



# Among Volunteers



MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER FROM LITTLE BROTHERS - FRIENDS OF THE ELDERLY

FEBRUARY 2011



## First Volunteer Companion gathering a success

Forty-two LBFE volunteers, guests of volunteers, and staff gathered together on Saturday, January 20, for our first Volunteer Companion Social. The gathering provided an opportunity for volunteers engaged in visiting activities through LBFE to get to know one another a bit while enjoying some afternoon treats.

Many volunteers agreed that it was a great chance to meet other volunteers, as they rarely have the opportunity to interact with one another. Ideas and stories were shared, and some volunteers were able to meet their LBFE staff contact in person for the first time.



Volunteers Patty Keenan and Jody Bratten trade answers to "Human Bingo."

Visit our [Facebook](#) page to see more photos of the event, and stay tuned for upcoming gatherings. We hope you will join us!

## Volunteer Time Reports for January Now Due

Time reports can be submitted via email, fax, or mail directly to your staff contact with LBFE. If you are unsure to whom you should be submitting your reports, please contact Carolyn Swenson at (612) 746-0753 or [cswenson@littlebrothersmn.org](mailto:cswenson@littlebrothersmn.org).

A writable copy of the time report that you can fill out and e-mail back is available for downloading at [www.littlebrothersmn.org/volunteer/volunteer-forms](http://www.littlebrothersmn.org/volunteer/volunteer-forms).

Complete reporting of volunteer hours helps us to secure and maintain funding, as volunteer hours and activities are included in our fundraising proposals to corporations and foundations. Thank you for your support and commitment to our elders.

## LBFE to be featured at March Timberwolves game

On Sunday, March 27, LBFE will be the "Non-Profit of the Night" for the Minnesota Timberwolves versus Boston Celtics basketball game. LBFE will be promoted in many ways at this event, including a table display on the concourse as well as a public service announcement during the game. LBFE elders will be participating with youth from the North Community YMCA Youth and Teen Enrichment Center in an intergenerational scrimmage after the game!

We have a limited number of free tickets for this game for volunteers willing to drive LBFE elders, or for Visiting Volunteers interested in bringing their elder participant to the game. Game time is at 6 p.m. If you are interested in volunteering for this event, please contact Josh Windham at [jwindham@littlebrothersmn.org](mailto:jwindham@littlebrothersmn.org) or 612.746.0723.

If you are unable to drive participants, but would like to attend and show your support for LBFE, tickets can be purchased at [www.nba.com/timberwolves/tickets](http://www.nba.com/timberwolves/tickets).

## January's "Participant Spotlight" brought in a match!

Last month, "Among Volunteers" debuted new monthly feature called "Elder Spotlight." The goal is to highlight one of the many LBFE elder participants in need of a Visiting Volunteer.

Within hours of sending the January newsletter, volunteer Jody Bratten enthusiastically responded that she would love to start visiting Mary. Jody, already a Visiting Volunteer for another LBFE elder, felt that she had the time and ability to visit an additional person and that Mary's interests closely paralleled her own. Says Jody, "[Mary] is a delight! We happen to have some things in common, including a small town that we know the people and businesses in, so we plan on taking a road trip there in the spring." Mary is equally excited by the match. "I was very, very pleased by how things worked out and how much we have in common. She is just a very kind, wonderful person,"

Please read this month's "Participant Spotlight" on Agnes, and consider becoming a Visiting Volunteer. It only takes a few hours each month to brighten someone's life, and find yours brightened in return.

## Training Opportunity

All volunteers are invited to attend upcoming in-service sessions hosted by LBFE.

### **Wednesday, Feb. 23, 6-8 p.m.**

Topic: *Aging 101: Biological, Psychological, and Social Perspectives*

Location: Hayden Heights Library  
1456 White Bear Ave. N.  
St Paul

To RSVP, contact Carolyn Swenson at least one week in advance at [cswenson@littlebrothersmn.org](mailto:cswenson@littlebrothersmn.org) or 612.746.0753.

