

Friends
of the
Elderly



Annual Report 2021-2022

“ . . . because above all, we need good friends ”

A MESSAGE FROM OUR AMBASSADOR

Dear Friends

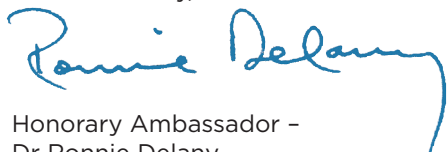
Ronnie Delany here, supporting **Friends of the Elderly**. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who support this wonderful charity. To each individual or corporate donor - thank you, your kindness and generosity is at the heart of what we do. I would also like to thank the wonderful volunteers who do tremendous work and give their time so freely. Each and every one of you makes such a difference to so many of our older friends. Can I tell you how lucky I feel that people still remember my athletic days and will come and have a chat with me? I am one of the lucky ones, as many older people have nobody to chat to. During and after Covid, older people have been more isolated than ever. Day on end without companionship. This is where **Friends of the Elderly**'s many different services offering support and friendship shines.

While the crisis of loneliness is becoming more widespread in Ireland, we are grateful for the support that **Friends of the Elderly** provide, through home visitation, friendly calls, social clubs and day trips - combining all these services to offer an older person a lifelong friendship. A feeling that they belong and they are not alone. What is so wonderful about **Friends of the Elderly** is their ethos that everyone "belongs".

Whether you are an older person who needs support, a T.Y. student, a college intern, a volunteer - it is the belief that we can all come together to tackle the issues of loneliness and isolation. Covid-19 has cast a dark shadow on people's lives but **Friends of the Elderly** are still reaching out to get to those most in need.

The highlight for me was undoubtedly the 40th Birthday Celebration that was finally held during the year. After many postponements, **Friends of the Elderly** finally got the chance to bring their members, volunteers and some of the original founding members together to celebrate this joyous and momentous occasion of supporting older people in Ireland for 40 years. I wish **Friends of the Elderly** many more years of success, their work is vital. And to those of you who support this work, thank you for being a truly wonderful friend of the elderly.

Yours sincerely,



Honorary Ambassador -
Dr Ronnie Delany



A MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGER

This past year yet again, **Friends of the Elderly** experienced a huge demand for our services. With many setbacks and lockdowns, we struggled to stay connected with our members and there were many times we had to pivot the services to meet demand and get to those most in need. Although the need was great so too was the impact of our work as we took enormous steps to tackle the widespread and ever-increasing issue of loneliness and isolation within our elderly community. This year many of our clubs and activities were interrupted or curtailed, and some continue to be disrupted, yet we keep going and continue to look at new ways to stay connected. Many vulnerable people were hugely affected by the pandemic, both physically and emotionally. Older people had normal services stopped, reduced carer contact, clubs cancelled, restricted travel, less social contact and many were left alone.



80,000 people over the age of 75 in Ireland live alone – can you imagine how frightening it was for them? The pandemic caused an influx of calls from older people looking for information, practical assistance, or just someone to talk to. It was sometimes heartbreaking working on the friendly call service as many people simply had no one else to turn to for support and companionship.

Friends of the Elderly have been providing services to the elderly and vulnerable for over forty years now and it is safe to say there has never been a greater need for our services than this past few years. We bring friendship, social engagement, and confidence back into people's lives. We continue to celebrate positive and active ageing, advocate for respect for individual choice, and dignity and independence for all older people in society. We reach out to bring one-to-one friendship, practical assistance, and social engagement to hundreds of the most isolated and lonely elderly people in our society.

Thanks to the continuing support of our generous donors and the dedication of our volunteers, we continue to make heart-warming connections with hundreds of older people, who would otherwise be left alone in the world. I extend my warmest thanks to our devoted staff team and to our dedicated Board. Together I hope we can continue to make a difference

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bernie Curran'. The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Bernie' and the last name 'Curran' clearly distinguishable.

