



**FriendshipWorks**  
Creating connections to end elder isolation.

# Your Impact. Our Gratitude.

Fiscal Year 2024  
(July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024)



Maureen and Tricia

*“Friendship and connection are timeless...Though the world has evolved, the human heart’s desire for connection remains constant.”*



Dear Friend,

As I reflect on FriendshipWorks’ journey over the past 40 years, I am filled with a deep sense of gratitude. Your countless heartfelt cards, letters, and messages remind me of the profound impact we’ve made together. This year, you’ve helped us create meaningful connections for 1,800 older adults across Boston, Brookline, Newton, Somerville, and Cambridge – an incredible 12.5% increase from FY 2023.

Friendship and connection are timeless. The need for companionship, a shared laugh, or simply knowing someone cares, remains just as vital today as it was four decades ago. The stories of friendship formed then are strikingly similar to those we hear today. Though the world has evolved, the human heart’s desire for connection remains constant.

I am pleased to share this report where you will find stories and reflections that highlight the growth of our programs and the work we are doing to ensure that no one has to age alone.

Whether you’ve been with FriendshipWorks for one year or 40, please know that your time and contributions bring joy and comfort into the lives of older adults who need it most. Thank you for believing in the power of human connection and for being a vital part of our journey!

Yours in friendship,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Janet Seckel-Cerrotti'.

Janet Seckel-Cerrotti, Executive Director

## Program Highlights FY 2024

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

This report is dedicated to all of you who have made an impact over the last 40 years! What beautiful connections you have helped us make!



*Friendly Visiting Volunteer Ann Canning with her friend Mary Gill in 2000.*



*Friendly Visiting Volunteer, Susan Balogh (L) and her friend Carol enjoying the Loring Greenough gardens in 2024.*

## *Friendships in Bloom!*

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.

The stories of friendship from years ago mirror those we hear today:

Friendly Visiting volunteer Ann was matched with her friend Mary in the 1990's. They both enjoyed identifying the flowers they loved while visiting local parks and garden spaces. Ann recalls that, at 94, Mary was still incredibly active and had a real lust for life, always looking for ways to improve her life and learn new things. "She was such a resourceful person and such a go-getter," says Ann. The two were featured in FriendshipWorks' (then Match-Up Interfaith Volunteers) first video where Mary expressed how much she enjoyed learning about Ann's life. "We're the perfect match-up."

Decades later in 2021, Friendly Visiting Volunteer Susan Balogh was matched with her friend Carol Wlodkoski. They too love to visit gardens and plant flowers while engaging in friendly conversations. "One thing I admire about Carol, she embodies being a life-long learner," Susan says. "She is always one of my cheerleaders. I have learned that, no matter what age you are, pursuing things you love keeps us engaged and brings us delight."

The two also have a passion for visiting bookstores, museums, and their favorite new coffee spot – a local Ukrainian bakery. Carol says, "I think we have a great rapport because we were both teachers and are full of information. I am very lucky that Susan was matched with me."

