

THE ROSE

Annual Donor Newsletter



MAINTAINING MEANINGFUL FRIENDSHIPS WITH A VULNERABLE POPULATION, THE ELDERLY, DURING A PANDEMIC



Visiting Volunteer, Ruth Gill and Forever Friend, Eleanor Bertolli visiting by phone.

The pandemic presented a challenge to continue friendships this past year when in-home visits were prohibited. Our volunteers rose to that challenge.

Visiting Volunteer, Ruth Gill was paired with Forever Friend, Eleanor Bertolli three years ago. During the pandemic, Ruth has found a way to continue her friendship with Eleanor without being able to visit her in the nursing home.

Ruth keeps in touch by phone with Eleanor about every 2 weeks and they chat for about an hour each time. The visits allow Eleanor to reminisce about her life and share those stories with a

friend. She recounts stories of her happy marriage to her husband Ralph who died 23 years ago. She once traveled alone across the country by train as a young woman to visit him at his army training camp before he was deployed to Europe in WW2.

At 100 years old, Eleanor has an excellent memory and she also keeps up on current events while isolated from outside visitors in the nursing home. Eleanor desperately misses the frequent visits from her friends before the pandemic, and she is looking forward to the day when everyone has been vaccinated and can get together again for coffee, cake, and company!

While Ruth is able to relieve some of Eleanor’s loneliness with their phone visits, Ruth herself gets a great deal of enjoyment from spending time with Eleanor. Ruth shared, “it’s a real privilege to be friends with someone who has witnessed all the changes of the last hundred years. I’m thankful to Little Brothers for bringing us together.”

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

How is it possible to celebrate a birthday in the middle of a pandemic? With a little ingenuity! Little Brothers - Friends of the Elderly is committed to make each birthday a personal celebration on our elderly Forever Friend’s special day.

Each elderly Forever Friend receives a take out lunch of their choice, a decorated cupcake, a fresh carnation, a personal birthday card and gift, and a physically distanced birthday visit.



Forever Friend Gladys Brownlee

Celebrations have included a Hawaiian Luau in a parking lot and window visits at nursing homes. We’ve decorated sidewalks with chalk art and have sent out parades of cars decorated with balloons and banners.

While the average age of our Forever Friends is 78 years young, we celebrated with two centenarians who turned 100 and 104.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

David Geisler, President
 Steve Sabatini, Vice President
 Cheryl O’Brien, Treasurer
 Trisia Narhi, Secretary

Theresa (Pleshe) Cherubini
 Kyla Cole
 Rebecca Freund
 Mitch Horton

Carrie Massie
 Randy Simonsen
 Syd Faassen
 Jeff Veum

A WORD FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friend,

Isolation caused by the pandemic can take a toll on our physical and mental well-being. It is also a reminder that isolation is not new to the elderly we serve. They know all too well how difficult it is to be alone without the company of family and friends.

Thanks to you, we have worked hard this past year to let our elders know they are not forgotten! We just have to do it in creative ways to keep them safe. Instead of in-home, face to face visits, we are making hundreds of phone calls, sending "friendship mail," and holding some very exciting virtual activities, all while still delivering firewood, monthly food bags, getting our elderly friends to doctor appointments, and celebrating the holidays and special occasions.

Your support makes it all possible, and we are so grateful! We have been moved by our donors who believe in our mission even when you may have challenges of your own! **We rely on you, and our elderly community relies on you. Thank you for helping us relieve loneliness and keep our elderly friends safe.**

Sincerely,

Cathy Kass-Aten
Executive Director



CELEBRATING THE HOLIDAYS WITH OUR ELDERLY FRIENDS

We were determined to celebrate the holidays with our elderly friends so they wouldn't be alone. It was decided the safest way to celebrate was to provide meal delivery to all of our elderly friends. Though the elders missed

the comradery of our congregate meal sites, they were understanding. We prepared for months and consulted with the health department to ensure safe practices.



Our motto, **"where service to the elderly begins by being a friend"**, reminds us that the most important gift we bring when we knock on the door is the gift of friendship. When we deliver their holiday meal, we always include a fresh flower and a small token gift of sweet treats. With every service we provide and with every gesture that we do, we do it in the spirit of friendship.

We served a record number of meals this year: 1100 meals on Thanksgiving and 1000 on Christmas.

"To Little Brothers Friends of the Elderly, I would like to thank you so much for the great Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners! It's so very, very good. And also thank you for all the help you give me. I'm so happy to have wonderful friends just like you guys. I thank again. Well that's about it for this year 2020! And happy new year 2021."

