



# Among FRIENDS



SUMMER 2011

## A glorious Easter dinner unites elders with volunteer families

Nearly 250 people, including 100 of LBFE's elder friends, plus volunteer driver companions with their families, gathered at the Prom Center in Oakdale for our annual Easter Sunday ham dinner on April 24.



Jane Patyk, Elise Atkinson and Donald Doeksen were among nearly 250 elders and volunteers who gathered at the Prom Center on Easter Sunday.

Many thanks to our amazing volunteer teams, including drivers, kitchen crew, servers and greeters, as well as deliverers who brought hot meals to another 25 homebound elders. Ninety-five volunteers in all made it happen! Most

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## Structural changes keep LBFE healthy, strong and moving forward

Little Brothers-Friends of the Elderly is drawing near to its 40th year of service to elders in the Twin Cities.

Through the years, our commitment to providing companionship to our elders has been steadfast, while adapting our programs to reflect our community's evolving social and economic needs.

Most recently, the challenging economy and our desire to ensure our sustainability into the coming years have prompted us to reevaluate our structure and scope of operations. In January, LBFE's Board of Directors initiated an organizational assessment. This led to a number of changes that position us to

better achieve the short- and long-term goals of our three-year Strategic Plan.

The changes involved a restructuring of the organization and a downsizing of staff. We also consolidated our operations by closing our St. Paul office on Bandana Blvd., with all staff members now at the Lake Street office in Minneapolis. The months of March and April found us – the nine remaining staff members, plus Board members and volunteers – sifting through decades' worth of files and memorabilia, organizing, painting and cleaning.

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LBFE has been awarded the Charities Review Council "Meets Standards" Seal indicating that it meets all sixteen of its nonprofit Accountability Standards.

**Little Brothers - Friends of the Elderly** is an international, nondenominational, volunteer-based, nonprofit organization. We are committed to relieving isolation and loneliness while promoting well-being and independence among older adults in the Twin Cities Metro Area.

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**Gretchen Vanderlinden-Wang**, *Visiting Advocate Coordinator/East and North St. Paul/NEST*  
**Josh Windham**, *Visiting Advocate Coordinator/West and Central St. Paul*

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## Looking ahead

The LBFE board has been actively planning the search for LBFE's new executive director and developing the related transition plan. I have been working closely with the board as the "guest leader" during this interim period. Together we have collected and reviewed input questionnaires from staff, board members and friends of LBFE. Based on this information, the board has been looking at LBFE's strengths, challenges and opportunities.

Several decades ago, Loren Mead, founder of the Alban Institute, recognized the challenge of pastoral transitions and wrote a small guide, "Five Developmental Tasks for Interim Ministry." The wisdom in these steps is applicable to all nonprofits and organizations. These developmental tasks offer a proven framework for moving forward.

**TASK 1: Coming to terms with history.** The board has been taking an unvarnished look at LBFE – its past, strengths, weaknesses, shortcomings and accomplishments. There is much to be proud of as well as challenges to be recognized.

**TASK 2: Exploring identity and direction.** An executive director transition is a unique moment to shape the future of the organization unconstrained by the limitations of the executive's leadership capacity and capabilities. The board is looking forward, exploring the organization that we aspire to create, and then shaping the job (and job description) around the present and future leadership needs of LBFE.

**TASK 3: Making necessary changes.** A change in

executives often spotlights other needed changes – in leadership, staffing, systems or structure. We have made reductions in staffing level and all staff are now working out of our long-term Minneapolis location. LBFE is blessed with excellent staff, a strong board of directors, and committed donors and volunteers.

**TASK 4: Renewing linkages.** Over time, key stakeholders and supporters may become disengaged. One of the "platform-building" tasks can be to bring some of them back into the fold.

**TASK 5: Committing to new leadership and a new direction.** With a healthy perspective on our history, and having worked to build a solid leadership platform, we will be planning a careful on-boarding process for our new executive. That process will include defining priorities, delineating roles and responsibilities (for the board as well as the executive), clarifying mutual expectations and, finally, developing performance measures and a review process.

In my short tenure as LBFE's Interim Executive Director, I have been impressed by the wisdom, diligence and work ethic of the board members and staff.

During this process, the board has a singular focus: to recruit, hire and "launch" an executive who will build on LBFE's rich legacy, work to create the future, and use his/her capable leadership skills to bring the mission fully to life. Our elders deserve no less.