# Program Impact by the Numbers FY2024

July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024



1,800

Older Adults Participating



600

Caring Volunteers



451

Friendly Visiting  
Matches



395

Medical Escort  
Trips



493

Elders Comforted  
Each Month by PetPals Visits



706

Elders Connected  
Through MusicWorks



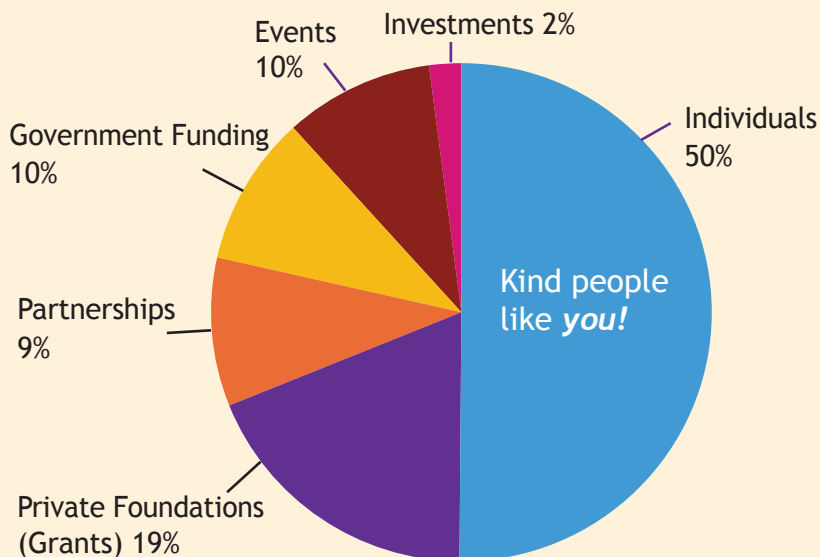
164

Tasks & Errands Completed  
by Friendly Helpers



Elders Pay No Fee  
for Programming  
Thanks to Supporters Like You

## Where Our Funding Comes From:



This chart showcases the vital revenue streams that sustain our mission to reduce elder isolation in Greater Boston. We would like to acknowledge the generous donations from our individual supporters. And a special thank you to those who choose to leave a lasting legacy by including FriendshipWorks in their will.

To learn more about planned giving visit: [fw4elders.org/legacy](http://fw4elders.org/legacy)

## Relieving the Stress of Medical Appointments

Older adults are still making their way back to medical appointments since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. FriendshipWorks' Medical Escort program had a 39% increase over last year – the highest number of escorts since 2021.

Thanks to your support, those who live alone or without family nearby like Tom can rely on our caring volunteers to access the medical care they need.

*"I just want to let FriendshipWorks know how much I appreciate all your kindness. It made me feel wonderful and made the worry of my hospital visit much easier."*

– Thomas Dunscombe (L) with Medical Escort volunteer Molly Gerahty 2024



Here is a note of gratitude from the 1980's for the Medical Escort program:

*"My sincere thanks for relieving the tension I had in regard to my afternoon appointment. Peter was just wonderful in his care of me. When I arrived home, I was wondering if my doctor and nurses wondered if I had brought my lawyer along to make sure I received attention. If you see Peter, tell him I am very grateful for his care. One lady asked, 'Is he your son?' I would have liked to say 'yes'."*

– Margaret Reid, Program Participant, 1980's

## Bringing Comfort and Joy Through PetPals

Your support helped new PetPals volunteer teams "graduate" through our training so they can bring the joy and unconditional love of a pet to elders. Teams visit 22 assisted living communities, nursing homes, and senior centers all over Boston. Volunteer Tim Mackie shares how he and Olive love visiting Hale House:

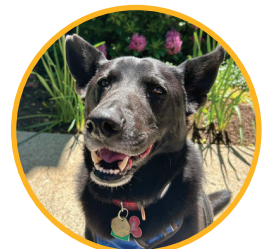
*"It's like going to a room full of friends. We share stories. We sit together and listen to music. A lot of the other older adults haven't heard about each other's backgrounds, and when I ask them, they start chatting and getting to know one another – so that's really cool too. I like knowing that what we do helps people and seeing how excited they get for our visits."*

– Tim Mackie, PetPals Volunteer



Above: Tim Mackie (L) with Olive

Right: A few of this year's PetPals "graduates" (top to bottom): S'mores, Lucky, and Mr. Bean





## Getting by with a Little Help from Their Friendly Helper



Because of you, older adults received a little extra help with short-term tasks, errands, or chores through the Friendly Helping Program.

*“Thank you so much for sending the person to help me pack. I had a really pleasant time talking to her.” – Luz*

*“I want to thank you very much for sending someone over to help me with my Netflix and Roku TV. He was very good and helped me a lot. He did a really good job.” – Ralph K.*

## Making Beautiful Music Together

Thanks to our collaboration with Goddard House Community Initiatives, our MusicWorks program helps older adults socialize, move, and engage with their neighbors through musical games, singing, playing instruments, zumba, and dancing. This program is offered to groups in more than 14 elder residential buildings in Boston and features multicultural guest musicians and performers. MusicWorks helped over 700 older adults connect and experience the joy of music.

*“It happens all the time. People are reluctant to participate at first. By the end of a session, they are playing instruments and trying to sing.”*

– Cornell Coley (R), MusicWorks’ Performer & Teacher



## Thank You to Our Board!

FriendshipWorks would like to thank the Board of Directors for their time, talent, and dedication to advancing our mission.