Manager –
Bernie Curran

ABOUT FRIENDS OF THE ELDERLY

Since 1980, **Friends of the Elderly**, a non-profit, non-denominational, volunteer-based organisation, has been committed to alleviating isolation and loneliness among older people. We aim to promote independence and well-being. We offer older members the opportunity to make new friendships with each other and with our compassionate volunteers. Our hope is that all older people can have equality of opportunity and improved quality of life as they age, and also have a great social life.

Older adults represent the fastest-growing segment of our population, but no one should grow old alone. Companionship is a key component in the healthy ageing process. There are many reports and studies which outline the detrimental effects loneliness and social isolation can have on an older person's health and well-being.

National and international research shows loneliness and social isolation is now a major public health issue which is twice as devastating to health as obesity. Older people, particularly those over seventy-five, are more at risk from social isolation than many other groups. **Friends of the Elderly** provides services to hundreds of older people all over Ireland each year. With our many clubs and activities, programmes and events we make a significant social impact on the communities of older people we serve.



Some of our team with one of our Service Civique volunteers at Áras an Úachtaráin

*We are service user led and reach out to older people in their own communities, tailoring our services to meet their needs. **Friends of the Elderly** acts as an advocate for our older members and helps them to access appropriate local services. We also provide hundreds of food and hygiene hampers in conjunction with SMD (Support to the Most Deprived) and our many corporate partners. We also run educational programmes to assist our members to stay connected.*

Through COVID-19, we have adapted our services to reach more people and provide vital services to those struggling with the detrimental effects as a result of the worldwide crisis. We are also part of a larger organisation with branches across Europe and the Americas and in 2022 we will celebrate 42 years in Ireland.

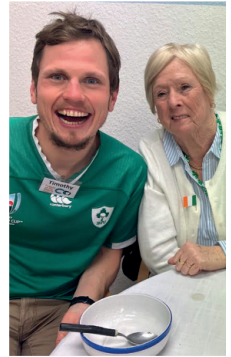
OUR WAY OF CARING

Our community-based programmes aim to make it easier and more enjoyable for older members to remain in their homes and continue to enjoy life. It is sometimes difficult for older people when they have experienced great changes in their lives, such as widowhood, bereavement, loss of friends and siblings, emigration and relocation of their children, and many health changes. Our approach is flexible and the needs of the individual older person are at the core of what we do.

We take a coordinated approach working with statutory and voluntary agencies to achieve our goals of eliminating loneliness and social isolation.

We also engage corporates, education centres and the wider community to work with us to achieve our vision. In 2022/23 we will extend our programmes to ensure older people do not go without essential food items through winter and at times when fuel costs escalate.

**Timothy, Our part-time volunteer
in The Wednesday Club**



Friendly Call Service

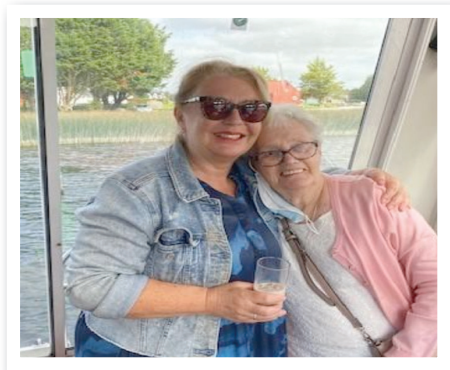
Open Nationally to those over sixty, this service is growing year on year. Through recent difficult times it has proved to be a lifeline to those most in need. The service has grown from 13,520 calls in 2017 to a staggering 38,500 calls in 2021. A huge demand for the service in 2021 led us to expand even further, and pivot the service to enable a greater reach to older people. And calls were longer we could give more time and establish closer relations. Our caring callers offered daily priority calls to those who had lost vital services due to closures. Lost carer hours, day-care centres closing, reduced meal delivery services, family and friends not visiting because of public health advice left many feeling so vulnerable during the most rigid restrictions.



Lauren, one of our fantastic friendly callers!

Our volunteers offered reassurance and practical help and we had a huge offering of support from local volunteers, young and older corporate professionals, those in retirement and students alike. **Friends of the Elderly** staff and remote and onsite volunteers made calls in 2021 keeping those connected and feeling safe during the pandemic. This year we have enhanced the friendly call even further by adding priority calls and a buddy call system.

