

Remarks on the 40th Anniversary Celebration of the Options Program/ Spring BBQ

By Michele Deitch

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My name is Michele Deitch, and I am Dr. Irene Deitch's daughter. While I regret I could not be with you in person today, I am so pleased to have the opportunity to share a few remarks on this special and fun occasion for the Options Program.

My mother Irene founded the Options Program more than 40 years ago, and it would be hard to overstate how important this program was for her. She was always talking about it at home—how much she loved the students in the program; what a great opportunity that Options provided these students; and the importance of lifelong learning. For my mom, age was just a number, and it had nothing to do with slowing down or being complacent. She wanted to see mature students take intellectual risks and pursue their dreams. She also knew that the best way for people to stay healthy in their golden years is for them to stay intellectually engaged, to be part of a dynamic community, and to form meaningful relationships.

The impact that participating in the Options program had on these students was remarkable. So many people over the years have told me that the program was transformative for them and that their spirits and passions were revived through the program. Those who taught in the Options program also found their students to be the most motivated students they ever had. And I hope that the undergraduate nursing students who are doing service work with Options students similarly find this work to be meaningful and important. The fact that so many of you came out today to celebrate this collaboration speaks volumes about the impact of the program.

While my mother sadly passed away two years ago this month, it means so much to us to see her legacy continue through the Options program. I know she would have loved to be here with you today, excitedly talking with each of you, giving everyone her trademark hugs and kisses, and seeing all that you've accomplished. Know that she is here in spirit, and that she joins me in congratulating the Options program on celebrating its 40th anniversary and wishing it long life and a continuation of its meaningful mission.

Thank you.