– *Linda Tacke, LBFE Interim Executive Director*

## Visiting Volunteer Family explores the cities with elder friend

SUMMER 2011

It was a cold day with falling snow swirling around outside when LBFE met up with 81-year-old Richard Meline and his Visiting Volunteer Family, Genevieve Ray and her son, Austin. But the warmth shared among the three dispelled the cold in an instant.

“When we met Richard for the first time, it just felt right,” explained Genevieve.

One of the reasons the three hit it off is that 14-year-old Austin is very active, “and so am I,” said Richard. In fact, Austin recently won the city final in track for the mile, coming in 5:54. Richard, too, likes to take to the road and can walk a good three miles at a crack. He recalled, “One time, the three of us went out to get groceries and, instead of getting in the car, I said, ‘Let’s just walk to the store.’ I wondered if I could – and I could!”

**“You don’t have to be the best – just be the best you.”**

– Richard Meline

The trio has been meeting two Thursday afternoons a month since the end of last summer. They share a sense of adventure, and have enjoyed going to a soccer game, the American Swedish Institute, the train museum and the Foshay Tower museum. One time they took the streetcar to Excelsior and Richard relished exploring the streetcar museum.



*Austin, Richard and Genevieve frequently drop by the community center near Richard’s residence for a friendly chat.*

“I love anything that has to do with transportation,” said Richard. Before retirement, he was with the MTC as a bus cleaner, a position he held for 17 years. A St. Paulite, Richard grew up in the Bluff neighborhood. “White Castle was our meeting place,” he said.

Richard has a slight touch of Alzheimer’s, but wears a patch to offset the symptoms. His appearance is important to him and he recently grew a beard – “a distinguished Van Dyke one,” he said while stroking it. He claims his beard puts him in the company of “professors, engineers and preachers.” “I’m a simple man,” he said thoughtfully, “and my apartment reflects who I am. What’s here is honest, straightforward and quality.”

The afternoons with Richard work out well for the Rays’ schedules. Austin has been homeschooled since second grade and now participates

in a Post Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) program, working toward an Associate’s Degree in Physical Therapy. Genevieve, too, has flexibility, juggling several part-time income-producing ventures, as well as providing office assistance for her mother, who is a psychologist and author. “It’s a match that we all benefit from. We always look forward to the next adventure together,” said Genevieve.

**Would you, too, like to explore the benefits of being a Visiting Volunteer Family matched with an elder friend? Contact LuAnne Speeter at 612.746.0753 for more information.**

## A glorious Easter dinner... *continued from page 1*

impressive is that many of our volunteers have made Easter Sunday with LBFE a tradition for 20 years or more. Long-time volunteer Lynn Convery had the set-up and serving routine down to a science, while Tom Connelly once again oversaw the greeting crew.

“The day was truly glorious!” exclaimed LBFE Interim Executive Director Linda Tacke, who sported

a jaunty Easter hat for the occasion. As a bonus for our guests, staff from Penn Cycle, including owner Jim Sorensen, were on hand to promote healthy and safe bicycle riding options. Guests were thrilled to test out easy-riding bicycles available through Nice Ride Minnesota, as well as stationary models and a “Townie” bicycle especially designed for stability. After the festivities,

our guests departed with smiles and flowers in the LBFE tradition.

Special thanks to the Prom Center for use of their staff and facilities, Johnson Senior High School for providing dozens and dozens of cupcakes, and Just Desserts who donated elegantly decorated cakes.

It was a joy-filled Easter day, indeed!

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## Structural changes... *continued from page 1*

Under the leadership of Interim Executive Director Linda Tacke, LBFE is intent on preserving and nurturing our core services of elder companionship and social engagement. With Program Director Dianne Feltham at the helm, we successfully hosted our traditional Easter dinner in April at the Prom Center. Friendship and Flowers continue to be delivered to nearly 200 elders on the third Saturday of each month, and we still provide our other social activities, including the monthly knit and crochet

groups and birthday parties for elders, often in partnership with corporate and civic groups. Our four Visiting Advocate Coordinators, Chelsea Igou, Sandy O’Donnell, Gretchen Vanderlinden-Wang and Josh Windham, oversee teams of Visiting Volunteers and provide vital social connections for our elder participants. LuAnne Speeter, Director of Communications and Volunteer Recruitment, and Marcy Luedtke, Director of Development, focus on expanding our relationships and resources with individuals and

businesses in the community to ensure LBFE’s ongoing growth. Four-year veteran employee Sandy Lewis, Business Director, handles financial operations and data processing.

In July, we enter into Fiscal Year 2012 with a renewed sense of purpose. Through the generosity of you, our many donors and volunteers, we gratefully stand here today stronger and better than ever.

