

# VOLUNTEER MANUAL



# LBFE

LITTLE BROTHERS

FRIENDS OF  
THE ELDERLY

UPPER MICHIGAN



"Where Service to the Elderly begins by being a Friend"

*Serving the Elderly Since 1982*

Heartfelt   
**THANKS**  
**TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!**

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## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Little Brothers – Friends of the Elderly (LBFE) is a national network of non-profit, volunteer-based organizations committed to relieving isolation and loneliness among the elderly. We offer to people of good will the opportunity to join the elderly in friendship and celebration of life.

# PHILOSOPHY

Our mission is to relieve isolation and loneliness among the elderly, promote independent living, renew their life's purpose, and create connection to community. We provide in-home visits, medical transportation, food assistance, enriching activities, firewood, and invite them to holiday dinner parties.

Our motto “**flowers before bread**” expresses our belief that the spirit must be nourished as well as the body. Elderly people should be treated with love, dignity, and respect.



# WHO WE SERVE

Little Brothers - Friends of the Elderly provides programs and services for people 60 years of age and older in Baraga, Houghton, Keweenaw, Marquette, and Ontonagon Counties who are aging without social support. Loneliness and isolation can arise from a variety of reasons, including: outliving family and friends, family moving away or physical limitations.



As elderly friends are referred to our agency, we assess their needs and determine how we can help. As elderly people experience life-changing events such as the loss of their driver's license, a health crisis, or death of a family member, they may require more services from Little Brothers. If significant need for friendship and services is identified, the elderly may become a "Forever Friend".

## **FOREVER FRIENDS**

Forever Friends are elderly people who have expressed they need and want friendship and socialization. In addition to regular in-home visits, we assist them with their needs to keep them independent and happy. When we add someone to our program we make a commitment to be their friend for the remainder of their life, therefore they become our *forever friend*.

# YOUR ROLE AS A VOLUNTEER

Your role as a volunteer is to provide friendship! You can be a friend by:

- ♦ Creating a lasting friendship with an elder as a visiting volunteer.
- ♦ Celebrating Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter with our elders.
- ♦ Providing transportation to medical appointments and parties.
- ♦ Delivering food bags or special occasion gifts.
- ♦ Assisting the elders during our many parties and activities.
- ♦ Processing or delivering firewood.

**Your role is to be a FRIEND - not a social worker, financial planner, doctor, or family member.** We ask that you avoid providing professional services even if you are qualified. This maintains a level of friendship that avoids putting you and our organization in a questionable situation where we are open to accusations of wrongdoing. As a friend, our responsibility is to help advocate for and assist our friends in navigating the system to find services they require.

You must decline to serve as executor for an estate, to serve as a conservator or guardian, handle their finances, or to provide legal and financial advice for your elderly friend. Professional services extend beyond these examples. When in doubt, please confer with the Elder Services Coordinator.



All programs and services provided by Little Brothers - Friends of the Elderly are FREE OF CHARGE.

Because many of our elderly friends enjoy the benefits of the programs and services they receive, they may insist on giving payment. While it may seem harmless to accept five dollars from an elder who really wants to pay for your gas when you drive them, you must refuse. We can never give the impression that our friendship has a price attached.

It may be very important to the elder to buy you a cup of coffee or lunch once in a while, or to buy you a birthday gift. In the spirit of friendship, you may accept small personal non-cash gifts, not to exceed \$35 value in any given year.

We also discourage donations to the organization from the elderly who receive our services. If an elderly friend wants you to deliver a check or cash to our office, please decline. Inform them you cannot hand-deliver donations and they must send it through the mail.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Information regarding our elderly friends is confidential and must be safeguarded. Only discuss their personal information with Little Brothers staff who are directly involved. Casual discussion of an elder's private business is not friendly, and puts the elder at risk if you are overheard by someone who does not have the elder's best interest in mind.

## TIPS FOR VOLUNTEERING WITH ELDERS



### Allow for Extra Time:

Arrive early and be patient.

### Slow Down:

Adjust your speaking and walking pace.

Speak Up: Speak loudly but also slowly and enunciate.

Be Seen and Heard: Sit face to face and maintain eye contact to foster good communication.

