



Among FRIENDS



WINTER 2011/2012

Acts of Companionship ensure elders are Not Alone!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Not Alone! campaign	1
Executive Director's column	2
Book club builds friendships through lively discussion	3
Thank you to our holiday event sponsors!	3
Social connections reduce the risk of elder self-neglect	4
Board Perspectives: Melissa Fors	5
Giving online	5
Christmas dinner volunteer opportunities	6
Thank you, Thanksgiving dinner volunteers!	6
In memory	6
Activities calendar	7

Did you know that, for the cost of two weeks' worth of pumpkin spice lattes, a lonely Twin Cities elder could receive a caring visit, a home-delivered holiday meal and a wrapped gift? Or for the price of a restaurant dinner for two, 10 shut-in elders could receive Friendship and Flowers visits?

LBFE is delivering these and other Acts of Companionship to elders over the holidays and into next year through our **Not Alone!** campaign. With a goal of 1,500 sponsored Acts by the end of the year, we are intent on relieving isolation and loneliness for hundreds of seniors, while reducing their risk of depression, self-neglect and more. Thanks to your generosity, these older adults will experience social connections, joy and renewed hope.

By donating specific Acts of Companionship, you have a choice of how your donation is being put into action. And you have a tangible understanding of your contribution's effects. Consider donating an Act of Companionship as a gift to a loved one for the holidays. Want to have a real impact on our community? Enlist your company or organization to sponsor the cost of a social event attended by 25 or more elders.



To contribute to **Not Alone!**, visit us at www.littlebrothersmn.org/contribute, call **612.746.0750** or mail your gift using the enclosed envelope and write **NOT ALONE** on the envelope.

Choose which Acts of Companionship your gift will support:

- **\$50** provides a friendly home visit, gift and holiday meal for 1 elder
- **\$100** provides Friendship & Flowers visits to 10 homebound elders
- **\$250** provides a friendly home visit, gift and holiday meal for 5 elders
- **\$1,000** sponsors a memorable community gathering and meal for 25 elders
- **\$5,000** underwrites an entire Thanksgiving or Christmas Day holiday congregated meal for over 100 elders



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

It's not too late to erase loneliness for an elder in 2011. Support the Not Alone! campaign by mail, phone or online.

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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www.littlebrothersmn.org
Editing by LuAnne Speeter
Layout and design by
Allegra - Arden Hills, MN



LBFE: Our elders' home for the holidays

After visiting with several elders at our October birthday celebration, I walked away with a strong appreciation for all the ways LBFE makes celebrations warm, comfortable and personal for those we serve. These are the same terms most of us would use to define the way a special celebration should be.

And now, as the temperature drops, snowflakes appear and winter coats emerge, our thoughts and memories turn to the holidays with family and friends – times of happiness and joy that holiday traditions bring!

This wouldn't be the case for our elders who, in most instances, have no one to celebrate with. That's where LBFE comes in, when the strong relationships established by LBFE staff members and volunteers take on a more profound meaning. Throughout the entire year, not just the holiday season, our staff team and volunteers work effectively to build "family" relationships with our elders that emerge in very special ways during the holidays. We provide social engagement opportunities, special

events and the regular communication that help our elders minimize feelings of loneliness, isolation and, in some cases, depression.

How proud we are to serve our elders in this way! A Thanksgiving feast for hundreds of elders and volunteer families, a Christmas celebration with presents, a tree and wonderful food. So much to look forward to! The social connections established during these two holiday celebrations, and the warm memories related to these events, help offset elders' loneliness and social isolation for many days to come.

Although we will be celebrating with our elders on these two holidays and throughout the season, it is the regular contact we provide our seniors year-round that makes the biggest impact; thousands of "Acts of Companionship" that generate feelings of family, every day of the year.

Greg Voss
Executive Director



Novemberfest?

"Crazy" George Schiltz of Cottage Grove, Minn., and his accordion led elders, volunteers and staff in a sing-along at LBFE's November birthday luncheon.

Book club builds friendships through lively discussion

As the LBFE Book Club settled into the library meeting room on a November evening, its members had a singular goal – dissecting the bestseller, *The Lovely Bones*. The spirited discussion was sprinkled with comments such as, “It was suspenseful throughout,” “So much going on,” and “I thought the family was dysfunctional.”

The Book Club has been meeting one evening a month for about half a year. Its members have devoured such titles as *The Help*, *The Last Letter*, and *Water for Elephants*. Led by LBFE volunteer Amy Wesselhoff, other members include Georgette, Bill, Virginia and Della. Amy comes prepared with questions, and is adept at drawing out members’ reactions to the author’s work and expanding on their comments.

It’s a collaborative group, selecting each month’s book through consensus. They’re not afraid of



LBFE volunteer Amy Wesselhoff (left) leads book club members to probe deeper into each month’s reading selection.

technology, either. Most of the members read their books on Kindles, electronic readers that were provided to LBFE through a grant from The Digital Inclusion Fund of The Minneapolis Foundation. Reading traditional paper versions is perfectly acceptable, too, of course.

