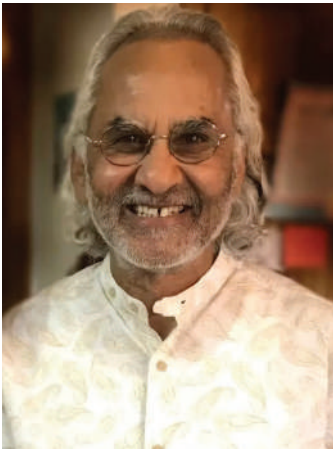


Yatendra Shah

(March 14, 1947 – September 24, 2022)



In September 2022, our dear friend and longtime volunteer, Yatendra Shah, passed away. We consider our relationship with Yatendra a blessing and a gift, for to be in the presence of Yatendra was witnessing kindness, compassion, and generosity of a great man.

Yatendra began volunteering with Little Brothers-Friends of the Elderly in 2007. Over the years, he was a regular attendee at Movie Night, a Birthday Visitor, drove for all our parties and summer outings, and was always quick to help wash dishes at our theme parties.

Yatendra knew how to be a friend; he quietly and efficiently could get any job done, identify unmet needs, and discover ways to fill those needs. Yatendra was a man for others, loving his family, his friends, and extending himself to the larger community. We will miss our friend.



Thank you, Gardeners!

Thank you to the Master Gardener Volunteers, Mt. Airy CURE, and Art Swanson for the beautification of our mural garden, the weeding, mulching, etc. Your hard work is appreciated, and you have made the mural garden a beautiful space.



Florida

Thanks to Nancy Wess who hosted us in her home in Ft. Walton Beach, Florida (after our Airbnb cancelled due to plumbing issues!) in late March. Our group enjoyed a day at the Gulfarium, a Dolphin Watch Tour, a day in Mobile, Alabama, many delicious meals, a day on the beach, and much more.

Thank you for your support which allows us to provide these opportunities for our elderly friends.



Yogi, Randy, Larry, Joan, and George enjoy the Airboat Ride through the Mobile, AL bay



George Royal, Joan Reul, and Larry Adams get ready to board the Dolphin Cruise



Joan prepares our picnic lunch



5530 Colerain Ave
Cincinnati, OH 45239

Electronic Service Requested

Viva Las Vegas! By Kathy Eby



The Fabulous Gala Committee

On Saturday, March 11, LBFE took the gala to Vegas, baby! Well, actually it was the Newport Syndicate...but they did not disappoint! I'm sure I heard Frank Sinatra singing "Luck be a Lady tonight" while folks were trying their hand at the gaming tables...

We mixed things up this year...different location, buffet dinner instead of plated, gaming tables and live entertainment....

Elvis (a.k.a. Mike Davis) and his sister (did you know Elvis had a sister?) Terri Davis-Hayden had the joint hopping! A few lucky folks were the recipients of Elvis's scarves, teddy bears, and songs sung just for them...

If you were one of the lucky folks who came to the gala, don't worry... "what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas"...see you next year!

Now...Sing with me...in your best Elvis imitation...
Bright light city gonna set my soul
Gonna set my soul on fire
Got a whole lot of money that's ready to burn
So get those stakes up higher
There's a thousand pretty women waitin' out there
And they're all livin' the devil may care
And I'm just the devil with love to spare, so
Viva Las Vegas, Viva Las Vegas...

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LITTLE BROTHERS
FRIENDS OF
THE ELDERLY
CINCINNATI

LBFE

NEWS
SUMMER 2023

Director's Report Ja'Lah Willingham

Prior to the pandemic, many were unaware of the negative implications loneliness and isolation resulted in. Just a month ago, three years after the pandemic, the U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. Vivek Murthy, declared loneliness as a new public health epidemic, releasing an 85-page advisory. On May 6, Dr. Murthy stated, "Our epidemic of loneliness and isolation has been an underappreciated public health crisis that has harmed individual and societal health," (*Forbes*, 2023). Some have also been aware that Little Brothers – Friends of the Elderly has been in the Cincinnati area tackling the same "newly" declared epidemic for the past 26 years because of volunteers and donors like you! After learning of the work we do and the strong impact made in the lives of lonely and isolated elders, people also often wonder how it is all possible.

In my short seven months of being a part of the LBFE network, it has been quite evident that **our elderly friends do not just want us to be a part of their lives, they need us to be a part of their world to make life a little easier and a lot more beautiful.**

In this summer's LBFE newsletter, meet our strong and mighty staff who ignite the mission of Little Brothers – Friends of the Elderly and hear the stories of some of our amazing volunteers who fuel the drive of everlasting memories and friendships made daily in one of the most vulnerable populations of people. You can also learn more about our upcoming 26th Annual Tom Wess Memorial Golf Outing and how you can support our mission to relieve loneliness and isolation among the elderly.

