

## A WORD FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

At our recent Valentine's Day party, my heart was filled with joy as we celebrated with our friends, and it reminded me of my early days with the organization. Fresh out of college with a business degree I joined the AmeriCorps program to serve the elderly at Little Brothers – Friends of the Elderly. At the time, I never imagined that an organization with a mission so meaningful to me could become my career.

I have always been drawn to people who have rich histories and life experiences to share. Those early connections through LBFE fostered friendships that lasted a lifetime. The photographs of those Forever Friends in my office continue to inspire me today as I begin my new role as Executive Director.

It is an incredible honor for me to lead and serve this unique organization. It has been a pleasure working with Mike and Cathy Aten who together have created and fostered a strong, vibrant program based on friendship over the past 40 years.

You may have felt the effects of loneliness during the pandemic. The pandemic brought attention and research to what we already knew, loneliness is a detriment to our health and well-being. Now, research is showing that society has gotten comfortable with being alone. A recent article in The Atlantic "How We Learned to Be Lonely," highlights some of that research. Over the years, I have witnessed countless examples of why our elderly friends become lonely. Your support allows LBFE to help bridge the gap they alone cannot cross.

Last year we saw fluctuations in our service outcomes compared to pre-pandemic numbers. Overall, we saw growth in the number of elderly people we served with fewer volunteers. Our focus now is to revitalize our Friendly Visiting and Medical Transportation programs which stagnated during the pandemic due to limitations of in-person outreach and reduction of volunteers. We are actively working on implementing refreshed elder referral and volunteer engagement campaigns to grow our elder outreach and onboard new volunteers.

While there is so much to be thankful for, your financial support is needed to help the organization continue to position itself to meet the needs of our elderly friends and strengthen our delivery. I am working with our dedicated and dependable staff and volunteers to fulfill our commitment to relieving isolation and loneliness among the elderly.

Whether you are just becoming acquainted with LBFE or have been a long-standing supporter, thank you. I look forward to getting to know you and learning why you are motivated to make a difference in the lives of our elderly friends and neighbors and how we can make a lasting impact together. I am available by phone or email, and I welcome you to stop by the office for a visit.



Carol A. Korpela

Executive Director

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Staff of LBFE receive the Portage Health Foundation check

## PORTAGE HEALTH FOUNDATION GIVING TUESDAY

The results are in from Portage Health Foundation Giving Tuesday! Little Brothers - Friends of the Elderly received a total of \$122,422.38 in donations. Individual and community business donors contributed over seventy-six percent of that total. Thank you to Portage Health Foundation for hosting this community event, and their matching gift. **These generous gifts will carry forward our mission and have a lasting impact on our elderly friends!**



Forever Friend Jerry receives wood from LBFE

## FIREWOOD PROGRAM: WARMTH OF GIVING

The **wood program** is unique to the Upper Michigan chapter of LBFE and was built on connecting our elderly friends in the community with a widely used resource. Since the humble beginnings, this program has been dependent on the many donors, staff, and volunteers that have assisted with labor, property usage, and donation of wood. An equipment shed was built by Jeffers High School in 2016, and was later moved by a crew of motivated and determined volunteers to the new wood lot in 2021. In the fall of 2022, a new woodshed was constructed on this same lot, to allow for proper storage and seasoning of wood.

Elderly friends are eligible based on their expression of need, and over the years this program has experienced an increase in demand. In October of 2019 to 2020, the requests outpaced other years, and there were 127 cords of wood delivered. Recently these numbers have begun to climb again as other stressors in the economy have increased. The future goals of the program are to add another woodshed to increase storage capacity. The cost of materials for this new addition is estimated to be \$15,000, and work is ongoing to raise the donations to cover this cost. A second woodshed is vital for access in the winter, and proper seasoning for the volume of wood needed to support the program. Additionally, the woodshed avoids frozen stacks in several feet of snow and delivering a quality wood for our elderly friends.

Most weekend days at the wood lot, you will find volunteers cutting and splitting wood to size for upcoming deliveries, regardless of the weather. This work at the wood lot is important to our elderly friends and to the volunteers who share the experience of giving back to their community.