Visitation Programme



Two friends enjoying the river cruise on the daytrip to Athlone.

This is open to the over 60s in the greater Dublin region and is also established in Dunboyne, Co. Meath. Each of our volunteers visits one or two of our older members in their home or nursing home at least once a week. Visitation volunteers are subject to a careful selection, vetting, training and matching process and an introduction phase in which the volunteer and the older person are supported by staff. They then agree on a time and day for visitation, which can be a social call, outings for coffee, walks or shopping. Sometimes if our older members avail of outings or events our volunteers may be called upon to assist and this

is a great alternative to the social visitation in the home. In 2021 approximately 12,000 volunteering hours were dedicated to this programme, resulting in 11,500 visitations. Due to COVID health concerns, visits were sometimes moved to the garden to stay connected throughout the pandemic. Although visiting numbers were down somewhat due to COVID restrictions, we are now re-prioritising this programme in 2022/23.

Social Engagement Clubs

The range of activities we offer to our members is varied and diverse. Each week we operate our Wednesday Club, a social event where 80 members come together to sing, dance and share refreshments. There is a huge musical aspect to the Wednesday Club with a resident band, although our members are usually the stars of the show – with their singing and line dancing. We also run coffee mornings, afternoon teas, a Movie Club and some educational programmes such as I.T. upskilling, which aims to narrow the digital divide for older people. These clubs offer a warm and welcoming space to meet, learn and enjoy good company. We also have cabaret afternoons with some fantastic local talent performing in the hall.



Outings, Day Trips and Parties

Friends of the Elderly has an extensive outings and parties programme, which operates both onsite and off at various festive times throughout the year and

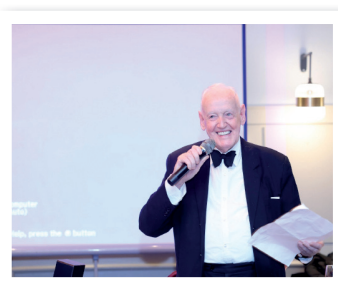
through the summer period. We run four national trips to places of interest annually, for fifty-plus members each time. We also have at least four trips in Dublin for smaller groups on which we aim to bring the less mobile or more isolated, providing transport for those who are in need. In addition, we travel out to afternoon teas and Sunday lunches at various times and attend events together - art exhibitions, music, theatre and film. This year we returned to organising our short holidays, heading to Wexford with Seniors Card for a four-day break.

Pre-COVID, we have usually facilitated three Christmas parties with four-course dinners, lively entertainment and Christmas presents for all. However, this past year we went out to The Bonnington Hotel which had a much bigger function room and it was a very pleasant change to have everyone together for Christmas dinner. We also celebrate the other festive periods with themed parties. Our corporate partners provide tickets to shows which we raffle. We always aim to enable social life with others who have similar interests. We also involve our older members in our Volunteer Recognition evening.

This celebration is to recognise their work and commitment to our growing organisation. Every member of our social club has their birthday recognised with a present and card and some celebrations at the Wednesday Club for the significant birthdays!

Advocacy and Signposting

Our staff team and volunteers work continuously with all our members but also with our referral agents, many of whom are GPs and social care professionals. We work with these partners and also family members (who may be living some distance away) to ensure that our older members get support and guidance and can access good quality services. We ensure our older members know their entitlements, get the assistance they need and signpost services they can call on when they have issues. Our volunteers will inform staff when an older member is experiencing difficulty and may need assistance and this is then taken up by staff or referred to other services which may be able to help. In 2022 we started our Lunch and Learn sessions with partner agencies and professionals giving quality, relevant information to our members.



Our Older Friends

Ageing can be a positive process but for many it can also be a turbulent time in their lives, with major changes to both body and mind, which can throw up many difficulties for our members. We are here to support people in this phase of their life and ensure they continue to live life to the fullest.

Brigid is 85 and has no family. She told us she did not have a great start to life – her mother died when she was born and her auntie who raised her died when she was 8. Her dad had no choice but to give her to the nuns. She stayed and worked with them all her life.