Don't Make Assumptions: Our elders are a diverse and fascinating group of people, with a variety of beliefs, life experiences, interests and opinions. There is no "typical" elder.

Set Boundaries: It's okay to set limits on your personal space, emotions, and time. Communicate your limitations early on - don't wait for it to become an issue.

Share Stories: Discuss family, childhood memories, memorable vacations, personal milestones, favorite books, etc.

Have Fun!

## FRIENDLY VISITING PROGRAM

The Friendly Visiting Program is the heart of Little Brothers - Friends of the Elderly. Through this program, we ask volunteers to make a commitment to visit the elderly friend they are paired with on a regular basis. Your visits may include socializing over a cup of coffee, taking a walk, reminiscing, or running errands. The resulting friendship may continue through a lifetime.



Each relationship is different and so is the amount of contact and activities shared by the parties involved. We merely ask you commit to visit your elderly friend at least twice a month.

If your elderly friend seems to have urgent needs that require professional help such as financial assistance or counseling, please contact the Elder Services Coordinator. We may be able to link the elderly friend with the services they need. We are with you every step of the way. We want to make sure that this volunteer experience is both enjoyable and rewarding for you and your elderly friend.

If at any time you are unavailable to visit, you are required to inform the Elder Services Coordinator. We will assign an employee to visit in your absence.

It is important for you to keep us abreast of any changes in the health or circumstances of your elderly friend because once you are paired with your elderly friend, you become their primary visitor.

It is VERY IMPORTANT that you document each visit, errand, ride, etc. on the visiting volunteer contact record sheet provided. We use this information to monitor the relationship and assist you as needed. The information is also helpful for us to study program trends to be used in grant writing and other potential fundraising.



## SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- Bring photos of family and friends.
- Create a photo album or framed photograph collection.
- Make a scrapbook of your elderly friend's lifetime.
- Share your own favorite stories and memories.
- Share tales of your travels.
- Read newspapers and magazines.
- Read letters from family and friends.
- Help your elderly friend write letters.
- Have an indoor picnic.
- Play a musical instrument.
- Work on a craft project together.
- Treat your elderly friend to an in-home spa treatment.
- Ask for help in planning your garden.
- Play cards or board games.
- Do jigsaw puzzles together.
- Go "window shopping" in catalogs.
- Bring a favorite recipe book and plan a meal.
- Cook or bake.
- Read a chapter of a novel or several poems.
- Take a walk.
- Challenge your elderly friend to a spelling bee.
- Enjoy good conversation.
- Play recordings of your elder's favorite music.

# MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

Our Medical Transportation Program provides “door-through-door” transportation, offering personal, stand-by assistance for elderly people who have difficulty getting in and out of vehicles and buildings. By providing transportation, we give our elderly friends independence and enable them to age in place, delaying the move to an assisted living or nursing home.

When you agree to provide a transport, we require you to call the elderly person at least 24 hours prior to the appointment to confirm the details, including pick-up time. This alleviates the elderly friend’s worry so they know they can depend on a ride.

If for any reason you are unable to provide the transport, you are required to inform the Transportation Coordinator so other arrangements can be made.

We ask volunteers to provide the transports using your own vehicle at your own expense. We will also train volunteers in loading and driving our handicap accessible wheelchair vans.

If you make direct arrangements with your elderly friend to drive them to an appointment, please inform the Transportation Coordinator for our record-keeping.



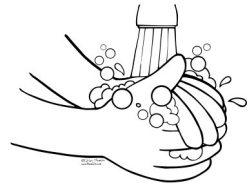
We keep a record of all transports to study program trends to be used in grant writing and other potential fundraising.

# HOLIDAY PARTIES AND ACTIVITIES

We celebrate the holidays with our elderly friends so they won't be alone on a day which holds such happy memories. We prepare fresh meal, set and decorate the tables, and provide musical entertainment. Every elderly guest goes home with a party favor, flower, and leftovers (if available), For those unable to attend, we deliver a meal or gift with a flower to their home with a friendly visit.

