

ElderFriends, a service of Family Lifeline, is a volunteer friendly visitation program that promotes healthy aging and independence among isolated elders by providing companionship, outreach, and advocacy.

FY2012

Outcome Fact Sheet

Meet the people we served: We matched 143 isolated elders with a friendly visitor. All ElderFriends volunteers make a year-long commitment to visit their elders on a weekly basis, strengthening the social networks of older adults who wish to remain independent and age-in-place for as long as possible.

Of the elders served:

- Average age was 80, ranging from 63 to 98
- 79% were female; 21% were male
- 7 in 10 considered themselves to be low or very low income

"I've been doing so well since ElderFriends sent me [my volunteer]. My children [who don't live nearby] are the world to me. ElderFriends staff and [my volunteer] are the next important people to me. I love ElderFriends and [my volunteer]. You did a superb job of match-making."

-- Quote from elder

Relieving loneliness and improving elders' overall quality of life:

Research confirms that decreasing loneliness among elders promotes both physical and mental health. When an elder's social needs are not adequately met, it can take a great toll. In fact, a newly published study found that seniors who felt lonely were

"My mother would always tell me about the visits with her [volunteer]. The more visits she had, the more stimulated she was, [which] made her life happier. These visits gave her a reason to get up, get dressed, and made her feel important and valued."

-- Quote from elder's daughter

60% more likely to lose their ability to engage in activities needed for daily living, and 45% more likely to die than those who felt meaningfully connected to others (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services). By providing companionship through regular friendly visits, we strive to meet the emotional needs of isolated older adults and ultimately improve their quality of life.

- 100% of elders said they were satisfied with ElderFriends services and staff.
- 98% of elders said their volunteer offered them needed emotional support.
- 89% of elders said they feel less lonely since being matched with their volunteer.

Building sustainable, mutually rewarding intergenerational relationships: Studies show that increasing physical, cognitive, and social activity through intergenerational relationships can improve the well-being of an aging population, reduce their risk for premature institutionalization, and reconnect them to their community (Archives of Internal Medicine). At the same time, these friendships provide volunteers an opportunity to share their enthusiasm for life and learning, while enhancing their own pursuit of successful, healthful aging.

- 100% of volunteers said participating in ElderFriends was a personally rewarding experience.
- 97% of volunteers said they would recommend ElderFriends to a friend or family member.
- 95% of volunteers said ElderFriends provided them with the resources necessary to advocate on behalf of their elder.

Creating human capital solutions to help advance our mission: Scholars report that communities with high rates of volunteering are healthier and have stronger economies, less crime, and lower incidences of illness (Corporation for National & Community Service). Our volunteers contributed nearly \$173,000 in services and in-kind donations, which resulted in significant savings for Family Lifeline, vital support of our mission, and important economic benefits for the local community.

- Dedicated volunteers provided more than 6,400 hours of in-home friendly visits, outreach, advocacy, and other program support.
- By effectively investing in human capital, we delivered more services for less money, leveraging \$2.19 for every \$1 spent.

"ElderFriends is a great service to me and the community. My [volunteer] is one of my favorite people ever and a joy to know. She lifts me up every time she visits."

-- Quote from elder