She was surrounded by people but she always felt none of them were family. She never married and never properly learned to read or write. A time came for her to stop working and she was suddenly in a new life on her own. The days were long and she wouldn't talk to anybody. She felt like her life was over.

*"I heard of **Friends of the Elderly** through my community nurse. She made the referral on my behalf and things moved very quickly. I was invited to attend their social club in Bolton Street. I started to meet people. I made a very special friend called Sheila, she is the best friend that I ever had. Even though I joke that she's an old lady because she is 75, ten years younger than me. I am invited to her family celebrations – weddings, birthdays and now I never spend Christmas alone anymore. I remember getting my first birthday card from **Friends of the Elderly**, it was the first card I had received for my birthday in a very long me. It made me feel so special. I even get birthday presents from them – they are so wonderful and it is the best decision I ever made to join **Friends of the Elderly**"*

Brigid a Social Club Member.

Kevin has found himself alone as his family are grown and his wife has moved to nursing care. He spends most of his days visiting his wife. As a result of COVID restrictions he could not visit his wife and he soon fell into depression.

He was always a bright outgoing man, so this really had a huge impact on him. He didn't want to go out. His GP suggested **Friends of the Elderly** to him, and he was willing to give it a go.

*I received a call from one of the ladies in the office who explained exactly the services **Friends of the Elderly** provided. She was so kind on the phone, I felt that there was hope that I had somewhere to go. I attended the social club the very next day. I was so nervous I felt overwhelmed when I got there first. But the volunteers and the lady I spoke with on the phone made me feel so welcome. I loved it. I was soon tapping my foot and singing along with the resident band. The songs brought back so many memories for me. I have even signed up for the home visitation programme and have a lovely man who visits me once a week. We go for coffee and walks but most of all we chat about everything. He is a friend that I thought I'd never have.*

Kevin, a Visitation Programme Member

Peggy was a very keen ballroom dancer all her life until she suffered a stroke at the age of 65. It was so unexpected and her whole life changed in an instant. Her mobility was greatly reduced and she relied on family and friends to take

her out. She was always so independent. Her occupational therapist suggested **Friends of the Elderly** and at first she was reluctant but eventually she rang herself to find out about our services.

*"I was really hesitant to ring **Friends of the Elderly**, but I am so glad that I did. It has made a huge difference to my life. Even though my mobility is reduced this does not stop me attending their cabaret dinners as transport is provided for me. I am also on their friendly call service. This is a true lifeline for me, and especially was throughout COVID. I receive regular phone calls from all different volunteers so the conversation is always so varied. I also receive beautiful food hampers and care packages. I once told a volunteer of my love of reading and soon books started to arrive for me. I never feel alone anymore, I have friends who care about me and this has given me a new lease of life "*

Peggy, Friendly Call Member

OUR VOLUNTEERS

Friends of the Elderly is a volunteer-based organisation. This past year we have made great improvements to the way we support volunteers and because of this we have been recognized with an award called the Volunteer Friendly Award from the Dublin Volunteer Centre. Volunteers are invaluable to our organisation and are the very foundation from which we operate. We are proud of the time, commitment, and dedication they give to delivering quality services to our older members. Their companionship and friendships change lives. Many of our older friends are also volunteers, giving many hours to assist in the clubs, work at our charity shop and to make calls and visits to our older members.

They bring a richness to the experience for all involved and share their life stories of volunteering with the younger students and new volunteers on their arrival. We now have approximately 320 volunteers, some in the community, some working onsite and many from the corporate world. Our biggest corporate partner is Homestore+More and the fantastic colleagues from stores around the country are a huge support to our services.