## Orientation Sessions

You're invited to attend our Orientation and Basic Training. New and experienced LBFE volunteers will learn more about the organization's history, current programs, and the future of older adults in Minnesota. Discussions on working with older adults, handling difficult situations, and current agency policies are included:

**Saturday, Feb. 12, 9-11:30 a.m.,**  
1845 E Lake St, Minneapolis

**Wednesday, Feb. 23, 5-7:30 p.m.,**  
1295 Bandana Blvd, Ste 165, St Paul

**Saturday, Mar. 12, 9-11:30 a.m.,**  
1845 E Lake St., Minneapolis

**Wednesday, Mar. 23, 5-7:30 p.m.,**  
1295 Bandana Blvd., Ste 165, St Paul

RSVP to Carolyn Swenson at [cswenson@littlebrothersmn.org](mailto:cswenson@littlebrothersmn.org) or 612.746.0753.

## Participant spotlight: Agnes

Agnes has been an LBFE participant since 2003 and would enjoy being matched to a Visiting Volunteer for the first time. Agnes finds it hard to connect with those in her building but would really enjoy visiting with a “down-to-earth” female volunteer who may share some of her interests.

A mandolin player, Agnes enjoys music and would welcome someone who also appreciates music. Agnes also loves card games such as Euchre and Canasta, and hearing about people’s travels throughout the United States, with a particular interest in the western states, as she lived and worked in Utah, California, and Washington. Agnes shares her St. Paul apartment with two birds and has a great love for animals.

If you have an interest in becoming a Visiting Volunteer for Agnes, please contact Carolyn Swenson at [cswenson@littlebrothersmn.org](mailto:cswenson@littlebrothersmn.org) or 612.746.0753.

## Volunteer Department Information

For questions, inquiries or referrals, please contact **Carolyn Swenson**, Director of Volunteer Services, at [cswenson@littlebrothersmn.org](mailto:cswenson@littlebrothersmn.org) or 612.746.0753. Office hours are Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

**DONATE**

Support LBFE’s mission of providing companionship to isolated seniors in the Twin Cities.

[www.littlebrothersmn.org/contribute](http://www.littlebrothersmn.org/contribute)

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## Volunteer spotlight: Nativity of Mary Pen Friends

One of the most enduring partnerships for LBFE is the one between LBFE and [Nativity of Mary Church and School](#) in Bloomington. Begun approximately 23 years ago by Sister Colleen at the church, Nativity members and students write letters and cards to almost 40 LBFE elder participants on a monthly basis. The 118 volunteers from Nativity are comprised of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, as well as a number of school alums or adult church members.

By one estimate, Nativity of Mary has provided close to 30,000 letters and cards to our elders over the years! Bobbi Sliwinski, Nativity of Mary parishioner and coordinator for the Pen Friend program, says that many of the adult letter writers are seniors themselves, who recall the excitement of getting a personal letter in the mail. “It makes [the volunteers] feel good, and hopefully they are making someone else feel good” by providing that contact to someone who may not otherwise have a lot of personal contacts.

Due to vision loss, arthritis, or other physical problems, Nativity volunteers are prepared that they may not receive a letter from their elder participants in return. While some elder participants do write back, all do appreciate the connection to a caring person whom they have never met. One of the elder participants heard from her Nativity of Mary student for years after the student had graduated from the school. The volunteer wrote faithfully, updating the elder participant of her college studies, career, and wedding plans. As the elder’s world began to shrink because of her visual impairment and move to a care facility, the letters became an important link for her to the outside world, as well as a topic of discussion for the LBFE volunteer who regularly visited with her.

We thank Nativity of Mary for their steady commitment to the mission of LBFE over all these years, and hope it continues for years to come! We are also on the lookout for new partnerships, so if you are aware of a school or church that might be interested in becoming involved as Pen Friends, please contact Carolyn Swenson at [cswenson@littlebrothersmn.org](mailto:cswenson@littlebrothersmn.org) or 612.746.0753.

## Volunteer opportunities: February and March

To sign up for these opportunities, please contact Josh Windham at [jwindham@littlebrothersmn.org](mailto:jwindham@littlebrothersmn.org) or 612.746.0723.

