

SPRING 2025

# THE ROSE



SOCIAL CONNECTIONS  
& COMMUNITY HAVE  
HEALING EFFECTS

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EASTER VOLUNTEER  
OPPORTUNITIES

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HOLIDAY LEAD  
VOLUNTEERS  
NEEDED

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APRIL IS  
NATIONAL  
VOLUNTEER MONTH

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GIVING  
OPPORTUNITIES

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MESSAGE FROM A  
FOUNDATION DONOR

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HEALTHY AGING AT  
HOME IN  
ONTONAGON

LITTLE BROTHERS  
FRIENDS OF  
THE ELDERLY  
UPPER MICHIGAN

# LBFEE

# A Letter from the Director

## Social Connection and Community Have Healing Effects

In the 25 years I have been involved with Little Brothers - Friends of the Elderly (LBFE) I have met many people who left a lasting impact. Mary is someone whose friendship started out of necessity. With age, Mary's own large social circle diminished to just a couple of friends who would check on her occasionally. She lost her only son to a tragic accident when he was a young man. When her husband of 50 years died, her small family of three, became one and she was alone.

At 80 years old, she was starting a new chapter in her life. For her, making new friends was challenging after a comfortable existence with her husband, grieving together for their son for many years.

With no siblings and few friends, she turned to LBFE for support. No longer able to drive herself, she needed rides to her medical appointments and help with grocery shopping. As the years went by and our friendship grew, her mobility declined, and she could no longer go to the store with me so I would do her shopping. When I would arrive with her groceries, she would have dinner in the oven. She held on to what little independence she had and refused my help with setting the table or preparing the meal. The door of her antique stove was heavy, but she persisted. Hunched over, she would tug on the door to open it and pull out a tray of salmon. She delicately plated each filet and set a salad on the table. She put effort into making it special as she did for her own family for many years.

Preparing a meal for one and eating alone can be a lonely activity, especially on a holiday shared with family and friends for

many years. Mealtimes are a social activity, and the absence of company can exacerbate the feeling of isolation. That is why Little Brothers – Friends of the Elderly celebrates holidays with our friends. We serve more than just a meal; we celebrate the season of reflection and giving with our community by providing dine-in meals with a familial atmosphere decorated for the season. Like family, we invite our friends and neighbors to come together for a joyous celebration and traditional holiday meal.

Each holiday, LBFE serves over 1,000 older adults in five counties thanks to our generous community who donate and volunteer to share their holiday with us. Many restaurants selflessly share their inventory or bake pies. Businesses donate food and supplies. Children decorate meal delivery bags and create festive party favors. It truly is a community celebration.

The United States Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy has classified loneliness and social isolation as an epidemic to call attention to the public health crisis of the lack of connection in our country. For example, chronic loneliness and social isolation can increase the risk of developing dementia by approximately 50% in older adults.

But social connection and community have healing effects and helps protect us from serious health concerns like dementia, heart disease, stroke, and depression.

Through our signature Friendly Visiting program, we facilitate friendships and social connectedness by pairing volun-



Carol Korpela, Executive Director

teers to visit our Forever Friends to celebrate life's everyday joys and precious moments like birthdays and holidays together.

Your financial support is vital to our success in carrying out our important role in addressing this public health crisis. I invite you to join us in making a difference in the lives of our older adult neighbors, like Mary who closed the final chapter of her life at the age of 93 among friends.

**Chronic loneliness and social isolation can increase the risk of developing dementia by approximately 50% in older adults.**

# HAPPY EASTER

## VOLUNTEER

### MEAL PREPARATION

Arrive early to help prepare a traditional holiday meal. A lead cook will provide direction.

### DINING ROOM SETUP

Arrive mid-morning to set tables and decorate the hall. Package meals for home delivery.

### SERVING

Arrive mid-day to serve the meal to seated guests. After serving, sit down and enjoy a meal yourself with the elderly guests.

### CLEANUP—Biggest Need

Assist with cleanup during and after your assignment. Wash dishes, sweep, mop, etc.

### MEAL DELIVERY—Biggest Need

Arrive mid-day to pick up meals to deliver to an elder's home. Stay for a short visit if the elder is receptive to company.

### DRIVE ELDERLY GUESTS

Pick up a few elderly guests at their homes and drive them to and from the dinner party. Stay and enjoy a meal with them.

### MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT

Do you play the piano, guitar, violin, or sing? Provide a festive atmosphere as elderly guests arrive and during the dinner party. Take a break when the meal is served to enjoy the meal yourself.