Top: New woodshed in use this winter

Bottom: Before the new woodshed, Volunteers take on the arduous task of unburying the wood in the snow





Volunteer Breanne (right) picking up monthly food bags

## FOOD PANTRY: PROTECTING AGAINST FOOD INFLATION

According to the USDA, the price of “food-at-home” has increased, 11.8% since December of 2021. This is a pressing issue for our elderly friends on fixed incomes, and our monthly food pantry supplements this need. Little Brothers - Friends of the Elderly benefits from the annual Michigan Tech Lambda Chi Alpha Fraternity food drive through their National North American Food Drive. LBFE is also a recipient of the TV 6 Canathon.

This holiday season we were visited by Calumet Post, State of Michigan Police officers from the “Stuff a Blue Goose” program dropping off over 3,500 lbs. of nonperishable food in collaboration with the community involvement for our food pantry program. Each month we distribute about 80 food bags to elderly friends, 60 years and older. The greatest need is small portioned non-perishable goods.



Police officers deliver food pantry donation

## HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- ♦ **Volunteer!**
- ♦ **Donate Loan Closet Equipment, or Food for the Holiday Meals**
- ♦ **Check, Cash, or Online Donations**

- ♦ **Monthly Giving:** (ACH, Online, or Check)  
Sustain our mission by supporting our elders with monthly giving. You will receive regular updates on how your gifts support our mission. For more information about monthly giving, please contact Amber Goodman:

**Online Donations can be made at:**

<https://events.org/donate/lbfe-donate>

Phone: 906-482-6944 ext. 1016

Email: [amber.goodman@littlebrothers.org](mailto:amber.goodman@littlebrothers.org)

## SECURE THE FUTURE OF OUR UPPER MICHIGAN CHAPTER BY GIVING TO OUR LOCAL LITTLE BROTHERS - FRIENDS OF THE ELDERLY *FOUNDATION*

Our Upper Michigan Chapter of Little Brothers is a model program of volunteerism and service to our elderly neighbors, and we want the organization to be here for years to come! That is why we created our own local LBFE **FOUNDATION** to help secure our chapter's future.

Establishing our own Foundation was a dream for more than 30 years and became official under Mike Aten's leadership in 2014. We are proud to see substantial growth and you can be a part of this excitement too! Help us secure the chapters future by remembering Little Brothers Upper Michigan in your Estate Plan.

### Here are some ways you can help:

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

### You can also designate your gift to any of our *Endowed Funds*

- \* John and Cookie Johnson Needs Endowed Fund – supports special needs of our elderly Forever Friends
- \* Wood Program Endowed Fund – supports the Firewood Program
- \* Lola Yoder Expansion Endowed Fund – supports expansion efforts in Upper Michigan

It's never too early to plan and your gift can ensure Little Brothers will bring friendship and service to our elderly neighbors for years to come!

For more information, contact Cathy Kass-Aten at 906 282-3406 or email - [cathy.aten@littlebrothers.org](mailto:cathy.aten@littlebrothers.org)



Little Brothers - Friends of the Elderly  
527 Hancock Street  
Hancock, MI 49930

Address Service Requested

SPRING 2023

# THE ROSE

Annual Donor Newsletter

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## GATHERINGS & FRIENDSHIP

The fall program rolled out with an exciting development with the return to smaller party gatherings (including quarterly birthday parties, Halloween, and Valentine's Day) and sit-down meal sites for the holiday season.

Returning to the traditional celebrations of LBFE is the heart of the mission and we are working on exciting new additions to the social dining experience to further encourage in-person participation. We continue to offer meal deliveries for our large holiday gatherings with an understanding of individual needs.

Volunteer Kathy delivers  
Christmas Meals in Baraga

This Christmas and Thanksgiving were made possible in part by the local businesses that donated food and other items to the celebrations. Community members donated time and skill, baking desserts, and venturing out in the winter conditions. Dedicated volunteers served about 1,000 meals for each of the holidays, and Easter is predicted to result in similar participation.



Gail and Lorraine celebrate at the Halloween  
Party