

'Women Helping Women'

Nevada Public Radio | By [Anne Davis](#)

Published May 4, 2023 at 10:00 AM PDT



Illustration: Ryan Vellinga / Photo: Unsplash

The Desert Newcomers Club is part social circle, part lifeline in a lonely world

The desert gets a bad rap for being an inhospitable place. One group of ladies is challenging that perception, however: the Desert Newcomers Club, a collection of nearly 300 Southern Nevadan women whose aim is to offer hospitality to the valley's transplants. Laura Annese, who's been the nonprofit's president since 2022, sat down with *Desert Companion* to talk about the club's purpose, how it's providing a sense of community for local women, and her plans to reach more new members.

What is the Desert Newcomers Club?

We welcome women to the valley, whether they're new or have lived here for many

and have some activities together. You know, Las Vegas is a very hard place to meet people and to form friendships, because it's so transient.

What do you do together?

Our (\$30 per year) membership provides access to all our activities, luncheons, and meetings ... We currently have over 60 activities a month ... (We offer) board games and card games. We also have ways to develop new skills like knitting or sewing. The ladies are working on quilts to give to charities ... I wanted to learn knitting, so I joined the club, and there are some knitters, and they teach you how to knit or crochet. And while you're doing that, you have fun and you make new friends ... We have three different book clubs, we have Toast on the Town, where some of the ladies like to go out for dinner once a month, and we have much, much more!

Sponsor Message

How did you get involved with the club?

Well, I grew up in New York, and I moved here when I was 56. So, I was still young enough to work ... And while I was still working, I found an ad in the paper — the *Review-Journal* used to put out a calendar every week ... and it would say what's going on in the community. And I saw the Desert Newcomers welcome coffee. It was in the morning at 9:30, and of course I'm working so I can't do it, but I clipped it out and I saved it. And when I retired, my sister moved here and she left all her friends behind. So, I said, "Come on, I have this little ad, we're going to go and see Desert Newcomers and what it's about." So, she and I went in April 2019 ... Everybody was so friendly and welcoming that we signed up, and automatically we had over 200 friends.

Since you're the president, members must share with you how the club has impacted them. What have they said?

The impact is huge. You know, as you get older, it's harder to make friends. When you're young and your children are young, you have friends at work, you have friends in their schools, you have your neighbors, etcetera. But as you get older, your friends dwindle, and you may move to be near your children, but you don't know anybody there. This (club) really helps members' mental and physical well-being. By sharing a meal at our luncheon, by going to an activity, by joining the widow social group, or going to Toast on

the Town and having dinner — sometimes they eat alone every night. So, they get out, they can share a meal with somebody ... It helps their mental and physical outlook.

How did the pandemic affect the work that you do, as a social club?

We couldn't get together as a group because of COVID ... You're home day-to-day, and you call your friends up on the phone, and that was about it. But one of the ladies — she was so inventive, she figured out how to play Mahjong on the phone. So (club members) played Mahjong every day by phone. I was asked to join that later on, and after a couple of months of them doing that, I have to tell you that I looked forward to it every week.

What are your plans for the Desert Newcomers Club, as you move into the second year of your tenure as president?

Well, what I've been working towards — and what I hope the future holds — is we reach more women. I would like to get more members than we even had last year, because the more women we reach, the more lives we touch, and the better their lives are ... We don't want to be the best-kept secret in Las Vegas!

To learn more about the Desert Newcomer's Club, visit desertnewcomersclub.org.

Tags

[Desert Companion](#)

[Q&A](#)

[Community](#)



Anne Davis

[See stories by Anne Davis](#)

0 Comments

 Login ▾

Start the discussion...

LOG IN WITH

OR SIGN UP WITH DISQUS 

Name



Share

Best Newest Oldest

Be the first to comment.

[Subscribe](#)

[Privacy](#)

[Do Not Sell My Data](#)

Stay Connected

© All Rights Reserved 2023 | [Privacy Policy](#)

[Home](#)

[How to Reach Us](#)

[About](#)

KNPR

KNPR's State of Nevada

Support Your Station

KNPR

KNPR's State of Nevada