### **BINGO**

Needs: 6 drivers

Where: Minneapolis League of Catholic Women  
207 S 9th St, Minneapolis

**Tuesday, January 11** (1 driver)

Drop off 9:30 a.m./pick up 12:30 p.m.

**Tuesday, Feb. 8** (5 drivers)

Drop off 9:30 a.m./pick up 12:30 p.m.

### **BIRTHDAY LUNCHEON SPONSORED BY BLAKE STUDENTS**

Needs: 5 drivers

Where: Blake School, Upper School Campus  
511 Kenwood Pkwy, Minneapolis

**Wednesday, Jan. 19**, 11:30 to 1:00 p.m.

### **BIRTHDAY LUNCHEON**

Needs: 10 drivers (5 Minneapolis; 5 St. Paul)

3 set up/serve/clean up

Where: LBFE office, 1845 E Lake St, Minneapolis

**Wednesday, Feb. 16**, 12:00 to 2:00 p.m.

### **BIRTHDAY LUNCHEON - NEST NEIGHBORHOOD**

Needs: 2 drivers (St. Paul)

Where: Our Saviour's Lutheran Church  
674 Johnson Parkway, St Paul

**Wednesday, Jan. 19**, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

**Wednesday, Feb. 16**, 12:00 to 2:00 p.m.

### **DAY OF REFLECTION: "LISTENING"**

Needs: 3 drivers

Where: Benedictine Center, 2675 Benet Rd, Maplewood

**Thursday, Jan. 13**, 10 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

### **FRIENDSHIP AND FLOWERS**

Needs: 20 deliverers

Where: Pick up at either LBFE office

**Saturday, Jan. 15**, 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.

(5 Minneapolis; 5 St. Paul)

**Saturday, Feb. 19**, 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.

(5 Minneapolis; 5 St. Paul)

*(continued)*

## *LBFE at Midtown Global Market for "Better Together" family event*

LBFE will be one of a number of non-profit organizations participating in "Better Together," a free, community-wide family service event at the Midtown Global Market on Friday, Feb. 25, from 5-8 p.m.

Families are invited to come and participate in fun, hands-on service projects, reflect on the importance of giving back, and learn about opportunities to get involved in the community. LBFE will be the recipient of one of these projects. At our booth, families will be invited to create tissue paper flowers to be used with our Friendship and Flowers visits and will learn about all of the family-friendly volunteer opportunities that LBFE offers.

The Midtown Global Market is located at Lake Street and 10th Avenue South in Minneapolis. We invite you to stop by this fun event! For more information, check out the [Doing Good Together website](#).

**KNIT & CROCHET/CARD-PLAYING GROUP**

Needs:10 drivers

Where: LBFE, 1845 E Lake St, Minneapolis

**Thursday, Feb. 24, 9:30-11:30 a.m.**

**Thursday, Mar. 24, 9:30-11:30 a.m.**

**PICTURE DAY: PROFESSIONAL PORTRAITS FOR ELDER PARTICIPANTS**

Needs: 20 drivers

Where: LBFE, 1845 E Lake St., *Minneapolis*

**Monday, Feb. 21, 1:30-3 p.m.**

Where: LBFE, 1295 Bandana Blvd., *St. Paul*

**Monday, Mar. 21, 1-3:30 p.m.**

**RECREATION GROUPS - ASSORTED OUTINGS**

Needs: 1 driver per small group (4 groups per month)

Where: Various community outings such as malls, movies, parks, zoos, etc.

**Every Tuesday (usually) 9:30-11:30 a.m.**

**MINNESOTA TIMBERWOLVES "NON-PROFIT OF THE NIGHT":  
TIMBERWOLVES VS. BOSTON CELTICS**

Needs: 5-6 drivers

Where: Target Center, Minneapolis

**Sunday, Mar. 27, 5:30-10 p.m.**



LITTLE BROTHERS - FRIENDS OF THE ELDERLY | 1295 Bandana Boulevard N | Suite 165 | St. Paul | MN | 55108

[www.littlebrothersmn.org](http://www.littlebrothersmn.org)    [info@littlebrothersmn.org](mailto:info@littlebrothersmn.org)