

CINCINNATI NEWS



2020

DIRECTOR'S COVID-19 REPORT

Dear Friends,

For years we have been writing our story on the impact of isolation and loneliness among the elderly and what we do to alleviate it. With COVID-19 impacting our lives we are having more conversations about the effect of isolation and loneliness and how relationships, friendships and belonging to a community bear more importance, now more than ever.

The pandemic has given us the opportunity to educate ourselves on what it means for people who have been no strangers to “sheltering in place”, what it means to live a life with not a lot of interaction with others. For some people “sheltering in place” is a new concept; unfortunately for those already familiar with it, the pandemic has intensified it.

We were quick to put into motion what we could do in response to the pandemic. We increased the number of participants in our telephone reassurance program, spent eight Saturdays delivering “Thinking of You” bags to 580 of our elders and those living in local nursing homes, sent out art packets, providing shopping assistance as needed. Amy Nicolai delivered an art project to our art program participants. Randy put together a “Movie at Home” packet to our movie participants and had a conference call to discuss the movie. Kathy Eby hosted Card Club over the phone, playing 10 rounds of Showdown poker. Local students have been sending cards to our elders; those celebrating Birthdays have been receiving “more cards than ever” as one recipient reported, and receiving their birthday bag, cake and flowers. We are partnering with Legacy Psychological Services in developing the “LBFE/Legacy Listens” program where we are identifying people who are in need of ongoing counseling. Our Third Thursday friends have been receiving a packet with Laurie’s jokes, Jenny’s trivia, word searches, art sheets and this month, a box lunch – all that we normally share, without the smiles and hugs.

We are currently delivering picnic lunches on Saturdays taking us up to and including the 4th of July. We are then going to start thinking of ways we can take our summer outings to our friends. We sent 120 surveys out asking our elders what they miss, what they look forward to and anything new they would like to do – the responses have been varied and exciting.

In this newsletter, you will read about the successful Gala we had on February 29th, which we are grateful to have had. Our theme “Honoring the Superhero in all of us” captured what we have known all along – there are superheroes everywhere and amongst us all. We look back on our Winter Events and Outings, remember the gift of the life of Mary Beth Cluxton, a plea for our volunteer Jim Feldman, information about donating from Joe Callahan and more!

Please continue to support us by sending a donation, remember us in your thoughts and prayers and know that you are a beloved member of the community of Little Brothers – Friends of the Elderly.

Sincerely,
Yogi Wess
Executive Director



Winter Outings and Winter Events

December is a special month at Little Brothers-Friends of the Elderly. Everyone gets excited with the coming of Christmas and the New Year. Our tradition is to start the holiday season with the Trim the Tree party. Fifteen elders attend and enjoy an excellent lunch of homemade soup and sandwiches, decorate the Christmas tree and the office --all thanks to Lynne Nix and her group of friends, who have been hosting this event for 15 years.



Joan Reul displays her Trim the Tree skills

We also kept up with the tradition of going to Laboiteaux Woods of the Cincinnati Park District for their Christmas craft party. Twelve elders, volunteers, and staff were guided through six Christmas craft projects and everyone took their creations home to decorate their tree. We all shared hot chocolate and animal stories from the in-house park expert.

We participated in Peter Mosher Service Day for the 6th year, which is held in honor of Peter, who died in 2013. His friends and family spend the first Saturday in December volunteering at area agencies. We supplied live Christmas trees, decorations, lights, and wreaths for eight of our elderly friends, and the volunteers provided the visit and assisted in decorating the tree, enjoying hot chocolate and cookies. Our elders especially enjoy the long lasting smell of the pine needles in their apartments at Christmas!



Blanche McGrady shows off the Peter Mosher Tree in the Judson Jerusalem Senior Building Lobby

Everyone looks forward to our Christmas Eve party, probably the most popular of the year. No exception this year. The K of C Hall is festively decorated to greet folks as they arrive. Some tasty snacks were shared before the big meal of homemade potato soup, honey baked ham with a pineapple sauce, scalloped potatoes, and smoked green



Third Thursday attendees entertained by The Dancing Grandmas

beans. Santa arrived to pass out presents to excited recipients. We ended with a champagne toast. Everyone left satisfied and happy.

Christmas day we visited and took meals to 125 elders (turkey dinner) with visits. We also saw 400 elders at four local nursing homes with bags of goodies and flowers. All of our elderly received personalized gifts this year donated by our generous volunteers and community donor groups and individuals.



The Gibboney family delivering Christmas cheer and lots of gifts



Lynne Nix and the Trim the Tree gang



Joni and Gary Mataitis Wish List Queen and King!

that tune” celebrating famous love songs. Teams compete for nice prizes, but everyone walks away with candy and other goodies.

Everything from microwaves and clothes to books and cds are donated, according to what elders asked for, needed and wanted.