*'I have volunteered as a friendly caller since 2018, I work both from the office and from home on my app. I love to chat so I really enjoy the calls on the morning and afternoon lists. I am also a buddy caller which has enabled me to build a great relationship with one gentleman whom I call twice a week. I finally got to meet him when both of us received tickets from **Friends of the Elderly** to a show at Bord Gáis. It was an amazing experience to sit and chat face to face with Paddy as we had chatted for so long on the phone. Sometimes it is difficult to gain trust and many older people understandably want to be independent for as*



Volunteer of the Month

long as they can. I think they feel they don't want to reach out and ask for help but as the saying goes 'Everyone needs Friends' It's so true! And at times it's harder to make new connections. This is the reason I have started to volunteer. I saw my own Nan losing friends and family and it was heart-breaking and much confidence is lost through this period of your life. It was great to see Paddy out and about at the theatre enjoying himself with other members and of course a huge surprise for me to finally meet him. I have had such a great time volunteering and I would recommend it to anyone! **Mary, Friendly Call Volunteer**

*"I volunteered with **Friends of the Elderly** throughout the summer last year and as I had some exams, I was an occasional volunteer. I chose the social clubs and cabarets as I love music and it was epic – I thought it was going to be all tea and scones and chats! They were so energetic and friendly: I did theatres, hosted the song contests, went on the trips and got to know so many other students and interns along the way. The members are so nice. They taught me line dancing, guitar and drums and I also learned a thing or two about myself and life in general! I am signed up for Christmas this year to help with dinners and parties and I am bringing one of my college friends along too! A great experience altogether.* **Joanne, Occasional Part-time Volunteer**

I am one of the visiting volunteers and I have been in a few different roles with a couple of different people as I have been volunteering for years. I started with a lady called Josie some years back and stayed with her throughout her move from home to nursing care. It was one of the most enriching relationships I have experienced. There were many fun times and great chats and of course sad times. But I would not have changed anything for the world. Volunteering is so rewarding and just a few hours out of my life, has given so much to Josie who was my special friend. I took a break after she passed away and then returned and I now visit another man who lives locally. I originally signed up for a one-year term and enjoyed it so much I decided to stay on. I tried to do different things each week and to empower Josie to do more for herself. My belief is that you are never too old to try new things, and she agreed. What a time we had and so many funny memories to hold onto.

Myself and my new friend are playing chess so I can't wait to get around to him each Thursday to try and beat him at it! So much competition it's unbelievable!



Elaine, Visitation Volunteer

DUNBOYNE BRANCH

Visitation in the Community

Our visitation programme continues to be successful with numerous friendships being built in the locality. Our volunteers are amazing, all of whom regularly visit members at home and contact elderly members by phone. Our elderly friends are benefiting greatly from these visits as are our visiting volunteers. Nursing home visits are ongoing and include two local nursing homes. We continue to visit elderly people on a weekly basis. We are growing the number of members availing of our services, which is very encouraging.

Coffee Club

Our Coffee Club is hugely successful and continues to grow in numbers. The Oak Centre in Dunboyne, facilitates these clubs every 6 weeks. Numbers have grown to over 100, with 80 elderly people attending each time. The transport provided by ATN buses is invaluable. Our music continues to be provided by Robbie Fallon. Local businesses SuperValu and Avoca provide a lot of the confectionery for the mornings. We have a cohort of extra volunteers that help during the coffee clubs. Transition Year students from St. Peter's College continue to provide great hands-on help and support to the members attending. The students have built up a great rapport with the elderly. Overall our presence in the community has grown significantly over the past year which we hope to build on over the coming years.



INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERING PROGRAMME

In 2018, **Friends of the Elderly** participated for the first time in Service Civique which enabled us to take two or three French students each year for a one-year placement. This valuable programme, now in its fourth year, is funded by the French Government. It offers young people under 26 the opportunity to volunteer for up to one year internationally on approved projects, and to work alongside Irish and other European volunteers.

This programme promotes informal learning and personal development and volunteers gain valuable practical experience and improved English. After much planning we have now hosted 11 students through this programme. The full-time French volunteers have enhanced our services and brought another culture and a new dynamic to our work in 2021/2022.



Pictured left are some of the volunteers who became befrienders, visiting some members

at home and supporting those who came to the social club and our other events. They also took on friendly calls, shop volunteering and administration duties.

Although the past two years were very much disrupted by COVID-19, they enjoyed the experience and learned so much from the challenges they faced.

