



FEBRUARY 2025

Caring for Friends...The Heart of Philadelphia

One Caring Community Providing Food and Friendship

Sharing Stories of Love and Friendship.

FACES AT THE HEART OF OUR MISSION.

Our logo says it all. Caring for Friends was founded on the Caring Hearts of those who volunteer and donate to support our mission.. We help to heal the hearts of those we serve. We rely on the giving hearts of our many generous supporters. In this issue we celebrate the HEART of our mission...to feed those in need, to comfort those who are lonely and alone, to support the our community and continue to grow. Please enjoy these images and stories and feel free to share your stories and photos on our social media platforms: Instagram ([caringforfriendsorg](https://www.instagram.com/caringforfriendsorg)) and Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/CaringforFriends>).



Springton Lake Middle School

A 10+ YEAR CARING COMMUNITY PARTNER

Springton Lake Middle School held their annual school-wide community service project in honor of Martin Luther King Day of Service. Throughout the week teachers worked on lesson plans that spoke of the importance of volunteering and MLK Day. The school community donated items needed to be used on the day of the service project. Caring for Friends provided some food items and other items. On the day over the event students visited various stations where they packaged meals, made sandwiches, created snack, breakfast and toiletry bags. At the end of the event over 1000 of each item were created, boxed and made ready for donation.

Many times, when a group volunteers and donates they may not have the chance to see who their gift is supporting. Tameka Gibson-Williams, from the City of Chester, was on hand all day to support the teens and talk to them about the desperate need within her community. At 2pm the students helped to load 3 vans/trucks to take the items back to her neighborhood where a line was waiting to receive the donations. Within 24 hours, everything was gone.

This is just one way a school community can get involved with Caring for Friends. Others include: Baking and Bingo with a Senior Home, Food Drive, Volunteer in Our Kitchen, Make Snack Bags or Host an event such as the one run by Springton Lake.



Share your heart and love with someone in need.
Contact Hannah at volunteer@caringforfriends.org.



Burlington Company Support CORPORATIONS WITH BIG HEARTS

Burlington is just one corporation of many who know how to give heart and time to those in need. For many years this fabulous group has been bringing large groups to Caring for Friends to volunteer. The gift of their support means so much to us and those we serve. Opportunities exist for companies to help in many ways.

Give your time by volunteering in house, making meals, snack bags, offering specialty services and food drives that help us with operating costs.

Support financially by creating a Giving Fund or Match Program at work. Ask your company about foundations available and work with us to ensure the future of this wonderful mission. Contact Marti Berk at mberk@caringforfriends.org today and start to share your heart with us.

In Loving Memory of Danny Drake

A MEMBER OF OUR CARING
FOR FRIENDS FAMILY



Danny began his journey with Caring for Friends in 2023 as a meal client. He suffered from Multiple Sclerosis and could not shop or cook. As the disease advanced his elderly mother helped where she could. After she passed and he was no longer able to work Danny searched for new support. In 2023 he was added to our home-delivered meals program.

Through his relationship with his delivery friend, he discovered that Caring for Friends could provide him with more than just meals. Danny began volunteering in the office and soon became an almost daily fixture. Through this activity, he found a purpose again and became like family to staff and volunteers alike.

Family comes in all shapes and sizes and does not always need to be connected by blood. Danny, a proud man, wanted to be productive. Volunteering restored his sense of purpose and brought light to his life. He drove a mile to work each day although he could barely walk. He never used the handicapped spot, saving it for someone who needed it more. Alone in the world, Danny often stated that he didn't know where he would be without Caring for Friends. WE became his family.

Danny's MS progressed and he was involved in an auto accident in early April. Danny Drake passed away suddenly on Feb 4, 2025. He was not hungry or alone because of Caring for Friends. We will be scheduling a Celebration of Life at our offices and many of his CFF family have already contributed in his name. He will be missed by his family at Caring for Friends and we dedicate this newsletter to his memory. If you know someone struggling, alone, and in need of help, please reach out.

Confessions of a Serial Volunteer

AMY FLECK, CARING FOR
FRIENDS VOLUNTEER

For many years I have had the fortune to choose how I spend my time. Having left paid work when my children were younger, I was able to be at home, but also fill the hours they were in school with things that were enjoyable or meaningful. For me, that has always included volunteering. My life as a volunteer began when I was a teenager, when I joined a youth group. The first place I volunteered was at Shriner's Children's Hospital. We visited with the kids there, many of whom were far from home. It was a rewarding experience that left me feeling I had made a difference. Alas, a serial volunteer was born.

Volunteering is the ultimate win-win situation. As a volunteer, I know I am making a positive impact that is felt by those who I am helping, but also, it's felt by me. It gives me a personal sense of accomplishment as well as the opportunity to use some of the skills I wouldn't normally get to use.