February is the month of love and it is no different at LBFE. Our Valentine’s Day party is a favorite with good food, good company, and a game of “name



The Sweethearts enjoying Valentines Day

As the winter doldrums set in it is time to get ready for the winter activities. This year we went to Entertainment Junction, the Omnimax



Jim Meyer, Silas Warman and Joan Reul at Entertainment Junction

theatre at the Museum Center, and the revamped Reds Hall of Fame. We enjoyed the amazing train exhibits and the Coney Island exhibit, which sparked interesting conversations from our elders who remember the old Coney. All enjoyed the movie on Super Hero dogs at the Omnimax Theatre. There is nothing like smart and cute dogs to make you feel good. And all our Reds fans enjoyed the totally revamped Hall of Fame Museum. The exhibits brought many nice memories back to our old friends.

We had a great holiday and winter season; unfortunately, because of the Covid -19 virus, we had to shut things down just before the St. Patrick’s Day party. We are looking forward to the day when we can be together with our friends celebrating and enjoying one another’s company.



David Hopper and the Reds

The Assembly of Superheroes Unite for Another Successful Gala

At a time when heroes on the frontline make the daily news, we wanted to recognize some Superheroes who have made a big impact on Little Brothers – Friends of the Elderly. Those heroes are the people who attended, organized and otherwise supported our annual gala on February 29, 2020.

Clovernook Country Club resembled a convention of Marvel and DC enthusiasts, with guests and staff dressing the part. Nearly 150 people enjoyed an evening of great food and fun, including the opportunity to take selfies with superheroes.



Superheroes unite



Randi Maxwell, Ben and Caroline Alge and Carrie Inderhees gather round the Bourbon basket

Our raffle baskets were once again a big hit, thanks to all those who donated. New this year – and more popular than we could have imagined – was our bourbon specialty basket, which featured 17 bottles of bourbon from across our region’s distilleries.

The décor, ranging from superhero slogans, backdrops and lighting to centerpieces created by inmates from the Southeastern Correctional Institution, made our Superhero theme come alive. We also recognized some community superheroes

who have made a direct impact on the lives of our elderly. Those people included: Beth Ketzer, Deb McChargue, Dr. Jerome Gabis, Peggy and Kevin Mosher, Dr. Amador Delamerced, Jr., and Cincinnati Fire Department Station 51. Their actions truly reflect our purpose of “flowers before bread” and demonstrate the importance of treating the elderly with dignity, love and respect.



Chair Katie Baker, Yogi Wess and Superhero Honoree Dr. Jerome Gabis



Terry Herzog and George Hull with their favorite Superheroes

As the evening progressed, so did our fundraising. Guests showed their support by “ringing the bell” with each donation, moving our leader board closer to the evening’s \$23,000 goal. One of the most exciting parts of our gala is the live auction and this year was no exception. Attendees eagerly bid on a Cincinnati Reds Fan package, The Ultimate Labor Day Fireworks party, tickets to the sold-out Billy Joel concert in September, a Music-and-Meals Theater Package and a Girls’ Night of Fun Event. The enthusiasm in the room reflected the generosity we feel from all our volunteers and donors, whether they were present at the gala or not.

The good fortune that our event took place before widespread changes in community gatherings is not lost on us. In the end, we netted just over \$40,000, which is a slight increase from last year. These funds are needed now, more than ever, as we work to recoup lost revenue from other fundraisers that had to be canceled.



l – r Luanne Gibboney, Ron Brown, Rick Yauss, Roger Yauss and Linda Brown – always Superheroes!

Each year we are grateful for the financial support generated by this event, but we are even more appreciative in a year when it feels like everything in life has been turned upside down. Our focus remains on our mission: to relieve isolation and loneliness among the elderly in our community and to assist them in living quality lives.

Thank you to all the Superheroes who made our 2020 gala a huge success. Mark your calendars for Saturday, February 27, 2021 for next year’s event!



l – r Margaret Woodman and Vicky Lay surrounded by Superheroes

KIDNEY DONOR NEEDED



One of our long-time volunteers, Jim Feldmann, is facing a critical health issue. He has stage 5 kidney failure and needs a kidney transplant. His physicians have estimated that a transplant could increase his life by 12-20 years, time he would gratefully spend with his wife, Gloria, their children, and grandchildren.

Jim started volunteering with LBFE in 2003. He has served three terms on our Board of Directors and has been on the Italian Dinner Committee for eight years. He has been a visiting volunteer over the years and is currently matched with Silas Warman.

You may also know Jim from his role as Santa Claus for many years and as a regular volunteer on the holidays, summer outings, and winter outings. He is also the infamous winemaker who supplies his creations for our Italian Dinner and many gift baskets.

The information that follows was provided by Gloria in hopes that someone will find it in their heart to step forward and get tested for compatibility.

We wish Jim good health and are sending prayers his way.