Below is a statement from one of the volunteers around her mission:

*"On completion of my volunteer service with **Friends of the Elderly**, Ireland, I have evolved professionally but most importantly personally. The year was rich in emotion, between laughter, incomprehension, joy with all the volunteers that I met from all over the world and the wonderful team at **Friends of the Elderly**. I felt accepted in my entirety and they exploited the potential that I don't always see in myself"* **Naye**

COLLEGE INTERN PROGRAMME



Friends of the Elderly offers students from Ireland and around the world opportunities to undertake placements to gain valuable experience in the social and community sector. They can work directly in our older persons' programmes or in administration, or in our Fundraising and Communications department.

Friends of the Elderly continues to nurture contacts with third-level colleges in Ireland and this year worked with TU Dublin, NCAD, UCD and TCD. We work with many overseas students who come to Ireland to improve their English and gain a new perspective on how organisations such as ours

work. Below are some insights into how two students felt during and after their placements

*"This summer I was an intern at **Friends of the Elderly** for 3 months and I discovered how this association works. I worked mostly at the office and in the charity shop. I was happy that the shop was able to open when I started. Despite the pandemic, after one month, there was the movie club so I helped out there. It was very lovely to see the elderly people enjoying this moment.*

*I am glad to have had this experience in this beautiful country. I enjoyed volunteering with this team in Dublin at the **Friends of the Elderly**"*

Chloe Aellig – Switzerland

***Friends of the Elderly** could not be as successful and well-loved as it is without the people working here. Truly I think that the magic comes from how genuinely friendly everyone here is. I've worked some truly terrible jobs in the past and was a little nervous to see how I acclimated to an Irish working environment. Everyone here was so welcoming, everyone who works here is in the exact job*

they should be in. They were all born to bring friendship into this world. I was grateful to be around their energy for the month and a half I was here for. The older people I got to talk to were fascinating and I learned so much from just being able to talk to them. They are some of the sweetest people and it was always funny when they regaled me with their stories from America when I was homesick. To be honest, before I took this internship I didn't even think about how isolating it must be to be an older person. You really only realise when you hear how grateful they are just to have a phone call, or the way they light up when they see their friends during our social club. From what I thought was just going to be a simple internship that I worked at to fulfill class credit, to something that will forever change the way I treat other people"

Olivia Kennedy – Boston University

SECONDARY SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

Friends of the Elderly runs a schools programme to increase young peoples' knowledge of ageing and the challenges older people face, and how these challenges may lead to social isolation. Through our schools programme we hope to dispel myths about ageing and older people. We aim to do this through student participation in activities with older people, both in our Social Club and with older adults living near their school. In this way students discover the great benefits of intergenerational friendship for younger and older people alike.



We have an in-house schools programme which is very popular with students. It gives them the opportunity to share their skills with our older members while learning about life in years gone by. Social clubs, especially intergenerational clubs like ours, have been found to be one of the most effective ways of combating loneliness among older people. **Friends of the Elderly** is always glad to speak at schools and colleges about the issues relating to social isolation.

For the past two years, we could not have our usual Tech Clubs due to COVID; however, we aim to make a return to the clubs in 2022/23, with Microsoft coming on board as a partner. Usually TY Students facilitate the clubs alongside our staff. They act as teachers, showing some of our members smart technologies and better ways to stay in touch using technology. This learning is invaluable, especially in recent times when most were staying at home and needed to use

technology to stay connected. Our members were so glad they had upskilled in previous years and were better able to stay connected through the recent worrying time. Interns from Microsoft will conduct the classes this year and later in the year we hope to reconnect with local TY students.

We work with Gaisce Students, transition year students and summer volunteers, and also with other educational facilities who promote less traditional ways of learning, such as Youth Reach. We work with many diverse groups and like to be inclusive in our approach so as to enrich the experience for both young and old. We facilitate learning and work experience for people with disabilities. Placements can be for as little as one week or in some cases 26 weeks for the President's Award. They stay for as long as is needed to gain the confidence and experience they hope for or maybe just because they enjoy it so much. Either way they all receive the Young **Friends of the Elderly** Certificate of Recognition on completion of their placements.



