

# Q: How do Northeast Ohio residents 50+ stay mentally sharp? A: Mind Challenge trivia

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What is the color of Mickey Mouse's shoes?

Tammy Simmons knows.

As assistant director of Barberton's Parks and Recreation Department, Simmons provided the correct answer during a tournament earlier this year pitting teams of adults ages 50-plus in a regional trivia contest.

Hundreds of individuals participated, and organizers of the 2024 event coming up in April hope that number will swell above 700.

## Trivia competition grows in popularity

The [Mind Challenge for the New Majority](#) was founded in 2019 by Reminderville resident Art Greenberg and Orange resident Phil Levine, and teams are beginning to [form now](#) at community senior centers throughout Northeast Ohio.

**“Nobody gets mad; nobody holds a grudge.”**

**TAMMY SIMMONS**

The challenge features teams of four to six competitors working together to answer trivia questions on a broad range of subjects. Points are awarded for correct answers, and the team with the most points wins to play another day.

"The beauty of this is that it's a team trivia concept," Levine said in a recent phone interview. "We have the seniors use their minds and enhance their socialization."

## 'A lot of fun and fellowship'

Last year was Barberton's first in the competition, and Simmons said getting involved was easy. Although the Barberton team didn't win, they were competitive, she said. More importantly, everyone who participated enjoyed it.

"It's just a lot of fun and fellowship," she said. "Nobody gets mad; nobody holds a grudge."



Participants in the 2023 Mind Challenge for the New Majority prepare their answers at the Shaker Heights regional. *Photo Courtesy The Mind Challenge*

Team members from last year talk about it at the city's Active Adult Center, and the buzz could lead to creation of a second Barberton team, she said.

In January, she plans to begin practicing for the 2024 Mind Challenge tournament.

"We've already got dates up to practice," she said.

## **Hundreds participate throughout Northeast Ohio in Mind Challenge**

Greenberg said the competition has grown in participation and popularity since its inception in 2019. That year, the Mind Challenge featured 16 teams.

"That was pretty amazing (after) just coming up with an idea," he said.

More than 100 teams could register for the competition in 2024. The teams are formed at senior centers throughout Northeast Ohio, with the tournament kicking off with practice sessions before the eliminations begin.

Barberton competed with a team from Akron and four teams from Stow in 2023.

In 2024, Barberton's Active Adult Center will host the Summit Region contest, with teams from Brunswick, Medina and Wadsworth joining the region.

## **Green planning to field a team this year**

This year, Green is expected to also join the Summit Region and field at least one team.

Kim Goodhart, Green Parks and Recreation Program special events coordinator, said she spoke with co-founder Levine and liked the Mind Challenge concept.

"I thought it sounded interesting and something we can get our seniors into," said Goodhart.



Phil Levine, left, and Art Greenberg launched the Mind Challenge trivial competition for teams of older adults to compete.  
*Submitted Photo*

She brought the idea up at a recent lunch bunch meeting and said nine individuals expressed interest in participating. She's going to pitch it again and plans to form a team or teams in January.

"We will reach out to the people who expressed an interest," Goodhart said. "It's no cost to the city. It's a no-brainer."

No Summit Region team has won the Mind Challenge yet, but participants tend to enjoy the competition win or lose, Greenberg and Levine said.

"It's a fun activity," Levine said. "If it wasn't fun, they wouldn't play."

## **Older residents derive benefits from trivia, studies show**

Studies have shown that trivia can play a positive role in senior cognition and memory. Competitions like the Mind Challenge for the New Majority — trademarked by its founders — also promote social engagement among seniors and help reduce stress.

Levine said that teams are encouraged to register as early as possible to receive a Mind Challenge T-shirt, ordered on March 15. The winning team, which was Broadview Heights this year, receives a \$2,500 check for its senior center.

Win or lose, the competition is a fun event for participants, said Simmons.

"It was absolutely a blast," she said.

## **Test your knowledge: Here are few sample questions from Mind Challenge**

Here are some sample questions, with answers:

### **• U.S. Geography**

Q: In what state will you find seven of the 10 largest parks in the United States?

A: Alaska

### **• '60s Pop Culture**

Q: Name the 1960s breakfast cereal that had in its commercial the phrase, "Hey Mikey, he likes it!"

A: Life Cereal

### **• U.S. Presidents**

Q: Who was the U.S. President in office at the start of Prohibition?

A: Woodrow Wilson

### **• Popular culture**

Q: What is the color of Mickey Mouse's shoes?

A: Yellow