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# Nikki Nilon gave with hands, heart

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Long-time advocate for Girls Inc., addiction recovery and homelessness dies.

by: [Amanda Morales](#) | Staff Writer

The helping hands of Natalie “Nikki” Nilon were always painted with bright red nail polish.

On Sunday mornings, she used those hands for shopping, cooking and serving meals to the homeless. She

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“The interesting thing about her is that Nikki threw herself into the hands-on stuff,” said Rabbi Geoff Hunting, of Temple Sinai, where Nilon was a member.

Nilon, of Sarasota, died June 2. She was 80.



and assisted many through addiction recovery.

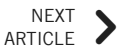


File photo. Jim and Nikki Nilon

The Sunday mornings the Nilons spent helping the homeless were sacred to the couple.

“They weren’t faceless people that she handed a cup of soup to or a sandwich,” Huntting said. “She knew who the people were and called them by their first name.”

Girls Inc. Executive Director Angie Stringer remembers Nilon’s passion for helping the girls the organization serves.



“It was so important to her to work with the girls when they were younger,” Stringer said. “(She believed) that helping them now would prevent them from entering into abusive relationships.”

Stringer recalls Nilon coordinating tea parties for the girls to meet women in the community who were role models.

“In the time that I’ve known her, she brought so many people into Girls Inc.,” Stringer said. “It was really her mission to introduce as many people in the community to the organization.”

Girls Inc. board member and longtime friend Sherry Watts heard Nilon speak about how strongly she believed in the organization at a tea party in January.

“She was so passionate about girls and women as we saw in NIKKI.”

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Nilon’s efforts were recognized in 2001, when she was honored with the Visionary award by Girls Inc. She also organized an annual luncheon for previous winners and honorees for the “She Knows Where She’s



“She would go from working with a homeless family to a board meeting to a fundraiser,” Stringer said. “She was someone who could relate to everybody and have a passion for everything she was involved in.”

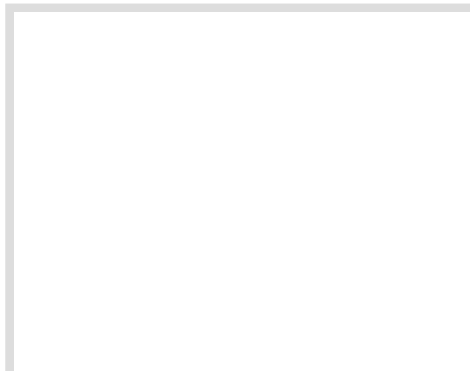
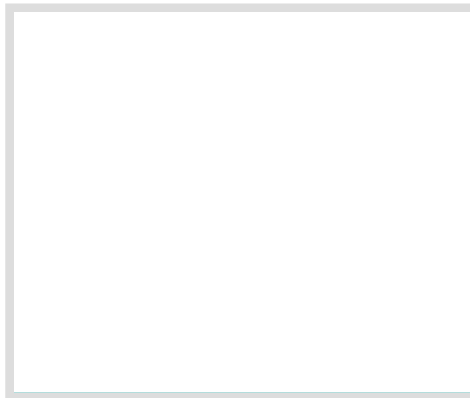
Nilon was preceded in death by her daughter, Lauren Pahos, and parents, Ruth and Isadore Baumgart. She is survived by her husband, the Rev. James Nilon; brother Irving Baumgart; daughter Robin Rash; son-in-law Steven Pahos; stepdaughters Lisa Redding and Susan Nilon; grandchildren Shelby Rash, Maggie Pahos, Lainie Pahos, Will Pahos, Tara Redding, Sean Redding, and Quinn Nilon; nephew Bruce Baumgart; and cousin, Jean Zylber.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Girls Inc. or Throne of Grace Inc. Funeral services will take place at 11 a.m. Thursday, June 9, at Temple Sinai, 4631 S. Lockwood Ridge Road.

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