



FriendshipWorks
Creating connections to end elder isolation.

Your Impact. Our Gratitude.

Fiscal Year 2023
(July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023)



Friendly Visiting Volunteer Evan (L)
with his match, Chris

“...please know you are making life more vibrant, healthy, and happy for older adults every day. Thank you for believing in our important mission!”



Dear Friend,

Thank you for your unwavering support and dedication to help FriendshipWorks enter its 40th year of reducing social isolation for thousands of older adults in Boston, Brookline, Newton, Somerville, and Cambridge. **You helped bring joy, support, purpose, and meaningful connection to 1,600 older adults – an increase of 23 percent over last year – and I am grateful and inspired to share this report with you!**

On May 2, 2023, U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy issued an Advisory about the Epidemic of Loneliness and Social Isolation. He reported that **social connection is as critical to our health and well-being as food, water, and shelter – something FriendshipWorks has inherently known for decades.**

The good news is that social isolation is solvable and treatable, and with your ongoing support, we will continue to bring hope, joy, and a brighter future for older adults in Greater Boston for generations to come. **Together, we are working to remove the stigma of loneliness by fostering and nurturing mutually beneficial friendships between elders and volunteers.** FriendshipWorks’ highly personalized services emphasize one-on-one interactions and companionship, fostering meaningful, long-lasting human connections. By strengthening our interpersonal relationships, we can improve our heart and brain health, reduce our risk of diabetes, high blood pressure, and depression. **Friendship works!**

Whether you’ve chosen to be involved with our mission by volunteering, donating, or participating in our Annual Walk to End Elder Isolation, please know you are making life more vibrant, healthy, and happy for older adults every day. **Thank you for believing in our important mission!**

Yours in friendship,

Janet Seckel-Cerrotti, Executive Director

Program Impact by the Numbers



1,600

Older Adults Participating



598

Caring Volunteers



534

Friendly Visiting
Matches



285

Medical Escort
Trips



262

Elders Comforted
Each Month by PetPals Visits



700

Elders Connected
Through MusicWorks



143

Tasks & Errands Completed
by Friendly Helpers



Elders Pay No Fee
for Programming
Thanks to Supporters Like You

Why I Volunteer as a Friendly Visitor:

- 33%** Looking to connect/make a new friend/build own social circle
- 21%** Helping to address feeling of loss or distance of own family
- 60%** Looking to add (more) purpose to life
- 29%** Looking to connect to a community/get to know the area



“The experience of being a friendly visitor has allowed me to connect with someone I would otherwise never have known. Also, as a stay-at-home mom, being a friendly visitor has been so valuable to me to feel like I have a sense of purpose outside of my immediate family, and to allow me to make social connections besides just my children and my friends who also have small children.”

- Elizabeth Alexy

Program Highlights FY 2023

All over Boston, hundreds of elders are connecting and thriving ... because of your support!

Thank you for helping to reduce social isolation and sustain our critical programming. Here's a glimpse of the positive impact you are making every day.

Friends Are Like Books - They Always Have a Good Story to Tell!

Thank you for helping FriendshipWorks' Friendly Visiting program match older adults with caring volunteers for friendship and support. Using a highly personalized process to match volunteers with older adults by interests, cultures, activities, and more creates a strong foundation for deeper connection and long-lasting friendships.

Joan Hill and Dayna Gallagher were matched over a year ago, and their friendship is still going strong. They love exploring local bookstores together or sharing a cup of tea while they discuss the many books in Joan's collection. They also enjoy going out for a bite to eat or visiting museums and other historic sites in the area.

New to the area, Dayna was looking to connect with older adults in the community and became a Friendly Visiting volunteer. Joan was the perfect match.

"We're BFF's! I love that Joan and I can talk about the things we are both interested in, like books or birds."

The friendship has also made an impact in Joan's life too.

"There's a difference when your wheelchair is pushed by a friend." Adds Joan, "Dayna makes me feel like I'm 40 again!"

Joan Hill (L) and Friendly Visitor Dayna Gallagher sharing their love of books.



Medical Escorts Help Keep Older Adults Healthy

Did you know that nearly 11 percent of older adults who skipped needed medical care in the last year say they did so because of a lack of support?

