

Dec 18, 2025



Bob Spencer, assistant director of the JOY Center, sang "Stand By Me" with the JOY ukelele group.

JILL Z. MA, SPBIS/Contributed

KEY LARGO — Seniors of all shapes and sizes shimmied, shook, danced, played ukuleles, stretched and balanced, did tai chi and yoga, and even hula hoop-ed Dec. 3 at the Murray E. Nelson Government and Cultural Center in Key Largo.

The JOY Center, which originated in 2017 and stands for Just Older Youth, offers classes for seniors twice a week on Tuesdays and Wednesdays as well as online via Zoom, but this was the not-for-profit's first showcase. While geared toward seniors, any adult is welcome to participate in JOY Center programs.

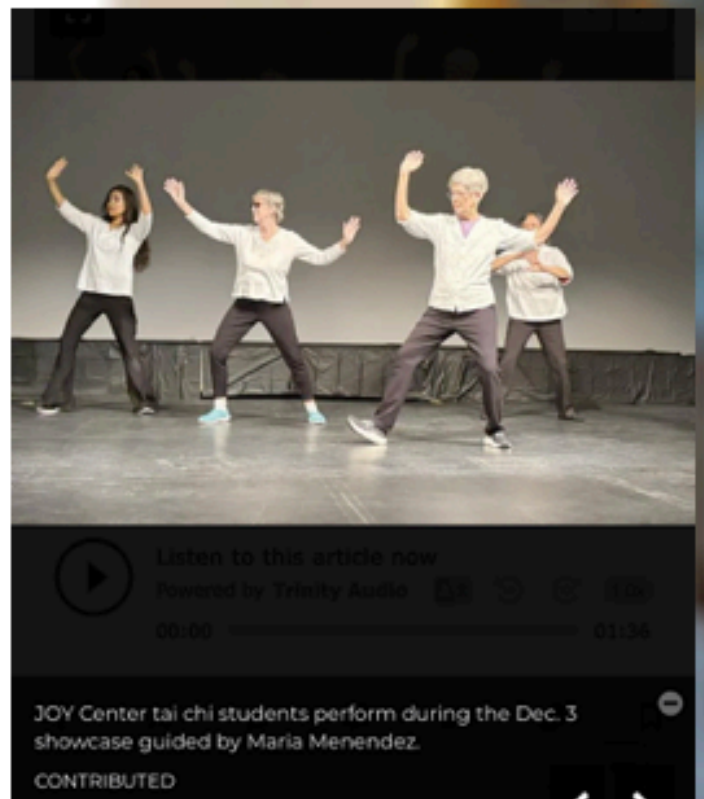
The two-hour variety show was called "Captains of the Cultural Ports of Call" because it offered international dance such as belly dancing and Greek Zorba, along with line dancing, as well as China's tai chi and India's yoga.

Families and friends of JOY participants also were entertained by JOY Assistant Director Bob Spencer, who sang a rousing rendition of "Stand By Me" accompanied by a ukelele band led by Mike Ehlers.

JOY classes are free but donations are requested to help support program costs.

In addition to classes, JOY offers a book club, card games and mahjongg. Some pop-up classes and speaker presentations arise from time to time as additional opportunities to learn something new and make new friends.

The JOY Center operates in partnership with Monroe County, which donates space and helps with coordination. JOY's website is justolderyouthinc.org, where participants can explore the schedule, register for classes and sign the required participation waiver.



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JOY Center tai chi students perform during the Dec. 3 showcase guided by Maria Menendez.

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