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Nonprofit Founder & Executive Director, Janet Seckel-Cerrotti to Retire After 40 Years of Service to Boston’s Elders

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BOSTON, September 27, 2024 – FriendshipWorks, a leading nonprofit that works to reduce social isolation, enhance the quality of life, and preserve the dignity of older adults in Greater Boston, has announced the retirement of its Founder and Executive Director, Janet Seckel-Cerrotti, effective March 2025.

Seckel-Cerrotti is a leading voice in local and national conversations regarding social isolation and loneliness among the older adult population. She has been with FriendshipWorks (formerly called MATCH-UP Interfaith Volunteers) since its inception in 1984—first as Coordinator of Volunteers and then Program Director when FriendshipWorks was under the aegis of Boston Aging Concerns. She became the agency’s founding Executive Director when FriendshipWorks became an independent organization in 1991. In all of these capacities, she has been the driving force, creating a vision, building valued partnerships, and steering the organization through the various stages of its growth and development. In 2018, FriendshipWorks was a winner of the “In Good Company: the Optimal Aging Challenge,” a global competition designed to identify breakthrough solutions to social isolation and loneliness among older adults. FriendshipWorks now operates five programs, offered free of charge, to over 1,800 older adults annually.

The Board of Directors has formed a committee to commence a comprehensive search for a new Executive Director, ensuring a smooth transition and continuity of leadership. Additionally, FriendshipWorks has retained Third Sector New England (TSNE) to assist the Board in hiring FriendshipWorks’ next great leader. TSNE is a Massachusetts-based consultancy with 60+ years of experience supporting the nonprofit sector with executive search, organizational transition, and capacity building. The Board and TSNE will be gathering input from across a diverse base of constituents as an important part of the selection process.

Reflecting on her tenure, Seckel-Cerrotti remarked, “I’m deeply grateful for the opportunity to have worked with such caring, smart, and dedicated staff, volunteers, Board members, and

community partners who ensure that no one has to age alone.” Seckel-Cerrotti said that witnessing the joy, friendships, and caring connections fostered through FriendshipWorks has been the greatest honor. “I’m especially thankful to the older adults who welcomed me into their lives and allowed me to be part of their journeys. Their warmth and wisdom have profoundly enriched my life.”

As FriendshipWorks bids farewell to Seckel-Cerrotti, the organization remains committed to its mission and its reputation as a leader in the healthy-aging space. In concert with a supportive and engaged Board of Directors, the new Executive Director will build upon FriendshipWorks’ strong financial foundation and continue to grow the high-quality programs that have become vital resources for older adults in Greater Boston. FriendshipWorks’ fiscal health, and ongoing accountability and transparency, have earned a Four-Star Rating from Charity Navigator.

Susan Foster, President of FriendshipWorks’ Board, emphasized the lasting influence of Janet Seckel-Cerrotti on the Greater Boston community. "Thanks to Janet's leadership, FriendshipWorks has thrived, becoming a vital source of hope and companionship for older adults experiencing social isolation and loneliness. Her impact will resonate for years to come."

About FriendshipWorks:

Founded in 1984, the mission of FriendshipWorks is to reduce social isolation, enhance the quality of life, and preserve the dignity of older adults in Greater Boston. FriendshipWorks accomplishes this by recruiting and training volunteers of all ages, faiths, and backgrounds who provide friendship, advocacy, education, assistance, and emotional support. The U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy issued an Advisory about the Epidemic of Loneliness and Social Isolation in May, 2023, reporting that social connection is as critical to health and well-being as food, water, and shelter. In response to the growing needs of older adults, FriendshipWorks delivers highly personalized, one-on-one programming to elders in every neighborhood of Boston, as well as Brookline, Newton, Somerville, and Cambridge.

Watch: [FriendshipWorks PSA 60 Seconds](#)



Janet Seckel-Cerrotti, Founder and Executive Director of FriendshipWorks

