



Since 1971 Little Brothers – Friends of the Elderly (LBFE) has been pairing volunteers with elders in the Twin Cities to promote companionship that helps combat the isolation and loneliness that often comes with aging. “Because above all, people need love” was the reason LBFE’ founder, French nobleman, Armand Marquiset, entered the lives of lonely and isolated elderly in France in 1946. Marquiset began visiting and delivering hot meals with flowers to elderly people in Paris. What began as the work of one man, is today carried out by tens of thousands of volunteers in nine countries.

LBFE was founded in the United States in 1959. The Twin Cities branch is one of nine in the U.S., and is the second largest and second oldest in the country. LBFE is nondenominational but maintains the name “Little Brothers” to remind us of the spirit of familial fellowship to our elders.

Services Overview

Connecting elders to the community

In-Home Staff Visits: LBFE Program Coordinators make regular visits to elders in their homes and long-term care facilities to provide companionship, advocacy, and manage the level of services appropriate to their needs.

Visiting Volunteers: Participating elders receive regular visits from trained volunteers who are carefully matched according to interests, personality, and geography. The Visiting Volunteer program promotes reconnection to community, and enhances personal independence. Trained volunteers commit to regularly visiting elders for one year or more.

Gathering in Friendship: LBFE hosts monthly intergenerational activities, luncheons, hobby-type groups, birthday parties, and bingo. LBFE also sponsors a variety of special outings, support groups, and quarterly social gatherings throughout the year. With the help of several hundred active volunteers, LBFE hosts community holiday gatherings for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter, as well as other special occasions. These celebrations are held at no expense to the elders or volunteers. If an elder cannot attend one of the major holiday celebrations, volunteers visit the homebound elder, giving them a hot meal, flowers, and good company.

Friendship and Flowers: Volunteers promote companionship, friendship, and wellness to homebound older adults in Hennepin and Ramsey Counties. A monthly in-person visit may include a flower, treat, and friendly conversation. Other engagements during the month may include phone or written methods of contact.

Transportation: LBFE owns both a van and a wheelchair-accessible bus. Staff members, with help from volunteers, accompany elders who request transportation to medical appointments, grocery stores, errands, social events, and holiday gatherings. The transportation program will be evaluated during the 2009 planning process.

Spiritual Health: LBFE partners with the Benedictine Center at St. Paul’s Monastery to hold “Days of Reflection.” This is an opportunity for elders and volunteers to discover the connections between health, one’s life experiences, and spirituality. It is a time for learning, reflection, and renewal. In addition, every three months throughout the year, LBFE staff, volunteers, and elders gather to remember the participants who have recently passed away. This is a wonderful opportunity to share stories, photos, and memories of those who have touched our lives.

Eligibility: Elders must be age 60 or older; live within Ramsey or Hennepin County; and have a weak support network. **Call: 612.746.0738**

Professional Counseling Program

Home-based professional counseling for elders who need professional help yet do not have the resources to access it

The Professional Counseling Program by licensed mental health professionals provides one-on-one mental health counseling support, on a weekly or biweekly basis, to elders who need home-based mental health counseling, yet do not have adequate mental health coverage. LBFE also has a unique partnership with Adult Protection Units in Hennepin and Ramsey Counties serving elders who are increasingly vulnerable due to mental health issues and social isolation.

Eligibility: Elders must be age 60 or older; live in Hennepin or Ramsey County; live independently or in an assisted living facility; have emotional issues which warrant professional counseling; are not currently involved in professional counseling; may have a major mental illness, yet are not involved in the formal mental health system. **Call: 612.721.6215, ext. 1220**

Peer Counseling Program

Home-based peer counseling support for elders undergoing loss and change

Peer Counseling trains older adult volunteers to serve individuals who are wrestling with some of the emotional challenges of aging, which include mild to moderate levels of depression, anxiety, grief and loss, and adjustment issues. Volunteer peer counselors provide emotional support and problem-solving assistance to clients for up to one year.

Eligibility: Elders must be age 60 or older, live in Ramsey or Hennepin County, live independently or in an assisted living facility, have mild to moderate mental health or adjustment issues, and be cognitively able to benefit from counseling support.

Call: 612.721.6215, ext. 1228

Counseling services include:

- Mental health assessment: Counseling Services staff members complete a thorough mental health assessment on each eligible client.
- Home-based counseling: Volunteers and staff members provide one-on-one counseling on a weekly basis in the comfort of the elders' home.
- Community referrals: Referrals to other community resources are made as the need arises.

For information on **volunteering opportunities** at Little Brothers-Friends of the Elderly, **call 612.746.0753**.

For information on the ways you can **contribute financial resources** to Little Brothers-Friends of the Elderly, call Janene Connelly, Senior Director of Advancement, **612.746.0748**.

Little Brothers-Friends of the Elderly

1845 East Lake Street
Minneapolis, MN 55407
612.721.6215

1295 Bandana Boulevard # 165
Saint Paul, MN 55108
612.746.0748

www.littlebrothersmn.org

Little Brothers-Friends of the Elderly is a national, nonprofit, volunteer-based organization committed to promoting companionship and providing mental health services among lonely elders. We offer to people of good will the opportunity to join the elderly in friendship and the celebration of life.