Thanks to your help, elders who live alone or without family nearby like Natalia can rely on FriendshipWorks' Medical Escorts Program and access the medical care they need. Here's a note of thanks from Natalia's daughter, Elena.

"I wanted to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude for your ongoing support in taking my mother, Natalia, to her medical appointments. Your kindness and dedication have made a significant difference in our lives, and we are so

grateful for your help. Your assistance has brought us comfort and peace of mind during a difficult time, and I cannot thank you enough."



Bringing Comfort and Joy through PetPals

Did you know that interacting with a friendly pet can help reduce blood pressure, improve overall cardiovascular health, and release endorphins that produce a calming effect?

Your support enabled 23 PetPals volunteer teams, including Nancy and her dog Ollie, to visit 262 elders every month across 20 assisted living, senior centers, and nursing homes in Boston. When elders experience the unconditional love of a pet, they reap all of the physical and emotional benefits, too.



Hale House residents love seeing Ollie and his playful antics when he and Nancy visit.

(Photo Credit: John Deputy)



A Friendly Helping Task Causes Ripple Effect

Because of you, older adults who needed a little extra help with short-term tasks, errands, or chores were able to accomplish them using FriendshipWorks' Friendly Helping Program.

Friendly Helping volunteers organized Jan Gadson Louissant's craft closet and supplies. She was then able to bring her flower arranging workshops to hundreds of older adults at community centers and senior housing developments all over Greater Boston.

"I recognized that there are a lot of other older adults who are isolated. By offering flower arranging classes I create a safe place for them to come and connect. FriendshipWorks' Friendly Helpers make it possible for me to teach as many people as I do."

- Jan Gadson Louissant, program participant

Sound, Song, and Smiles!

Our MusicWorks program helps older adults socialize, move, and engage with their neighbors through musical games, singing, playing instruments, zumba, and dancing. In collaboration with Goddard House Community Initiatives, the year-round program is offered to groups in 12 elder residential buildings in Boston and features multicultural guest musicians and performers. MusicWorks helped 700 older adults connect and experience the joy of music.

According to Safiya Leslie, MusicWorks Manager, many residents come to the program hesitant and skeptical of their own musical abilities but then end up confidently playing instruments or singing songs. Safiya says,

“I also see how the music breaks down any language barriers when everyone starts moving to the music together.”



Residents of Council Tower in Roxbury, play their favorite percussion instruments at a drum circle during a MusicWorks session.



“I was motivated to donate to your cause because of the recent loss of my last surviving grandparent this past summer. I was lucky enough to have grandparents in my life until I was 30 years old and wanted to give to this community in order to help end isolation among the elderly. Nobody deserves to be alone, and the simple act of a visit, reading a book, going for a walk, can really go a long way.”

- Samantha Ghika, FriendshipWorks supporter

Charity Navigator



✦ FOUR-STAR ✦

FriendshipWorks has earned Charity Navigator's highest four-star rating for leadership, innovation, financial efficiency, sustainability, and trustworthiness.

Thank you for supporting the 2023 Walk to End Elder Isolation!

Save the Date, May 19, 2024*



\$131,136
Raised

Thank you to:
50 Teams
200+ Walkers
467 Donors
33 Sponsors

Our Top Three Fundraisers:

Connie Packard*
Dean Denniston
Cathy Fabrizi

Our Generous Sponsors:



Mt. Pleasant Home
Peabody Properties
Sherrill House



Congratulations to our 2023 Award Recipients!

The Catalyst Award is for inspiring leaders dedicated to improving the lives of elders.

Recipient: Sandra Harris



The David Libby Award is for outstanding volunteerism.

Recipient: Kelley Pope



Beacon Hill Village
The Cambridge Homes
Hale House
Maloney Properties
Massachusetts General Hospital
Newton-Wellesley Hospital
Seniors Helping Seniors

In Kind Donations

JP Licks	Five Iron Golf
Huntington Theater	The Red Sox Foundation
Roche Brothers	Institute of Contemporary Art
Rogerson House	Carol Kemp
Polkadog Bakery	Greg Ciccarelli Photography
Kupel's Bakery	Art Sullivan
New England Patriots	Bass Pro Shops

* Our 9th Annual Elderbration and Walk to End Elder Isolation will be dedicated to past board president and long-time advocate, Connie Packard, who passed away August 2023.



Creating connections to end elder isolation.

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