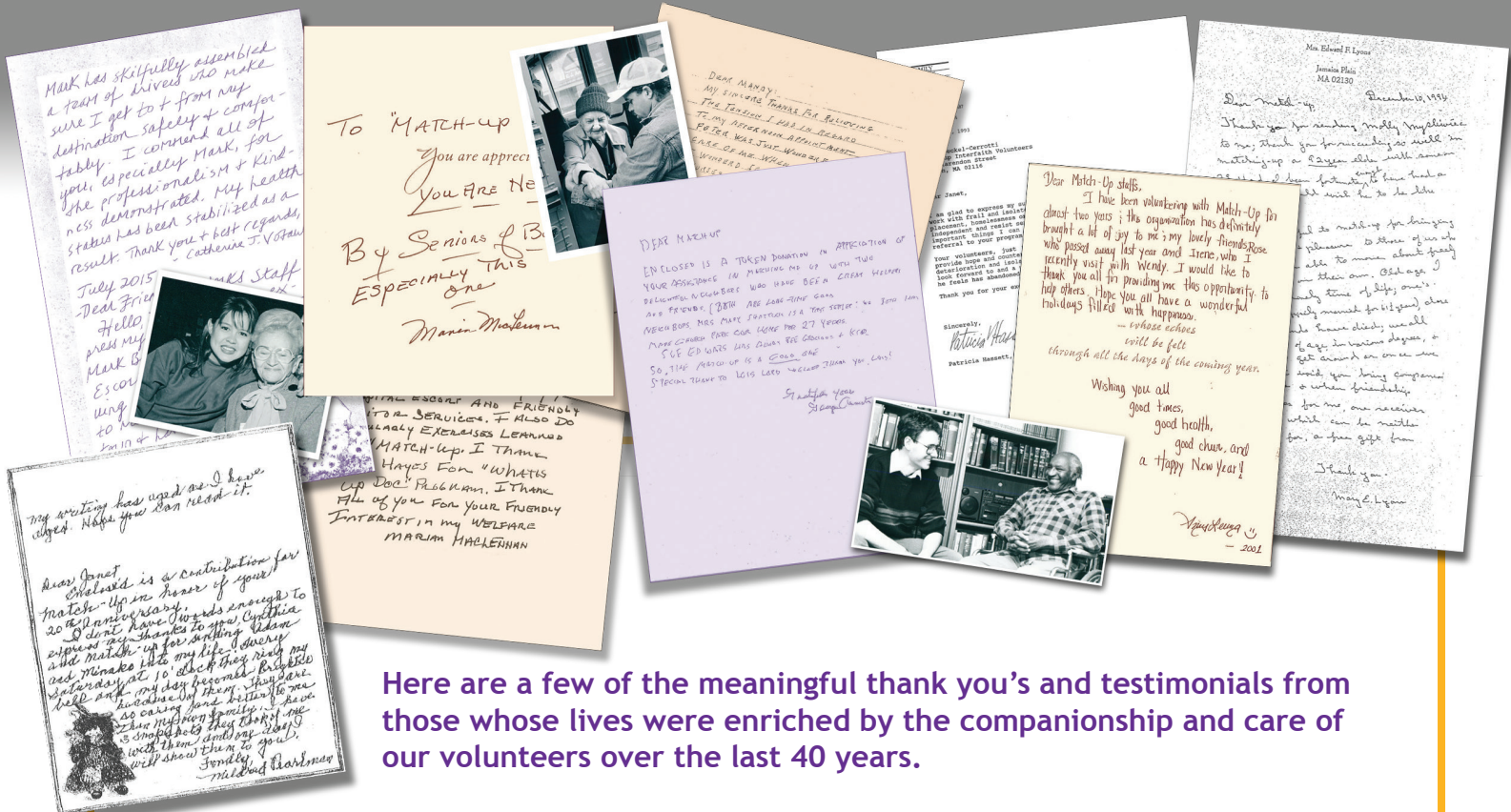
*Pictured Left to Right: Kyle Robidoux, Carol Kemp, Francis Thomas, Dana Rashti, Susan Foster (Board President), Janet Seckel-Cerrotti (Executive Director), Richard Schwartz, Koren Iskra, Caroline Kung. Not pictured: Daniel Apicella, Joseph Haddad.*

Charity Navigator



✦ FOUR-STAR ✦

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



Here are a few of the meaningful thank you's and testimonials from those whose lives were enriched by the companionship and care of our volunteers over the last 40 years.

**1989** "Helen and my Match-Up experience have helped me grow in all facets of my being. What started out as a volunteer project ended up changing my life."

– Linda Cappers, Friendly Visiting Volunteer

**1994** "Thank you for succeeding so well in matching-up a 92 year elder with someone 29. Had I been fortunate enough to have had a daughter, I would wish her to be like Molly."