## Monthly giving supports our elders year-round

The generosity of our donors allows LBFE to provide services throughout the year. As you can imagine, few of our program costs are seasonal. In fact, most of our programs – Friendship and Flowers, Visiting Volunteers, birthday lunches, bingo, and more – are provided to our elder friends each and every month.

A number of our supporters prefer to give on a monthly basis through our Among Friends Monthly Giving Club – and you may want to consider this, too. To make it easier and to cut down on your paperwork, you can arrange for your tax-deductible gift to be transferred automatically each month from your bank account or credit card in the amount of your choice.

To join the Among Friends Monthly Giving Club, simply download and complete the application form found at [www.littlebrothersmn.org/contribute/monthly-giving](http://www.littlebrothersmn.org/contribute/monthly-giving) and return it to us, or contact Marcy Luedtke at 612.746.0750.

## Twin Cities LBFE chapter hosts international board

SUMMER 2011

The LBFE community room on Lake Street became a veritable United Nations on April 29-30. That was the weekend the Minneapolis/St. Paul chapter played host to the international board of our parent organization, Les petits frères des Pauvres (Little Brothers of the Poor). Fourteen board members representing France, Germany, Switzerland, Ireland, Poland, Spain, Canada and the U.S. came together to discuss policy and practices.

Thanks to the almost unanimous mastery of English on the part of our foreign visitors – and the aid of one interpreter – language was no barrier. But even more universal was the appreciation of our shared mission: providing caring, companionship and connectedness to elder friends in our communities.

The sizes of the chapters vary widely; some chapters have just a

handful of staff members, while France's office employs 145. But large or small, chapters learned from each other over the weekend and offered their unique perspectives. For example, Germany uses a "three for three" approach, where groups of three Visiting Volunteers share companionship with three elders.

Minneapolis/St. Paul chapter board member Noelle Turner and her husband Jeff graciously opened their home to the group for dinner on Friday evening, and conversation and laughter filled each room. "I've never seen such warmth among such a diverse group of people," exclaimed Karen Major, LBFE Minneapolis/St. Paul Board President. "The genuine compassion for elders and love of the organization transcended any differences in culture or language."

For hosting the event, the



*A plaque depicting LBFE founder Armand Marquiset, given to our chapter as a thank-you gift by the international board, is on display in our lobby.*

Minneapolis/St. Paul chapter received a bronze plate imprinted with the bust of our founder, Armand Marquiset, which is now on display in our front lobby. The weekend was truly an energizing and heart-warming recommitment to the world mission of LBFE!



*Representatives in leadership positions of Little Brothers chapters located in France, Germany, Switzerland, Ireland, Poland, Spain, Canada and the U.S. visited our Minneapolis office in April.*

## Re-ignite your potential after 50! Two Evolve scholarships available

Are you interested in using your experience and untapped leadership potential to make a better world?

LBFE, in partnership with Vital Aging Network (VAN), is offering two scholarships to Evolve, an eight-month leadership development course specifically for adults age 50 and up. Through Evolve (formerly known as ALVA Leadership Development), you'll discover your unique path to making a contribution, build your skills and re-ignite your energies. Classes begin Friday, October 14, 2011, and meet one Friday a month through May

2012. The scholarship value for the seven-month course is \$750.

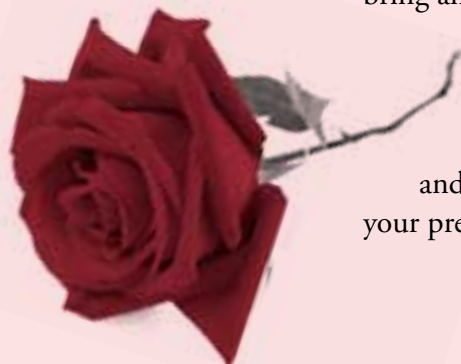
LBFE's partnership with VAN is in line with our commitment to provide a holistic, integrated approach to greater independence and well-being for older adults. VAN itself is an organization that empowers people to attain greater personal growth and civic engagement as they age through education, leadership development and opportunities for connection. The Evolve scholarships are part of a larger grant opportunity awarded by VAN to LBFE, and are made possible by the St. Paul Foundation.

If you are age 50 or older and would like to be considered for an Evolve scholarship, or for more information, please contact Dianne Feltham, LBFE Director of Programs, at [dfeltham@littlebrothersmn.org](mailto:dfeltham@littlebrothersmn.org) or **612.746.0732**.

