational services the JCC provides.

Although the JCC will be open on Saturdays, it is not considered business as usual. Members and their guests can enjoy the indoor pool, the outdoor pool (through Labor Day), the Fitness Center, gym and other common areas for informal gathering, individual choice activities and general unstructured utilization. However, there will be no league practice, competitive games or children's birthday parties. Further, the Weinberg Pavilion will not be available for rental for personal celebrations. The business office and Café food service will be closed, and no financial transactions will be made. Individual choice activities, such as personal training, massage, private pool lessons, exercise classes and babysitting will all be available on a pre-paid or post-billed basis.

The decision, which is consistent with the majority of other JCCs across the country, reinforces the JCC's mission to be a "home away from home" for the Jewish community, providing a welcoming gathering place where individuals and families can choose to enjoy recreation and relaxation with friends and family. The new Saturday policy will help to build and reinforce Jewish connections in a uniquely Jewish environment.

Because the JCC is a pluralistic agency with membership comprised of affiliated Jews from all denominations, Jews who are unaffiliated or unengaged as well as others in the community who are not Jewish, the new Saturday hours will ensure that JCC usage is not being limited and will give them an additional day to frequent the JCC if they choose.

There will be no changes regarding the Jewish holiday opening/closing policy nor will there be changes in the Kashruth policy and standards.

For more information, contact Barak Hermann, Executive Director, at (908) 889-8800 ext. 202 or bhermann@jccnj.org, Mindy Goldberger, President at (908) or mglj@verizon.net or Marcia Wasser, Shabbat Task Force Chairperson at ...

The JCC of Central New Jersey is located at 1391 Martine Avenue in Scotch Plains. The JCC of Central New Jersey is a constituent agency of the United Way and the Jewish Federation of Central New Jersey. Financial assistance is available for membership and various programs.

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