### NURSING HOME GIFT DELIVERY & VISIT

Pick up gifts from LBFE to deliver to elders residing in nursing homes. Make it meaningful by staying for a short visit.



## LEAD VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

LBFE depends on lead volunteers who are willing to oversee a party and give new volunteers direction.

Lead volunteers are needed in the kitchen to make sure the food is prepared, packaged and served. Dining room leads ensure a festive holiday experience for our guests.

We take food safety very seriously and we will send committed volunteers through food safety management training for certification.

Start now so you can train under a current lead volunteer.

### What makes a great holiday lead:

- \* Passion—an interest in cooking.
- \* Delegation—capable of providing direction
- \* Accountability—willing to follow LBFE party standards and food safety protocols and make sure others do so too.

If you have an interest in joining us in celebrating the holidays with your elderly neighbors, please call today! 906-482-6944.

### EASTER DINE-IN & HOME DELIVERY LOCATIONS

BARAGA ST. ANN'S

HOUGHTON ST. IGNATIUS

CALUMET SACRED HEART

MARQUETTE ELKS LODGE

CALUMET CLK SCHOOL

ONTONAGON HOLY FAMILY

HANCOCK RESURRECTION

SOUTH RANGE GRACE LUTHERAN

HANCOCK SALVATION ARMY

TAPIOLA DOELLE

Register to volunteer at  
[register.littlebrothers.org](https://register.littlebrothers.org)

More details can be found at  
[lbfemichigan.org/easter](https://lbfemichigan.org/easter)

## OTHER EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

LBFE has many social activities planned in the following months throughout our five-county service area. Please consider volunteering to drive elders to the events, prepare a meal, setup, serve, provide entertainment or more. Fill out a volunteer application online at [lbfemichigan.org/volunteer](http://lbfemichigan.org/volunteer) or call 906-482-6944 to learn more. If you're in the Marquette area, call 906-273-2575.

### BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Visit a Forever Friend at their home with a gift and flower or help at a party.

### FOOD BAG DELIVERIES

Deliver personalized bags of food to older adults experiencing food insecurity.

### CELEBRATE AND REMEMBER

Drive Forever Friends to the cemetery so they can pay their respects to loved ones before Memorial Day.

### MOTHER'S DAY & FATHER'S DAY

Help at a party or activity in honor of our Forever Friends or visit them at their home with a gift and flower.

### BINGO

Provide Forever Friends with transportation to and from the event. Help call bingo or assist a participant with this fun activity.

### CRAFTS

Provide creative ideas and materials. Volunteers are also needed to driver Forever Friends to and from the event.



### VOLUNTEER ORIENTATIONS

If you are interested in getting more involved, please come to an orientation. We host a group orientation every 3rd Thursday of the month in Hancock. Dates are subject to change so please rsvp.

Additional orientation options are available in all service counties: Baraga, Houghton, Keweenaw, Marquette, and Ontonagon.



Volunteers bracing the cold weather to split firewood.

## APRIL IS NATIONAL VOLUNTEER MONTH



National Volunteer Month is dedicated to honoring all volunteers who contribute to the betterment of our communities throughout the United States.

Here in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, Little Brothers - Friends of the Elderly mobilizes over 1,200 volunteers who provide friendship and services to lonely and socially isolated older adults. We are a volunteer-based organization and we honor YOU for your commitment and service.

You share holidays with older adults every year, you brace the cold to cut, split, and stack firewood, you commit to visiting lonely elderly every month, you help behind the scenes, and so much more.

LBFE would not be here without you. Thank you.



**In Memoriam**

**Eleanor Bertolli**  
08/03/20 - 09/23/24  
Visited by Ruth Gill

**Margaret Rowloff**  
02/01/50 - 10/18/24  
Visited by Romy Kulke

**Alice Slusarzyk**  
05/06/36 - 10/24/24  
Visited by Jeremy Brunner

**John Cherro**  
08/19/31 - 12/27/24  
Visited by Rasmus Jakobsen

**Carolyn Hall**  
10/01/44 - 01/03/25  
Visited by Julie Lecoq

**Carol Kangas**  
03/30/38 - 01/08/25  
Visited by Jakob Hammer

**Dorothy Fricke**  
02/12/28 - 01/08/25  
Visited by Romy Kulke

**Emma Beauchamp**  
07/02/21 - 01/16/25  
Visited by Cynthia Drake

**Glenda Tambellini**  
10/23/46 - 1/22/25  
Visited by Marie Goetz

**Ron Boyd**  
02/20/42 - 02/03/25  
Visited by Gordon Mulholland

**Esther Juntunen**  
08/02/33 - 02/09/25  
Visited by Kelly Chateau

**Roy Lindstrom**  
10/17/33 - 2/19/25  
Visited by Julie Lecoq



**GIVING TUESDAY GIVES THE GIFT OF FRIENDSHIP**

LBFE recently accepted a grand total of \$144,047.69 from Copper Shores Community Health Foundation. We are grateful to everyone who supported LBFE through their Giving Tuesday Amplification Fund.