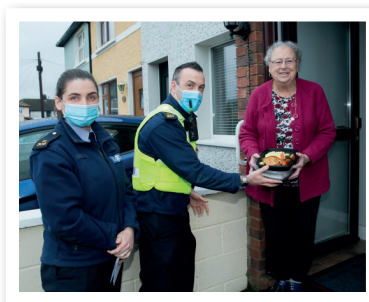
*"I completed my Gaisce TY placement in January. While doing this work experience I have learnt some new skills that will help me in the future. I have completed tasks such as hamper making, organized the stores, and pricing and tagging in the charity shop. On my third day of the placement a social event was held for the members and I got to help with teas, coffees and pastries and prizes for the raffle. I am so grateful for the opportunity to work with **Friends of the Elderly**, I have felt so welcome since day 1. It is a very warm and friendly environment"*

Ella Byrne

(TY Student Ratoath College LCA programme)

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY PROJECTS

The arrival of our new corporate partnership with **Home Store + More** provided much needed support for **Friends of the Elderly**. Their colleagues signed up to volunteer with our friendly call programme and made an incredible impact on reaching our members to help them stay connected. Providing financial assistance to **Friends of the Elderly** has enabled us to grow our membership by a staggering 54%. Providing social media support promoting our services and sponsoring our 40th birthday celebration along with sponsorship of day trips and musical cabarets. With their support



we are in a position to provide lifelong friendships to so many older people who need our help.

Oracle and **Com-Reg** worked with us in early 2021 when we were in extended lockdown by providing cards and letters that would help with our *Staying Connected Programme*.

Our summer trips were sponsored by **Home Store + More** and we were treated to an amazing garden party in the Old Rectory, Dunganstown Wicklow.

With the arrival of another lockdown all of our Christmas parties were cancelled, but again we received tremendous support. **Ripple** donated to our members Christmas card appeal to ensure that each member could receive a Christmas wish. We worked with **The Bonnington Hotel, Gahan Meats** and **The Seed Potato Company of Ireland** to deliver a Christmas dinner directly to our members in North County Dublin on the 22nd of December.

When we launched our Christmas Appeal many corporate partners donated ... **Global Payments, Abrivia, Avison Young**, to name but a few. This financial support ensured that we could reach and meet the extra demand on our services.

Fed-Ex came on board and offered delivery of all hampers outside of the Dublin area, and we heard how one hamper made its way by delivery truck, local island ferry and then An Post to a member on the Sherkin Islands!! True community spirit.

In January we celebrated Christmas – although belated – we partied in style as soon as it was safe for us to do so. Thank you to **Abbott Cherrywood** for sponsoring such an amazing event.

Unilever continued their support by providing items for our care hampers, delivered directly to members' homes and those in nursing care.

With the generous and kind support of each of our corporate partners we could confidently move into 2022 and meet the extra demand placed on our services

Our Beautiful Bolton Street Charity Shop

Ritzy Rags, has been in operation for over thirty years now and unfortunately has been hard hit with the closures imposed on retail throughout the pandemic. However, we have managed to recover well, whilst we adapted to new safe shopping guidelines. We were glad to reopen and get back to running our shop as normal and in line with best practice



We continue to sell many labels from both donations locally and items dispatched from France, which gives the shop a unique quality. The French labels are fabulous, and prices are still what you would expect in the charity shop sector.

We are grateful for your support of our shop. We welcome shoppers and those who volunteer and donate. This helps us to fund some of our projects and adds to the social inclusion programme for our older members.

Many of our recently retired members continue to volunteer, alongside students, interns, and young volunteers. It plays a big part in our intergenerational programme and it is our open door to the whole community.



Some of our corporate donors also assist, by making a call out for donations to their staff. Because of this and the French pieces, you can find many new items of clothing and some designer labels! We cater for all styles and price ranges and for young and old. We have both modern and vintage selections and it's simply a lovely place to shop or browse.