We invite you to keep the conversation going by sharing your own story with us - connect with us through social media, join us for a volunteer experience or event, or drop us a note through our cincinnati@littlebrothers.org email.

On behalf of our gratitude-filled elderly friends and staff, thank you for being a part of the difference made and a long-standing legacy of love and friendship for the past 26 years!



l to r Missy Bushman, Ja'Lah Willingham, Tony Burke, Kim Collett, Julie Randall, Anthony Davis, Yogi Wess

Meet our new Executive Director, Staff, and Students

On December 5th, Ja'Lah Willingham became our new Executive Director and Yogi moved into the role of the Elderly Services Coordinator which was vacated upon Randy's retirement.

Ja'Lah comes to her position with 10+ years of nonprofit experience and brings a wealth of knowledge in volunteer management, fundraising, team building, senior advocacy, and organizational and program development. Ja'Lah looks forward to working with everyone to continue building upon the solid foundation and powerful legacy of LBFE.

Julie Randall continues in her position as Assistant Director providing her keen skills of organization, financial wizardry, and calm presence. Julie began as a volunteer 5 years ago and is in her 4th year as Assistant Director. Julie's love of our elderly friends and professionalism is the glue for LBFE.

Missy Bushman just completed her first year as our Program and Volunteer Coordinator. Missy was a volunteer for 12 years and, after working as a teacher for 13 years, was ready for a new challenge. Missy's abundance of energy and her dedication to the LBFE mission is a gift to everyone she meets.

Anthony Davis is part of the Vantage Aging Program and works with us 25 hours a week. Anthony assists with On-Call, monthly programs, on-going visits, and office maintenance. Anthony is a licensed barber, licensed peer supporter, and avid chess player and states he "gets more out of his work with LBFE than he puts in." We are grateful to the Vantage Aging Program which introduced Anthony to us.

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Volunteer Appreciation Dinner



l to r: JoAnn Wess, Bruce Wess, Katie Baker, Barry Aldemeyer, Missy Bushman

On Sunday, April 16, our annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner was held at the Lakeridge Conference Center. Our volunteers were thanked for the commitment they have to LBFE and five volunteers were recognized for their years of outstanding volunteerism. Barry Aldemeyer, Katie Baker, JoAnn Wess, Jenny Wieland (who was unable to attend), and Bruce Wess were presented with The Tom Wess Service Award by our Program and Volunteer Coordinator, Missy Bushman. These awards are given in honor of Tom Wess, the co-founder of the Cincinnati Chapter of LBFE, who knew what it meant to live outside of oneself and to recognize when there is a need and then volunteer to fill that need.

Barry Aldemeyer

Volunteers are the only human beings on the face of the earth who reflect this nation's compassion, unselfish caring, patience, and just plain love for one another.
– Erma Bombeck

Barry heard about LBFE from Linda Wihl while he was involved with the Ignatian Volunteer Corps. Barry attended our volunteer training in 2016 about the same time that we met Elroy Toler, an elderly friend. Barry was matched with Elroy through our visiting volunteer program and had a friendship that lasted five years. Barry supported Elroy through his medical challenges and gave him the love and friendship he needed until the time of his passing.

Barry was quick to become a birthday visitor, signing up for 2-3 visits per month. Always on time and ready to fulfill his commitment, Barry arrives at the office to collect the birthday bag complete with cake, flowers, and gifts and then off to make the birthday visit. Barry has done visits from one end of the county to the other including visits to our elders in Kentucky. Barry can lift one's spirits and especially bring joy on one's birthday.

Over the years, Barry has delivered dinners on the holidays, driven for our summer and winter outings, was involved in our Covid deliveries, and has participated in our theme parties.

When Barry is not volunteering, he enjoys reading, traveling, and theatre. Barry is a retired attorney.

Thank you, Barry, for your stability, the comfort you extend to others, and for your years as a volunteer.