The LBFE Book Club meets at the Nokomis Library at 5100 34th Ave.

S. in Minneapolis at 4:45 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month and is anxious to welcome new members. If you’re interested in joining, please contact Chelsea Igou at cigou@littlebrothersmn.org or 612.746.0727. Oh – and consider checking out (or downloading) a copy of next month’s book, *The Great Gatsby*, so you’re prepared for an engaging discussion.

Thank you to our holiday event sponsors!

In the true holiday spirit of giving, a number of individuals, businesses and organizations have stepped forward to make our Thanksgiving and Christmas events memorable and very special for our elder friends. We wish to thank and honor the following for their support:

Farnam Street Financial
Christmas Tea

Just Desserts
Pies and Baked Goods

Deena Igou
Thanksgiving Centerpieces

**Lutheran Church
of the Redeemer, St. Paul**
Christmas Dinner Facilities

McGough Construction
Christmas Tea/December
Birthday Lunch

Prom Catering
Thanksgiving Dinner Facilities
and Catering, Christmas
Dinner Catering

Social connections reduce the risk of elder self-neglect

When Sally recently arrived in town to visit her 83-year-old sister Marie, she was appalled at what she found. Marie's normally pristine apartment was now cluttered with newspapers and unpaid bills; her clothes were caked with food and it was obvious to Sally that her dear sister was in need of a bath.

Self-neglect among older persons is more common than many of us may think. In fact, in some states, it accounts for more than half of the cases reported to adult protection services. Elder self-neglect is the inability to care for oneself and can include failing to eat or drink fluids in an adequate amount, to dress properly for the season, to take necessary medications and to follow basic hygiene practices.

Sadly, studies show that self-neglect makes people vulnerable to health problems and increases the risk of premature death. According to a study by Rush University Medical Center in Chicago, elders who don't care for themselves are six times more likely to die within a year.

“Consider taking the time to invite older family members, friends and neighbors to engage with you and your family in everyday life.”

— Dianne Feltham, LGSW



LBFE's social activities draw isolated elders into a caring community, helping to keep the risk of self-neglect at bay.

A significant reason for self-neglect is the breakdown of a social network that often accompanies aging.* For example, when an elder's spouse dies, children move out of town, or they feel their public status is diminished due to retirement, the elder may lose an important frame of reference and social identity. For some, this can lead to lower self-esteem and reduced coping skills.

“When folks experience a loss of a loved one or an age-related transition, they may be inclined to isolate themselves,” said Dianne Feltham, LGSW, Director of Programs for LBFE. “However, what is really needed is for them to be brought into a caring community.”

LBFE plays a key role in helping elders without social networks stay connected, helping to prevent the isolation that can lead to self-neglect. Our staff and volunteers can also identify if elders are not making

good decisions about their own care; in these instances, LBFE can provide greater assistance through one-on-one support and advocacy or will advocate for protective services.

“As the aging population increases, it's more critical than ever that we understand the risks of elder self-neglect and its implications,” said Dianne. “Consider taking the time to invite older family members, friends and neighbors to engage with you and your family in everyday life. The rewards for your efforts will be immeasurable!”

*Source: *Self-Neglecting Elders: A Clinical Dilemma* by Eloise Rathbone-McCuan and Dorothy Fabian, Auburn House Publishing Co., 1992

Board Perspectives – Melissa Fors



Melissa has been Lorraine's Visiting Volunteer for nearly two years. They enjoy outings together, such as LBFE's holiday dinners.

Melissa Fors has had a long-standing appreciation of elders. For this reason, Melissa found LBFE to be an organization that matched her personal and professional values. "I'm a senior director for marketing at Optum, which is part of UnitedHealth Group," said Melissa.

"UHG's mission is to help people live healthier lives and LBFE works toward that objective, as well."

A Visiting Volunteer with LBFE for nearly two years, Melissa had been drawn to LBFE's mission to combat isolation and loneliness among older

adults. "The LBFE staff carefully matched me with Lorraine, who not only lives near me, but shares a common interest: a love of Shih Tzu dogs," she said. Lorraine had a Shih Tzu named Oreo that she loved and now misses very much, but she has learned to love Melissa's Shih Tzu, Yuuki. "Lorraine and I have become great friends. We go together to events at her church, rummage sales and LBFE holiday meals."

Melissa revealed a "magical moment" with Lorraine when they discovered they both used the same dog groomer. "Lorraine now comes with me and spends time with the owner, reminiscing about Oreo."

In October, Melissa accepted an invitation to join our Board of Directors. "Professionally, I am passionate about growing businesses and I would love to grow LBFE so we can help more elders with more services," she said. "As our society ages, we will need to be prepared to serve a growing population. In joining the Board, I look forward to helping move forward the mission of LBFE to reduce social and emotional isolation among older adults."

Giving online – safe, quick and postage-free

LBFE wants to make it easy for you to contribute. That's why we provide a variety of methods. One way that's growing in popularity is online giving.

By logging onto www.littlebrothersmn.org/contribute, you can select "To give online, click here." You'll be brought to our secure site (see "https" in the web address – the "s" stands for "secure") where you can give your credit card details safely for your donation.