INFORMATION ABOUT KIDNEY DONATION

Here are some facts about kidney donation:

- We are born with an extra kidney, you only need one to live a full, healthy life.
- The majority of the donor surgery is a laparoscopic procedure with small incisions.
- Recuperation is generally 2 weeks for some and 6 weeks for the very active.
- All medical expenses are paid by the recipient's insurance.
- Donor must be between the ages of 21 years and 70 years.

If you are interested, you can contact The Christ Hospital transplant coordinator, Tricia Monson. All contact with The Christ Hospital is completely confidential. She is a great resource for anyone seeking information on the process.

Tricia can be reached at 513-585-1440 or tricia.monson@thechristhospital.com.

Of course I would love to talk to anyone that has questions or would just like to know more about the situation.

I know that donating a kidney is a major decision. However, after having read countless donor stories, it's clear there are some souls who feel called to this and see it as an opportunity to save a life. My hope and prayer is that we find such a person for Jim.

Gratefully,
Gloria Feldmann
513-290-2204

Volunteer Appreciation

April 19th was our scheduled Volunteer Appreciation Party which was canceled due to COVID-19. We were looking forward to thanking all of our volunteers and honoring Norine Gettys, Ruth Holtel, Alicia Modarressi, and Debbie Valitutto. We will look forward to our 2021 Volunteer Appreciation Party when we will honor Norine, Ruth, Alicia and Debbie with the presentation of the Tom Wess Service Awards.

Although we were not able to enjoy being together we want to thank all of our volunteers for living out the mission of LBFE – we thank you for being a visiting volunteer, a telephone reassurance volunteer, art group volunteer, transportation provider, movie night attendee, card player, birthday gift bag coordinator, part of our Third Thursday team, holiday volunteer, summer and winter events volunteer, member of the Lunch Ladies, volunteer cook, special events volunteers, Wish List coordinator, set up and clean up volunteer, board member, committee member, birthday visitor, card sender, COVID-19 response volunteer and the many ways LBFE is supported through our volunteers. Thank you!

Mary Beth Cluxton

October 25, 1947 – February 19, 2020



Mary Beth and the Art Afternoon group

We were privileged to have Mary Beth as a volunteer for 9 years. Mary Beth was the leader of our Art Afternoon program that met the first Tuesday of every month. Mary Beth would arrive early on the first Tuesday and get ready for the arrival of the elderly who looked forward to “Art Group” every month. Mary Beth would lead the group

in collage work, painting – which was their favorite. Mary Beth had many creative ways to draw out the creativity in each elder who, most times, did not realize that they had hidden talents, hidden capabilities. In her quiet, strong way, Mary Beth created a space where they could thrive and come alive through painting.

Mary Beth organized our Art Sale, kept our art cabinets well stocked, took care of our volunteer birthday cards, created our auction paddles and yardsticks for our yearly gala and golf outing.

Everything that Mary Beth was involved with had great results as she was creative, dependable, and did everything with class and grace.

We were saddened by the passing of Mary Beth and we will miss Mary Beth greatly in the days ahead. We are a better organization for knowing Mary Beth, grateful for the time she generously gave us, and certainly are more creative and artistic because of her.

In Mary Beth’s honor, our Art Afternoon program will continue under the direction of volunteer Amy Nicolai, with the assistance of volunteers JoAnn Wess, Robin Wickett, and Kathy Stigler. Thank you!



l – r Mary Seguin, Mike Knueven and Mary Beth April 2019 receiving the Tom Wess Service Award

Strategies for Giving

by Joe Callahan

Little Brothers Friends of the Elderly (LBFE) appreciates all of the generous gifts that you provide. Your gifts allow the LBFE organization to make a difference in the lives of our area seniors.

Many of the donors have asked for ways they can contribute other than writing a check. Today I will cover one strategy for giving, and that is to contribute appreciated stock.

For example, let’s say you bought Procter & Gamble for \$10,000 and now it’s worth \$15,000. If you sell the shares, you will pay capital gains taxes on the \$5,000 profit. If you donate those shares to LBFE instead, you benefit in the following ways:

- You make the gift that you intended.
- You avoid the capital gains tax.
- You get to make a \$15,000 deduction (assuming that you itemize deductions) that cost you \$10,000.

This is a simplified example. Please consult your tax advisor regarding your specific tax situation.

If you would like to discuss this in more detail or other ideas for giving based upon your specific situation, feel free to reach out to me, Joe Callahan at Callahan Financial 513-421-0800.

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Kroger will donate 4% of what you spend on your shopping to Little Brothers-Friends of the Elderly.

Simply sign up at www.krogercommunityrewards.com

Use our organization number MR078

Volunteers needed to maintain our Mural Garden

We are in need of a team of volunteers to maintain our Mural Garden. The area needs weeding and mulching. The area is filled with perennials which were planted by a volunteer Eagle Scout who maintained the area for the last couple of years and is no longer able to devote time to the garden. If you are interested, available, or have any questions please contact the office at (513) 542-7555 or email us at cincinnati@littlebrothers.org