This overwhelming act of kindness will sustain our mission to provide friendship and relieve social isolation among the elderly this year.

Thank you for trusting LBFE to deliver impactful programs and services.

**CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR RETIREMENT LES BEK**

Our colleague, Leslie Bek is hanging up her hat in June. She has spent the last few years promoting the health and wellbeing of older adults in her role as Program Manager for LBFE in Marquette. While we were fortunate to have Les spend the twilight of her career with Little Brothers, she has committed her life's work to serving the community in the non-profit sector. Throughout the course of her career, Les has also worked for Marquette General Hospital, Marquette County Health Department, and Girl Scouts. She spent some years with her own consulting firm, Les Is More. We appreciate the skills that Les has brought to grow and expand our outreach in Marquette County. She was integral in the relocation of our branch office in Marquette. Her knowledge of Fund Development has been an asset to our organization. Her talent as a wordsmith has also been highlighted in her monthly contributions to the Mining Journal's Boomers and Beyond Column. Les is looking forward to enjoying travel, golf, music, dancing, and shenanigans in her retirement.

Thank You Les for your contribution to LBFE and the elderly community.



# DRIVE TO CARE Now expanding to Marquette and Ontonagon

Getting to a medical appointment can be challenging for older adults and they depend on LBFE to provide them with essential transportation. Our ability to respond is dependent on volunteer drivers.

Our Drive to Care volunteer engagement campaign provides mileage reimbursement for volunteers who use their own vehicles. This initiative is designed to reduce barriers to volunteering.

Through our Medical Transportation Program, LBFE arranges rides, free of charge, to and from medical appointments for our elderly friends to ensure they can keep their essential appointments.

They rely on us because they are unable to drive themselves. They may not be able to afford public transportation or taxi service, they require standby assist through our door-through-door

service, or they require a wheelchair accessible vehicle.

**Volunteers provide knowledgeable and compassionate service and give reassurance, friendship, and assistance.**

If you are interested in learning more about becoming a Drive to Care volunteer driver, please call 906-482-6944. If you're in Marquette area, call 906-273-2575.

LBFE is grateful to the Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation, Copper Shores Community Health Foundation, Superior Health Foundation, and family foundations for funding this important initiative.

In December, LBFE has partnered with Upper Peninsula Health Care Solutions to grow this program in Ontonagon. Learn more in the article "Healthy Aging at Home in Ontonagon" on the back fold.



**VOLUNTEER DRIVERS NEEDED**

Mileage reimbursement available when you use your own vehicle.



**MAKE A DIFFERENCE  
ONE RIDE AT A TIME**  
[lbfemichigan.org/drive-to-care](http://lbfemichigan.org/drive-to-care)

## HELP DEFINE THE FUTURE OF LBFE

We want to hear from YOU! Little Brothers - Friends of the Elderly will be working on our strategic plan this year. Over the past 40 years, this organization has grown to serve thousands of older adults in five counties under the direction of founder, Michael Aten and his successor, Cathy Kass-Aten.

Now under new leadership, an everchanging landscape, and more studies on the effects of loneliness and social isolation, we want to hear from you about the potential of LBFE as we position

ourselves to serve older adults for the next 40 years.

LBFE will start both internal and external discovery to define our vision, values, goals, and objectives.

You can expect to hear more about this discovery throughout the year and we hope you participate so your voice can be heard.



## WAYS TO GIVE

There are many ways you can support the everyday work of the chapter. Your gift will ensure older adults in Baraga, Houghton, Keweenaw, Marquette, and Ontonagon Counties are supported through friendship and services.

Call Christie at 906-482-6944 ext. 1022 or visit us online at [lbfemichigan.org/donate](http://lbfemichigan.org/donate).

### Program Support

Support our everyday mission as we deliver vital programs and services that promote friendship. Our upcoming Easter campaign provides an opportunity for lonely older adults to visit with their peers over a traditional and delicious holiday meal.