God bless, Maria



WAYS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

MAKE A MONTHLY COMMITMENT

Monthly donations help to sustain our everyday work to mobilize 1,400 volunteers who serve 1,300 elderly people through our seven core programs.

Your commitment ensures the elderly people we serve in five counties receive services to keep them engaged in their community, prevent loneliness, and provide them with opportunities to maintain their independence.

Monthly giving can be automated online at houghton.littlebrothers.org/donate with your credit card, and we accept checks payable to Little Brothers - Friends of the Elderly. To sign up to be a Monthly Champion, please call Carol, Development Director at 906-482-6944 or email carol.korpela@littlebrothers.org

\$10 purchases gifts for special occasions, such as International Day of Older Persons.



\$20 allows us to celebrate the birthdays of our elderly Forever Friends with a meal, gift, flower, and visit.



\$30 provides our elderly friends with a personalized bag of non-perishable pantry staples.



\$50 allows us to recruit, screen, train, and mobilize volunteers in service to the elderly.



\$100 sponsors an elderly Forever Friend, providing them with friendship, services, and support for critical needs.



LEGACY TILES

Our **Wall of Honor** is a lasting memorial of permanently placed tiles adorned with messages of love and remembrance in both our main entrance and program hall. You can honor or memorialize a loved one, or celebrate a special occasion with the purchase of a **LEGACY TILE**.

Tiles are \$150 and tax deductible.

Contact Carol Korpela, Development Director, at 906-482-6944 or email carol.korpela@littlebrothers.org to purchase a tile.



SECURE THE FUTURE OF THE CHAPTER THROUGH THE LITTLE BROTHERS - FRIENDS OF THE ELDERLY FOUNDATION

Help the Little Brothers Foundation support the Chapter with their commitment of service and friendship to elderly friends beyond our lifetime. You can help us **Secure the Future** by remembering Little Brothers in your Estate Plan.

Please consider the best way to share with Little Brothers and make the most of your charitable dollars. This ensures that we will be here to love and serve elderly people who are alone and in need.

Here are some ways that you can help if you are considering a planned gift:

- Gifts through your will or trust
- Gifts of Property
- Life Insurance Gifts
- Retirement Plans
- Charitable Gift Annuities
- IRS Required Minimum Distributions (RMD)

Endowment Funds

- * John and Cookie Johnson Needs Endowed Fund – supports special needs of our “Forever Friends”
- * Wood Program Endowed Fund – supports the Firewood Program
- * Create a new Endowed Fund

Please contact Michael Aten at 906-370-2215 or email him at mike.aten@littlebrothers.org if you would like more information.

Phone: 906-482-6944

Fax: 906-482-6106

Email: michigan@littlebrothers.org

Website: houghton.littlebrothers.org

Little Brothers - Friends of the Elderly

527 Hancock Street

Hancock, MI 49930

Address Service Requested

SPRING 2021

THE ROSE

Annual Donor Newsletter

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit #61
Hancock, MI
49930

SPREADING JOY WITH PHYSICALLY DISTANCED SPECIAL OCCASION VISITS

Our annual Valentine's Day party was one of the last in-person events we hosted in 2020 before the Covid-19 pandemic shut down group gatherings. Typically, these celebrations would include a dinner party with over 100 people (elders and volunteers) in attendance. There would be live musical entertainment, activities, and each elder would go home with leftovers, a flower, and a party favor.

Another occasion we would always celebrate was *International Day of Older Persons*. For this occasion, we would mobilize volunteers to deliver a special occasion gift and a flower with an in-home visit to all of our elderly Forever Friends across five counties.

During the pandemic, we knew we had to ease the loneliness among our elderly Forever Friends safely. This is when we decided we should do more Special Occasion Visits similar to International Day of Older Persons. We found any reason to celebrate and bring cheer to the lonely elderly. For example, we honored National Friendship Week with dessert, a flower, and a physically distanced visit. For Healthy Aging Month, we distributed personalized Little Brothers - Friends of the Elderly facemasks along with hand sanitizer.

With the success of these additional Special Occasion Visits, we decided to step it up for Valentine's Day, and this year we delivered a meal. The meal included a local favorite, a fresh pasta, with coleslaw, chocolate milk, heart-shaped cookies, and Valentine's candy. Volunteers decorated the delivery bags, wrote cards, and delivered the meals. If our elderly Forever Friends did not want a meal, they received a special gift instead.

We plan to do more Special Occasion Visits and other unique activities until we can gather in large groups once again.