Katie Baker

Nothing can dim the light which shines from within.
– Maya Angelou

The minute the words were out of Katie's mouth, LBFE jumped into action. On a cool Sunday afternoon while waitressing at Red Squirrel, Katie uttered to Lucy that she would love to volunteer with LBFE and help with the fundraising events for there is where her interest and talents lie. Within months, Katie was on the Gala committee 2015 – "Going to Bat for the Elderly," followed by her participation in every gala since – "An Evening in Oz," "Puttin' on the Ritz for the Elderly," "Cheers to 20 Years," "Treasuring 21 Years of Friendship," "A Night at the Circus," "Celebrating the Superhero in all of Us," our "Live Virtual Event" (we gave her time off to give birth to her son – Harrison), "Our Silver Anniversary," and last month's "Night at the Casino." Katie has brought to the gala committee her keen sense of detail, her creativity, her ability to create the vision, and work with others in fulfilling the quest. Katie is a team player. She is patient, she has a calm presence, she is bountiful in her ability to critique, and seek ways to improve the use of time and resources wisely and efficiently.

Katie has served two terms on our Board of Directors as secretary getting minutes out to the Board members before they are home from the meeting. Katie has assisted with personnel information, technical issues, participated in our 2015 International Federation Conference, was our representative on the National Policy Council, worked with the Board on the process of our new logo, and represented Cincinnati at the International Federation Conference in Paris in May of 2018.

Katie is married to Alex Baker; she is the mother to Harrison and works full-time at American Financial Group.

Katie came to us when we needed her most and filled many roles – she organized many aspects of our galas, was a valuable Board member, and Policy Council Member. We all agree that to be in her presence is to be with a woman who is gifted, who is kind, and who is a pleasure to know and call friend.

JoAnn Wess

May happiness touch your life today as warmly as you have touched the lives of others.
– Rebecca Forsythe

It is estimated that in the 20 years that JoAnn has been a member of the Third Thursday volunteer team, she has washed approximately 7000 plates, glasses, knives, forks, and spoons in addition to coffee cups, coffee pots, and numerous pots and pans. Third Thursday is one of our monthly gatherings where we bring a group of our elderly friends to our office for socialization, a home cooked meal, and a planned program. JoAnn has been an integral and essential volunteer with Third Thursday – in addition to being the main (and only) dishwasher, JoAnn purchases and prepares the fresh fruit salad and sets up the room for the

gathering. JoAnn calmly fulfills her tasks, never falters, and is a display of strength.

In addition to her commitment to Third Thursday, JoAnn has helped organize our yearly Trim the Tree party and JoAnn has been instrumental in the on-going development and continuity of our Art Program. On the first Tuesday of every month, our artists are welcomed by JoAnn who keeps the group in supplies, designs the painting project for the day, and provides encouragement and direction. You can witness the success of JoAnn's dedication to this program when you see the many pieces of art that George, Florence, Blanche, Elaine, David, Larry, Darla, Susan, George, and Donna have created.

JoAnn spent her career as a schoolteacher in the Covington district. Currently, she teaches meditation, basket weaving, enjoys spending time outdoors, and has been the best thing that ever happened to her husband Bruce Wess.

Thank you, JoAnn, for your dedication to the mission of LBFE, for your unwavering commitment to those who need you. Thank you for your every kindness, for every dish you have washed, for the beautiful woman you are, and what you mean to all of us.

Bruce Wess

Goodness does not consist in greatness, but greatness in goodness.
– Athenaesus

The oldest son of Jeanette and Tom Wess, Bruce witnessed the importance of treating your elders with love and respect. Visit your grandparents regularly, learn all you can from your aunts and uncles, value the time you spend with your family, and always keep an eye on your Great Aunt Edna and Aunt Helen.

With the formation of the Cincinnati Chapter of LBFE, Bruce became involved as a volunteer cook – becoming the grill master on the 4th of July parties held at the Wess house and taking over Tom's role as the Thanksgiving Day kitchen cook and coordinator. When we delivered Easter dinners, Bruce assumed the role as chief cook and has also taken on that role with his cousins, Tim and Johnny, for our Christmas Day dinner deliveries. Over the years, we have received positive feedback on the delicious meals that have been prepared out of our LBFE kitchen spearheaded by Bruce.



Congratulations, Theresa and Jerome!

Jerome Michaux, our LBFE NYC Site Coordinator, and Theresa Lupo were married on October 1, 2022. The wedding took place in New Hyde Park, NY. Congratulations, Theresa and Jerome!



**26th ANNUAL TOM WESS
MEMORIAL GOLF OUTING**
Saturday, August 19, 2023
1:30 p.m.

Glenview Golf Course
10965 Springfield Pike
Cincinnati, OH 45246

For details, visit
www.littlebrotherscincinnati.org
or scan the QR Code

Born on March 17, Bruce spends his birthday not out celebrating St. Patrick's Day, but cooking every year for our festive St. Patrick's Day party. He arrives early, prepares the cabbage, corned beef, and potatoes – and does so in leprechaun attire.