Old age, I find, is a very lonely time of life...Into that void you bring companionship & pleasure & when friendship results, as it has for me, one receives a priceless gift which can be neither bought nor paid for, a free gift from the heart."

- Mary Lyons, Program Participant

**2001** "She did not regard me as an 'elder,' as helpless, dependent, needy, handicapped. She saw me as an individual with a mind, personality, a life."

– Anonymous, Program Participant

**2004** "I don't have words enough to express my thanks for sending Adam and Minako into my life. Every Saturday at 10 o'clock they ring my bell and my day becomes brighter because of them."

– Mildred Pearlman, Program Participant

**2015** "I'm writing to express my appreciation to the Medical Escort team for their continuing assistance with my weekly appointments. I get to and from my destination safely & comfortably...My health status has stabilized as a result."

– Catherine Votaw, Medical Escort Participant

**2022** "Shivani called me frequently in the hospital offering a friendly, kind voice inquiring as well as reassuring me all would work out. What a gift! That voice became so dear to me."

– Carol Haas, Friendly Visiting Participant

**2024** "It's a very dynamic friendship. There are so many different things that interest us both and we're able to share what we've discovered online or elsewhere."

– Peter McIntyre, Friendly Visiting Participant



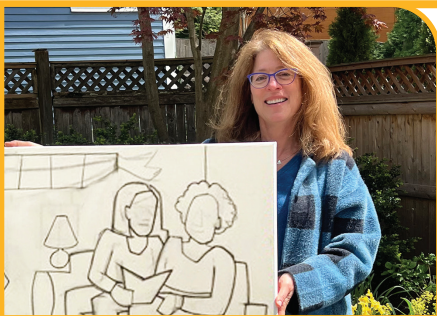
# Elderbration & Walk To End Elder Isolation

Sunday, May 19, 2024

## A Special Thank You to Team CPR!

FriendshipWorks would like to acknowledge team Connie Packard Rules for honoring Connie and her legacy through their participation at the 2024 Walk to End Elder Isolation. In addition to being a FriendshipWorks volunteer, ambassador, and Board President, Connie was a gifted fundraiser who eagerly engaged colleagues and friends to join her as champions of the mission.

Connie would be proud of all of us for coming together to continue creating connections and ending elder isolation.



Artist: Caryl Hull Leavitt

## Making this Year's Elderbration More Colorful

This year's Elderbration was a little more vibrant and colorful thanks to FriendshipWorks supporter and artist Caryl Hull Leavitt, who spearheaded a community art project. Attendees and volunteers of all ages and artistic abilities added their own flare to the two murals she designed, capturing the essence of social connection. They will be proudly displayed at the FriendshipWorks office.



# Thank you for supporting the 2024 Walk to End Elder Isolation!

Save the Date: May 18, 2025



**\$104,155**  
Raised



**Thank you to:**  
**56 Teams**  
**210+ Walkers**  
**544 Donors**  
**15 Sponsors**

## Our Top Fundraisers:

Team Connie Packard  
Dean Denniston  
Cathy Fabrizi  
Jesse Cerrotti

**Congratulations to our 2024 David Libby Award Recipient, Natasha Charewycz, for outstanding volunteerism!**



## Thank You to Our Generous Sponsors:



Boston Medical Center  
**HEALTH SYSTEM**



**RED SOX**  
FOUNDATION



Mount Pleasant Home  
a human good community

Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center  
Maloney Properties  
Sherrill House, Inc.

AARP Massachusetts  
Beacon Hill Village  
Brookline Council on Aging

Newton-Wellesley Hospital  
Seniors Helping Seniors

## In Kind Donations:

JP Licks  
Roche Brothers  
Rogerson House  
Polkadog Bakery  
Kupel's Bakery  
Encore Boston Harbor  
Five Iron Golf  
Salmagundi Hats Boston  
Greg Ciccarella Photography  
Bass Pro Shops

## Entertainment:

Art Sullivan  
Gaby Cotter - Singer  
Neriluz Cruz - Zumba Instructor

## Volunteers:

Catholic Memorial High School  
Gay for Good - Boston  
United Healthcare  
Boston Medical Center Health Systems



*Zumba was a big hit this year!*

*A special Thank You to Alice Tobin Zaff for her generous matching donation.*

 **FriendshipWorks**

*Creating connections to end elder isolation.*

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(617) 482-1510 [www.fw4elders.org](http://www.fw4elders.org)