By donating online, you'll save time and postage. And, your donation will be received and recorded sooner. As with a donation that's mailed or called in, LBFE will send you an acknowledgement of your donation for your records.

If you have questions about donating online, contact Sandy Lewis at 612.746.0744 or slewis@littlebrothersmn.org.

Christmas dinner volunteer opportunities

We still have openings for Christmas dinner volunteers. This year, our traditional Christmas dinner will be held on Sunday, December 25, from 12 noon to 2 p.m. at the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, 285 N. Dale Street, St. Paul.

Our area of most critical need is Drivers/Dinner Companions. Please check our website at www.littlebrothersmn.org/volunteer for the most up-to-date volunteer needs.

Please consider brightening the holidays for our elders this season! For more information or to sign up, contact LuAnne Speeter at 612.746.0753 (lspeeter@littlebrothersmn.org).

Thank you, Thanksgiving dinner volunteers!

More than 100 volunteers pitched in to give our elders a Thanksgiving they'll never forget. There were approximately the same number of first-time volunteers as veterans, many taking the initiative to find volunteer opportunities through web searches and such sites as VolunteerMatch.com and HandsOn Twin Cities. Many brought their children along to share in the experience.

To view photos of Thanksgiving 2011 at the Prom Center, check out our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/LittleBrothersMN.

In memory

The following people we served were remembered at our October memorial services:

Verona Halverson
Earl Burkele
Kirt Sonnee
Florence Peterson
June Redell
Charlotte Lindquist
Margie Straumann
Mildred Hohenstein

Little Brothers - Friends of the Elderly gathers every two months to remember people we served who have recently died. Our next memorial services are Monday, December 19, 2011, and Monday, February 20, 2012, 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 touching and memorable 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 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

December 2011 through February 2012 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 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 or 612.746.0732. *Thank you!*

December 2011

Monday, December 5, 12, 19, 10 – 11 a.m.
Gentle Yoga, Hamline United Methodist Church

Tuesday, December 6, 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Christmas Tea and Birthday Lunch at LBFE
Sponsored by McGough Construction

Tuesday, December 13, 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Bingo and Lunch at the League of Catholic Women in Minneapolis

Wednesday, December 14, 12 – 2:30 p.m.
Christmas Tea at LBFE
Sponsored by Farnam Street Financial

Saturday, December 17, 9 – 11 a.m.
Friendship and Flowers

Monday, December 19, 4 – 5 p.m.
Elder Memorial Service at LBFE

Sunday, December 25, 12 – 2 p.m.
Christmas Dinner at Lutheran Church of the Redeemer

Wednesday, December 28, 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.
NEST Area Birthday Celebration at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church

Thursday, December 29, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.
Knit & Crochet / Card-Playing Group at LBFE

January 2012

Wednesday, January 4, 11:30 – 1 p.m.
NEST Area Birthday Celebration at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church

Tuesday, January 10, 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Bingo and Lunch at the League of Catholic Women in Minneapolis

Thursday, January 12, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Day of Reflection at The Benedictine Center of St. Paul's Monastery (lunch included)
Theme: Winter

Wednesday, January 18, 12 – 2 p.m.
Birthday Luncheon at Blake School
Sponsored by Blake School

Saturday, January 21, 9 – 11 a.m.
Friendship and Flowers

Tuesday, January 24, 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Bingo and Lunch at the League of Catholic Women in Minneapolis

Thursday, January 26, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.
Knit & Crochet / Card-Playing Group at LBFE

February 2012

Tuesday, February 14, 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Bingo and Lunch at the League of Catholic Women in Minneapolis

Wednesday, February 15, 12 – 2 p.m.
Birthday Luncheon at LBFE
Sponsorship Available!

Saturday, February 18, 9 – 11 a.m.
Friendship and Flowers

Monday, February 20, 4 – 5 p.m.
Elder Memorial Service at LBFE

Wednesday, February 22, 11:30 – 1 p.m.
NEST Area Birthday Celebration at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church

Thursday, February 23, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.
Knit & Crochet / Card-Playing Group at LBFE

Event location addresses:

LBFE: 1845 E Lake Street, Minneapolis
LBFE Atrium Office: 1295 Bandana Blvd, Ste. 165, St. Paul
The Benedictine Center of St. Paul's Monastery: 2675 Larpenteur Avenue E, Maplewood
Blake School: 511 Kenwood Parkway, Minneapolis
Hamline United Methodist Church, 1514 Englewood Ave., St. Paul
The League of Catholic Women: 207 S 9th Street, Minneapolis
Lutheran Church of the Redeemer: 285 N. Dale Street, St. Paul
Our Saviour's Lutheran Church: 674 Johnson Parkway, St. Paul



Among **FRIENDS**

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INSIDE: WINTER 2011/2012 EDITION

Among Friends is published by
Little Brothers - Friends of the Elderly

1845 East Lake Street
Minneapolis, MN 55407

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among older adults while promoting
independence and well-being.

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Thank You!