A retired school psychologist, an active photographer with his WildWalks Photography business, Bruce enjoys camping, traveling, cooking, gardening, reading, and is an avid sports fan.

Thank you, Bruce, for the time you have devoted to LBFE in sharing your cooking skills, your wit, your genius, your love of JoAnn, your love of your elders - our love of you.

Jenny Wieland

Jenny, who was unable to attend the luncheon, is also a 2023 recipient of a Tom Wess Service award. Jenny has been a volunteer for 10 years, a member of our Force of Four Volunteer Committee, Third Thursday team, and a visiting volunteer. Thank you, Jenny, for always being patient, kind, and generous with your time.

Meet our new Executive Director, Staff, and Students

continued

Kim Collett is returning for her second practicum with us. Kim visits our elderly friends, assists with On-Call needs, performs assessments, and participates in our summer outings. Kim showed her dedication to the mission of LBFE when she was with us for her first practicum. We are thrilled to have Kim back with us this semester and appreciate her time and willingness to do what is needed.

Tony Burke is a Human and Social Services major at Cincinnati State planning to graduate in December 2023. Tony was an Activities Leader at Maple Knoll Village for 3 ½ years which was a life changing experience. Tony will assist with On-Call needs, monthly programs, and on-going visits. Tony is happy to be working with LBFE and continuing his work with the elderly and we are happy to have Tony with us bringing his zest for life and entertaining sense of humor.

How We Spent Our Fall Vacation, by Kathy Eby

After a 3-year hiatus, we were finally able to go back to Audrey's House (located on 5 acres of wide-open green space in Batavia, IL, it is a getaway for elders — many who haven't been out of the city or on vacation in years).

While still cautiously looking at Covid-19 in the rear-view mirror, the Chicago LBFE chapter has opened this vacation home and we were thrilled to be there again! Our caravan took off on Wednesday, September 7th for a 4-night vacation near the Windy City. Yogi Wess, Randy Yauss, and I drove, and it was such fun to share

what Chicago and the surrounding areas had to offer with our friends...Larry Adams, Roger Bracey, Fred Greer, David Hopper, Emily Mueller, Joan Reul, George Royal, Russell Schnuck, JoAnn Welch, and Darla Wiggins. Food is always an important part of any LBFE gathering, and this trip did not disappoint...from lunch at Misericordia (the Mission of Misericordia is to provide a continuum of care and support for children and adults of all faiths and cultures who have intellectual and developmental disabilities), pizza at Giordano's, and Randy's made-to-order breakfast and cookouts...everyone was well fed! Some of our excursions included a ride on the Chicago Architecture River Cruise (the river they turn green on St. Patrick's Day), a walk around the lake and a tram ride at the Morton Arboretum, shopping at Navy Pier, and the movie theater. Our days were full, and all slept soundly at the end of our action-packed days. The weather was perfect as most activities were held outdoors, but Mother Nature could only hold out so long and she unleashed her fury on our ride home. We ended our journey at the traditional parting restaurant, Steak-N-Shake outside Indianapolis, where we ate then said our goodbyes. Until the next outing...



Emily Mueller, Darla Wiggins, and Kathy Eby enjoy the beautiful Chicago weather



Russell Schnuck (RIP) and Roger Bracey take in the sites on the Chicago River



The gang enjoying time at the Morton Arboretum

My Adventures with Sharon Wagner, by Kathy Eby



Sharon Wagner

Whether it's out to lunch once a month, attending the 3rd Thursday program at LBFE, or trekking to Walgreens, Sharon and I always have a good time. Sometimes we even sing along to oldies in the car, and she doesn't laugh at my singing voice (or lack thereof!). I became her Visiting Volunteer in January 2020 and we never looked back. Visiting became difficult during Covid (as it did for everyone) but we still made contact either via the phone or FaceTime. Thankfully, those days are in the rear-view mirror and we are happily enjoying each other's company face to face. Sharon loves to play games, listen to her CDs, and hang out with friends...but her most favorite times are those spent with Little Brothers-Friends of the Elderly. Just ask her...she will gladly let you know what the organization means to her.



Kathy Eby and Sharon Wagner



Sharon Wagner, assisted by Missy Bushman, reels in a big catch

Amy Nicolai

Last summer, volunteer Amy Nicolai relocated to Northern Ohio leaving us sad to see her go. Amy coordinated our Monthly Art Program for several years, was a Visiting Volunteer to Darla, and a joy to be around. All the best to you, Amy!



Amy, second from left and friends.