### Monthly Giving

Your monthly gift sustains our everyday work to mobilize volunteers who serve older adults through our seven core programs.

### Memorials and Honoraria

Remember a loved one, recognize a special friend, or honor a special occasion by making a donation in their name.

### Matching Gifts

Employer matching gift programs allow you to team up and combine your employee benefit and donation to LBFE to make a greater impact.

### Fundraisers

Team up with your coworkers, employers, student groups, recreational groups, and civic groups to support LBFE. Proceeds raised from fundraisers like food drives, bake sales, and Jeans Friday can support our everyday work.

### Non-Financial Gifts

Non-Financial donations in-kind reduce our direct costs and keep expenses manageable. LBFE accepts vehicles, office supplies, firewood, party supplies, and medical aid equipment like walkers and wheelchairs.

**LBFE UPPER MICHIGAN FOUNDATION SURPASSES \$3,000,000!**



The goal of the Foundation is to provide a perpetual source of income to the chapter to help support their programs and ensure their future.

### MESSAGE FROM A FOUNDATION DONOR

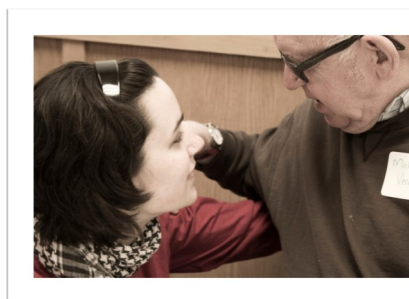
We appreciate Little Brothers - Friends of the Elderly (LBFE) so much. My parents, Len and Leona Byers (Mountjoy), moved back to Dollar Bay at the age of 70 to enjoy their retirement. They had very little family left in the area so LBFE became their family along with friends from Saints Peter and Paul Lutheran Church.

My parents and my mom's sisters, Fran Petersen and Janet Tourville, spent some special holidays with LBFE. On several Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, my husband, Tom, and I were able to come up and help serve food while my parents and aunts enjoyed the meals and friendship. Those holidays are some of my favorites!

We have chosen to remember LBFE in our trust as they are there for our loved ones when we can't be there. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Tom and Dawn Sneckenberg (Byers)

### YOU CAN HELP TOO!



You can ensure the future of Little Brothers programs here in the Upper Peninsula by including Little Brothers Foundation in your estate plan.

Your gift will be invested and managed by Little Brothers Foundation and provide a perpetual source of income to the Little

Brothers Chapter.

The Foundation supports the Chapter with guaranteed 1% quarterly payouts from our unrestricted account, 30% payouts from all wills received, and annual payouts from our endowed funds which target specific programs.

Your gift will support Little Brothers programs today, while building our Foundation for continued support long into the future.

As always, we encourage you to consult with your attorney or financial advisor.

Contact Cathy Kass-Aten at (906) 275-9260 or (906) 282-3406.



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Hancock, MI 49930

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SPRING 2025

# THE ROSE

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## HEALTHY AGING AT HOME IN ONTONAGON

LBFE is excited to transition from our initial assessment of our services in Ontonagon to a new pilot project.

Thanks to partnerships with Upper Peninsula Health Care Solutions and the Ontonagon Township Library, we are responding to the greatest needs expressed by older adults.

One feature we will be piloting is providing access to technology and telehealth services for older adults who lack the technology and internet access to participate in telehealth appointments.

LBFE volunteers will drive them to and from the Ontonagon Township Library for internet connectivity and private space and LBFE will provide the technology.

LBFE will also recruit volunteers to drive older adults to their medical appointments.

Additionally, we are looking forward to

enhancing our current signature Friendly Visiting program where volunteers are paired to visit our Forever Friends. LBFE will be addressing Social Determinants of Health among older adults to develop activity plans to improve their social connections.

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

For this program to be successful, LBFE relies on volunteers to deliver these services. To help us engage and coordinate volunteers, we are pleased to introduce you to Jill Rady, an Ontonagon resident with extensive experience from her career with Girl Scouts.

If you live or work in Ontonagon and would like to help LBFE address this vital public health need, please contact Jill to share your feedback or volunteer at 906-482-6944 or email [jill.rady@littlebrothers.org](mailto:jill.rady@littlebrothers.org)



Jill Rady

Through this partnership, we have digital blood pressure cuffs available to give away free to eligible participants age 60 and older. Please call 906-482-6944 if you know of someone in need.