*Drop by and say hello to
our good friends and
you might find something special!*

2021/2022 ACTIVITIES



OUR FUTURE PLANS

- Reintroduce our educational programmes and tech clubs
- Expand our food and hygiene hamper programme: with assistance from the SMD fund and our many corporate partners
- Highlight the United Nations International Day of the Older Person through a number of events around 1st of October each year.
- Prepare for the Investing in Volunteers Award
- Develop the role of volunteers within the organisation
- Raise awareness of the public health issues associated with ageing
- Improve service delivery and monitor quality standards
- Increase our fundraising initiatives to improve and expand our services

BEING ACCOUNTABLE

Guiding Principles:

We take great care to ensure that all donations and legacies received are used efficiently and effectively. All funds available over and above one year's current operating costs are directed to improve and expand our services. We are legally obliged and honour-bound to ensure that each and every donation and legacy received is duly recorded and promptly acknowledged. We also ensure that all funds received are used to the best possible effect to alleviate loneliness and isolation among the elderly who live alone.

Oversight and Reporting:

The Board has established detailed internal book-keeping and accounting rules governing the treatment of all receipts and expenditure, as well as detailed banking procedures. All financial transactions are recorded and presented them to our external accountants, who prepare detailed bi-monthly accounts for our Finance and Administration Sub-Committee. This sub-committee comprises the Chairman, the Hon. Treasurer and at least one other member of the Board of Directors. The sub-committee addresses financial matters of the charity and it reports to each bi-monthly Board meeting. A key function of the sub-committee is the preparation for Board approval of the charity's annual budget, as well as presentation of management accounts at each Board meeting, summarising the charity's financial performance accounts against budget performance for the financial year to date.

Annual Audit:

Friends of the Elderly's financial year runs from 1 April to 31 March. Financial statements are audited annually by our auditors, Hayden Brown (Chartered Accountants) and approved by the Board for presentation to the charity's Annual General Meeting. The financial statements for the year ended 31 March

2021 were subject to a clean audit opinion and were lodged with the Companies Registration Office and the Charities Regulator in advance of required deadlines. Audited Financial Statements are also available for inspection on the Friends of the Elderly website (www.friendsoftheelderly.ie).

Our Policy on Reserves:

Friends of the Elderly endeavours to maintain reserves equating to no less than one year's projected expenditure, as set out in our annual budget. We consider this level of reserves to be required to ensure our continued operations in the event of unforeseen circumstances affecting our revenues. When reserves fall below this level every effort is made to restore them to this level as soon as possible. We monitor revenue and expenditure levels on an ongoing basis to ensure we retain sufficient reserves to allow us to continue providing our services.

THANK YOU FROM OUR BOARD

Your support is vital –

Friends of the Elderly's achievements are only made possible through the support of our Volunteers and Donors. As the demands on our services grow so does our need for your continuing support.

On behalf of our older friends, we would like to thank all our volunteers who have supported **Friends of the Elderly** throughout the year. It is our volunteers who enable us to reach out to so many older people each year. A special thanks to the International Federation of **Friends of the Elderly** and to the Little Brothers of the Poor in France (Paris) who have supported us by providing a platform for shared learning and information exchange and encouraged us to keep going when times are challenging. To our Donors, we say a heartfelt thank you. Your support enables us to provide a growing range of services to many older people who find themselves alone and isolated. And to our biggest Corporate partner Homestore and more thank you for making a difference!

Our Honorary Ambassador:

Dr Ronnie Delany

Our Board:

Tom Horan Chairperson
Sean Darcy Hon. Secretary
Ray Brennan Hon. Treasurer
Deirdre Devaney
Liz Roche
Omega Goodwin
Geraldine McCarthy
Richard Nolan
Paula Butterly

Special thanks to recently resigned Board Member Geraldine McCarthy

PHOTO ALBUM 2021-2022



**CHRISTMAS
FUN!**



A DATE WITH THE PRESIDENT OF IRELAND



AHOY, ME HEARTIES!!





**YOU'LL
NEVER
WALK
ALONE**



**TWO OF OUR
GREAT FRIENDS
OF THE ELDERLY**

Thank you for being a GREAT Friend of the Elderly

HOW TO GET IN TOUCH

**Friends of the Elderly
25 Bolton Street, Dublin D01 V6H9
Phone: 01-8731855**

**email: info@friendsoftheelderly.ie
website: www.friendsoftheelderly.ie**

Our audited accounts are on our website.