We want to provide a comfortable and festive atmosphere for both elderly guests and volunteers at the holiday parties and activities. Please maintain the integrity of our philosophy by taking care in setting the tables, decorating, using flowers as centerpieces then wrapping them gently for the elders to take home, and distributing leftovers. These small touches are what make it a Little Brothers - Friends of the Elderly event!

Please follow food-safety procedures. Our elderly guests are at a higher risk for developing a food-borne illness because of their weakened immune systems.



Finally, RELAX and take time to visit with the elderly guests. Don't feel that as a volunteer you must always be busy. Your biggest contribution is BEING A FRIEND!

## FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

We provide the elderly experiencing food insecurity with a bag of non-perishable food each month. In an effort to serve the elderly and reduce waste, the bags are personalized so each elder is only getting what they want and need.



Most do not drive and need the bag of food delivered to their home. We ask volunteers to commit to delivering bags to one or two elderly friends per month. The bags are prepared and ready to be picked up the third Wednesday of every month. You have up to two weeks to pick up the bag and deliver it so you don't have to make a special trip.

## FIREWOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

For elders who still heat their homes with firewood during our long winters, we provide them with cut and split firewood to help them reduce their home heating costs.

Volunteers are needed to cut, split, stack and deliver firewood. This volunteer opportunity requires 2-3 hours of physically demanding work and volunteers should be in good health and follow all safety precautions.



# HISTORY



Little Brothers of The Poor was founded in Paris, France, in 1946 by Armand Marquiset, a French nobleman who saw the plight of the elderly living in war-ravaged Europe. Marquiset began alone by sheltering the homeless elderly and taking meals and clothing to them. He noticed, however, that material goods were not enough. They longed for those moments that most people cherish, like being remembered on their birthday or celebrating a holiday with someone they love. Marquiset found not just a poverty of material things, but a poverty of the spirit.

Marquiset realized this was an opportunity for people to discover, express, and develop their gifts for helping and loving others.

From this modest beginning his vision was to spread his organization to as many people and places as possible. *"I saw Little Brothers spreading across the earth igniting little fires of love,"* he said. Today, in fulfillment of this vision, thousands of Little Brothers' volunteers bring love and service to elderly people. Our mission is being carried out internationally.

In 1982, the Upper Michigan Chapter began in Houghton County under the direction of Mike Aten. Since then we have steadily grown expanding into five counties in the western U.P. The U.P. is characterized by long, severe winters, a tough climate for the home bound elderly. Ours is the only rural program in the country and we located here because of the tough climate, high population of elderly people, high poverty rates, lack of family support, and shortage of services for the elderly. Here, through the efforts of hundreds of volunteers, we have continued the tradition of making friendship the foundation of all our services. For us, *service to the elderly begins by being a friend.*

# **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

## **Q. How many elders does Little Brothers serve?**

A. We serve over 1,400 elderly friends throughout a five-county area.

## **Q. How do I refer an elderly person to receive services?**

A. Please call our elder services coordinator at 906-482-6944.

## **Q. Can I bring my children?**

A. Little Brothers welcomes families to volunteer. Your children are welcome at our events, however, childcare is not available and children under the age of 12 are not allowed to volunteer in the kitchen.

## **Q. How many volunteers are there?**

A. We utilize the skills of more than 1,200 volunteers annually.

## **Q. Can I give the elders gifts?**

A. You may give small tokens of friendship, as you desire. You can also choose to give an elder a gift during our Holiday Gift Program.

## **Q. Can I invite an elder to my home?**

A. Yes.

## **Q. Why is it important I record my visits?**

A. The information you share helps us monitor the relationship and gives us a stronger chance to receive funding through foundation grants.

## **Q. How long has Little Brothers been in Upper Michigan?**

A. Little Brothers expanded to Houghton County in 1982.

## **Q. How is Little Brothers supported financially?**

A. Through individual contributions, foundation grants, special fundraising events, and in-kind donations. We receive no United Way or government funding.

## **Q. How can I make a donation to Little Brothers?**

A. Donations can be sent to 527 Hancock Street, Hancock, MI 49930. Donations can also be made through our website, [houghton.littlebrothers.org](http://houghton.littlebrothers.org)



527 Hancock Street  
Hancock, MI 49930  
(906) 482-6944

1716 Presque Isle Avenue  
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