## In memory

*The following people we served were remembered at our April memorial service:*

**Ruth Audett**  
**James Dodd**  
**Dorothy Doughty**  
**Vivian Fulkerson**  
**Jerolyn Gates**  
**George Kimbrough**  
**Mary Parle**  
**Yvonne Rasmussen**  
**Mary Regan**  
**Dorothy Ruter**  
**George Stone**  
**Gertrude Trutty**



Little Brothers - Friends of the Elderly gathers every two months to remember people we served who have recently died. Our next memorial services are June 20 and August 15, 2011, from 4-5 p.m. at 1845 East Lake Street in Minneapolis.

We encourage anyone whose life has been touched by an elder we served to attend our memorial service. Each service includes a time of sharing memorable and touching moments we've had with our elders, which we have found to be especially helpful in our healing process. Feel free to bring any photos or memories to share.

Please contact Josh Windham at 612.746.0746 or [jwindham@littlebrothersmn.org](mailto:jwindham@littlebrothersmn.org) if you would like to attend. Memorial services are open to all, and if you would simply like to honor our elders by your presence, we welcome you.

# ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

## June through August 2011 Events and Volunteer Opportunities

We welcome your participation as a volunteer for all of the events below. You can also help support the mission of LBFE by sponsoring or hosting a monthly activity. For information about becoming a volunteer, contact **LuAnne Speeter** at [lspeeter@littlebrothersmn.org](mailto:lspeeter@littlebrothersmn.org) or 612.746.0753. To sign up for volunteering at an upcoming event, or to sponsor an event, contact **Dianne Feltham** at [dfeltham@littlebrothersmn.org](mailto:dfeltham@littlebrothersmn.org) or 612.746.0732. *Thank you!*

### June 2011

**Thursday, June 9, 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.**

NEST Area Birthday Celebration at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church

**Tuesday, June 14, 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

Bingo and Lunch at the League of Catholic Women in Minneapolis

**Wednesday, June 15, 1 – 3 p.m.**

Birthday Luncheon/Bowling Party at Park Tavern, St. Louis Park  
*Sponsored by Park Tavern and LBFE*

**Saturday, June 18, 9 – 11 a.m.**

Friendship and Flowers

**Monday, June 20, 4 – 5 p.m.**

Memorial Service at LBFE Minneapolis

**Thursday, June 23, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.**

Knit & Crochet and Cards Group at LBFE Minneapolis

### July 2011

**Thursday, July 7, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.**

Day of Reflection at the Benedictine Center in Maplewood  
Topic: "The Poetry of Aging"

**Tuesday, July 12, 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

Bingo and Lunch at the League of Catholic Women in Minneapolis

**Saturday, July 16, 9 – 11 a.m.**

Friendship and Flowers

**Thursday, July 21, 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.**

NEST Area Birthday Celebration at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church

**Thursday, July 21, 4 – 6 p.m.**

Birthday Luncheon and Picnic at LBFE Bradford House  
*Sponsored by Roseville Rotary Club*

**Wednesday, July 27, Time TBA**

Jesus Christ Superstar, Chanhassen Dinner Theatre matinee

**Thursday, July 28, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.**

Knit & Crochet and Cards Group at LBFE Minneapolis

### August 2011

**Tuesday, August 9, 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

Bingo and Lunch at the League of Catholic Women in Minneapolis

**Monday, August 15, 4 – 5 p.m.**

Memorial Service at LBFE Minneapolis

**Wednesday, August 17, 12 – 2 p.m.**

Birthday Luncheon and Picnic at LBFE Bradford House  
*Sponsored by McGough*

**Saturday, August 20, 9 – 11 a.m.**

Friendship and Flowers

**Thursday, August 25, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.**

Knit & Crochet and Cards Group at LBFE Minneapolis

**Thursday, August 25, 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.**

NEST Area Birthday Celebration at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church

#### Event location addresses:

LBFE Minneapolis: 1845 E Lake Street, Minneapolis

LBFE Bradford House: 3200 Hamline Avenue N, Arden Hills

The Benedictine Center: 2675 Larpenteur Avenue E, Maplewood

The League of Catholic Women: 207 S 9th Street, Minneapolis

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

Park Tavern: 3401 Louisiana Avenue S, St. Louis Park



# Among FRIENDS

INSIDE: 2011 SUMMER EDITION

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Your tax-deductible financial contribution enables *Little Brothers - Friends of the Elderly* to relieve isolation and loneliness among older adults while promoting independence and well-being.

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**Thank You!**