Most recently, my volunteer work has brought me to Caring for Friends. New situations can be stressful, but any apprehension I had was immediately put to rest the first day I walked in the door. I was warmly welcomed and we discussed what kind of work I could do that would best utilize my skills and abilities. My opinions and suggestions have been welcomed, and I've always been treated like my contributions to the organization matter. What more could I want than a meaningful experience?

The staff at Caring for Friends created an environment where I, as well as the other volunteers, are treated as an integral part of the operation, and it is one of the things that makes volunteering here so special for me.



Give a Piece of Your Heart by Donating



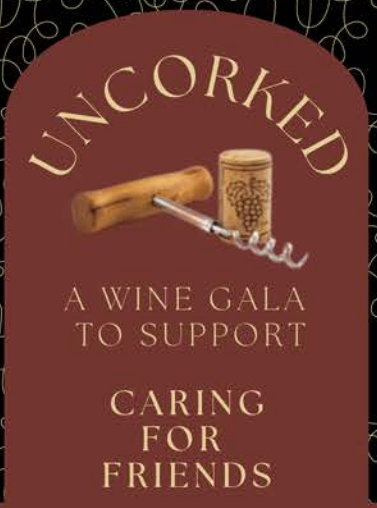


The Heart of Caring for Friends is YOU!

JOIN OUR TEAM OF CARING VOLUNTEERS,
PARTNERS AND DONORS AND GIVE A PIECE OF
YOUR HEART!



SAVE THE DATE
 SATURDAY, APRIL 5, 2025
 OVERBROOK GOLF CLUB
 Explore America's Finest Wine Regions



Reception with wine tasting and elevated appetizers, gourmet dinner, live and silent auction.

Matthew Karstetter, Chair - Vincent Schiavone, CEO

Sponsorships and RSVPs available NOW.

Visit <https://onecau.se/caringforfriends> today to register.

Email Marti Berk at mberk@caringforfriends.org for details.

PLEASE CONSIDER A HEARTFELT DONATION

There are many ways to support Caring for Friends, now and in the future. Our goal is to make the process both personal and simple. Allow us to customize a giving plan that works for your family or organization. Establish a planned giving/bequest. Honor a special occasion with a donation in honor. Gifts of stocks, bonds and property. Corporate match giving program or a company foundation. Select us as the beneficiary of a fundraising event. We are always available to attend the event, speak or send materials.

Recurring giving is the best way to support us. Simply select weekly, monthly, quarterly or yearly giving through our easy-to-use online portal on our website. By providing consistent donations to Caring for Friends you ensure that we are sustainable for the future. **Contact Marti Berk, Development Director, at mberk@caringforfriends.org or 267-874-2391 to discuss a gift.**



----- Cut Here and Mail In -----

Your tax deductible donation helps provide meals and friendly visits to isolated seniors, homebound client friends, and other individuals in the 5-county Phila region.

Date _____

First/Last Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Cash Check Credit Card

Card Number _____

Expiry Date _____ Security Code (3 digits on back) _____

Signature _____

Recurring

Weekly

Monthly

Annually

One-Time

\$1000

\$500

\$250

Other \$ _____

\$150

\$75

\$25



Mail to: CARING FOR FRIENDS
 12271 Townsend Rd, Philadelphia PA 19154
 Contact Marti Berk at mberk@caringforfriends.org or 267-874-2391

Chairman's Message

CARING FOR FRIENDS: POWERED BY LOVE

At Caring for Friends, love is at the heart of everything we do. We celebrate love in February, especially on Valentine's Day. We give flowers, candies, and cards to those we care about. But love doesn't stop with our romantic partners; we show affection to our children, parents, grandparents, and friends as well. At Caring for Friends, we take this love a step further, sharing it with those in need every single day.

Founded on love for our neighbors, Caring for Friends serves those who are often forgotten—homebound seniors, people with disabilities, and families facing poverty. These individuals may live in difficult situations, often isolated and struggling. Some are elderly and in wheelchairs, while others may be parents trying to put food on the table. This winter, many of them are cold because they can't afford to heat their homes.

One of the most moving experiences we've had was when a new senior meal client broke down in tears after receiving her first frozen meals from us. She shared that until then, she had only been eating cat food. The reality for those we serve is tough, and that's why we care.

We care because it's in our nature. We feel a responsibility to help those less fortunate, even if we don't know them personally. We're built to care for others, especially during hard times. While we often respond to big crises in a dramatic way, it's harder to recognize the daily struggles that people face. Yet, these struggles are just as real.

Helping others also brings a sense of fulfillment. Volunteering, giving, and helping those in need warm our hearts. It makes us proud and shows our children the importance of caring for others. As we close out a cold month, I'll be visiting a senior center and standing outside in frigid weather, handing out fresh food to those who need it most.

What I'm really doing, though, is sharing the love of our community. The gratitude from those we help, the smiles we receive in return, makes it all worth it. Our work is a constant reminder that kindness and love are the most powerful forces we can share.

Thank you for being the LOVE of our Caring Community.

Vince

Vincent Schiavone
 CEO, Caring for Friends