

**MY FRIEND,**  
*my world*  
35th Anniversary Gala



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**Media Contact:** Helena Finnegan  
hfinnegan@fw4elders.org  
(617) 482-1510 x125

## **FriendshipWorks Celebrates 35 Years with *My Friend, My World* Anniversary Gala**



**Boston, MA** – Every day, older adults are able to attend their medical appointments, get their medications, receive help with small tasks, partake in art or music, or enjoy a visit from the volunteers of FriendshipWorks at *no cost* to them.

“Matching volunteers with older adults who are socially isolated, lonely or may want a new friend is what we do. By connecting people, friendships are created and community begins,” said Janet Seckel-Cerrotti, Executive Director for FriendshipWorks, who has been there from its inception in 1984, formerly known as Match-Up Interfaith Volunteers. It is FriendshipWorks’ continuing mission to reduce isolation, enhance the quality of life, and preserve the dignity of older adults in the Boston area.

“What we do is about human connection – that is the key,” she added.

While the issues of aging in place and elder isolation have garnered recent attention as the longest living adult generation matures, FriendshipWorks – which committed to this issue 35 years ago – is seeking both individual and corporate partners to join the work of serving this rapidly expanding population. With 15% of the Boston population and 21% of the state – or 1.4 million people, now 60+, addressing social isolation among older adults is more critical than ever.

On Thursday, November 21<sup>st</sup>, FriendshipWorks will celebrate its 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the ***My Friend, My World Gala!*** Live music, delicious food and drinks, an exciting live auction, and featuring a performance by legendary Rock & Roll Hall of Fame inductee [Darlene Love!](#)

Supporting this year’s Gala are co-chairs Andrea Cohen, co-founder and CEO of [HouseWorks](#), and Denise McQuaide, COO and president of [Benchmark Wellness Management](#).

“FriendshipWorks has led the way in making a difference in the lives of thousands of seniors throughout Greater Boston. As social isolation continues to be a critical issue, the idea of creating *real* friendships that help seniors find purpose and a reason to wake up each morning is as important as having access to the best health care. I’m honored to be part of this event, and to support and celebrate 35 years of exceptional work and dedication to ensuring that seniors age with friendships, dignity and joy,” said Andrea Cohen, co-founder and CEO, HouseWorks and co-chair, FriendshipWorks Gala.

FriendshipWorks volunteers are matched with recipients through a variety of programs and initiatives such as [Friendly Visiting](#) and [Friendly Helping](#), [Medical Escorts](#), [PetPals](#), [Relaxing Through the Arts](#) and [MusicWorks](#), [La Cadena de Amistad](#), and the [Elder Low-Vision Initiative](#).

“Our individual and group programs speak to the necessities and quality of life that provides meaning,” added Seckel-Cerrotti. “Attending doctor visits, getting medications, participating in music and art programs, and receiving weekly visits or assistance with tasks, that’s what our programs are for. Bringing help, joy, meaning, and purpose is what the friendships built from these carefully matched volunteers and recipients do.”

In fact, last year, 450 volunteers touched the lives of more than 2,000 older adults in Boston, Brookline, and Newton, with more than 49,000 hours of unpaid service.

“Research overwhelmingly shows us that organizations like FriendshipWorks can help overcome social determinants of health – such as lack of social supports, poor nutrition, and inadequate transportation – that contribute to preventable ER visits and hospital re-admissions. Something as simple as someone to say hello to regularly or knowing a visitor will stop by can help break a debilitating sense of isolation and loneliness. Not enough can be said about the positive effect of human connection – the invaluable gift that FriendshipWorks has provided for 35 years to Boston-area seniors,” said Denise McQuaide, president and COO of Benchmark Wellness Management and FriendshipWorks Gala co-chair.

This year’s 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala, taking place at the Boston Park Plaza, promises a unique experience. During the cocktail hour, attendees will experience programs such as [PetPals](#) and [MusicWorks](#) in person, and capture the evening with a fun turn in the photo booth! Dinner and conversation will be followed by a Live Auction with outstanding items. Following, the evening will be capped by the fun and familiar tunes of yesteryear performed by [Darlene Love!](#) Love’s story was among those about back-up singers for Elvis Presley, Sam Cook, Cher, and other famous musicians showcased in the documentary, [20 Feet From Stardom!](#)

During the evening, FriendshipWorks will be honoring [Boston Medical Center](#) with the Catalyst Award, and Sandra Albright, who has dedicated her career to supporting older adults in Massachusetts, will be presented the Friendship Award by Honorary Gala Chair Mayor Marty Walsh.

It's an evening not to be missed, and supports the critical efforts of FriendshipWorks to reduce elder isolation and create connections through its programs and initiatives. Register now and plan to join us for an unforgettable evening making connections and reducing social isolation. FriendshipWorks’ Anniversary Funding opportunities and Gala program ads are still available! Contact: [gala@fw4elders.org](mailto:gala@fw4elders.org) or visit our page at: [www.fw4elders.org/gala](http://www.fw4elders.org/gala)

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*The mission of FriendshipWorks is to reduce social isolation, enhance the quality of life, and preserve the dignity of older adults in Greater Boston. We accomplish this by recruiting and training volunteers of all ages, faiths, and backgrounds who provide friendship, advocacy, education, assistance, and emotional support.*