



# BOLLI Banner

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Brandeis

## A LIFETIME IN NINE WEEKS

by *Bunny S. Duhl*



Last semester, a lucky group of BOLLI members had an opportunity to participate in the delightful Sages and Seekers program, led by BOLLI's Margie Nesson. The original program concept was developed five years ago by Natick resident Elly Katz as a program for high school students and senior citizens to combat ageism. Our Sages and Seekers experience paired 14 female Brandeis undergrads (Seekers) with 12 female and two male BOLLI members (Sages) in a successful attempt to bridge the great age divide and melt the stereotypes that each age group had held about the other.



Many of these Brandeis participants undertook this experience as part of their anthropology of aging class taught by Brandeis Anthropology Professor Sarah Lamb.

At the outset the Sages and the Seekers were strangers to one another, so there were no preconceptions about parents and heritage. "Getting to know you" sessions occupied our first few weeks. Then each Sage was chosen by a Seeker, with whom she spent the remaining seven weeks, sharing life stories. I found that each hour-and-a-half session flew by. I wanted to know so much more about my delightful and thoughtful Sophomore Seeker, and I wanted to share so much more with her about my own life. Suddenly, we were at the last session. Each Seeker read to the group and guests an amazing two-page tribute of what she'd

learned from and about her Sage. Following the reading, each Seeker gave her Sage a bound copy of her written tribute—and a rose. Imagine my surprise—and how touched I was—upon hearing that my Seeker had chosen to major in psychology based on what she'd heard from me about my life and work as a psychologist. We Sages had a brief opportunity to respond publicly to our Seekers' tributes. Deeply felt mutual accolades filled the room with a sense of bittersweet joy



photo by Richard Glantz

*BOLLI Sages and Brandeis Seekers*

as this wonderful heart-filling experience drew to a close. Indeed a bridge had been built, cemented with warm friendships between individuals of two generations, no longer strangers to each other.