



## **Mission Statement**

The mission of **AID FOR FRIENDS** is to serve needy, isolated shut-ins, primarily the frail elderly, in the five-county Greater Philadelphia Region, with seven free home cooked meals delivered weekly by empathetic volunteer visitors, and also to provide shut-ins with free outreach services. The goal is to help our homebound “*client/friends*” maintain their cherished independence by supporting their determination to remain in their own homes for as long as possible and to enhance their quality of life.

## History of Aid for Friends

Rita Ungaro-Schiavone founded Aid for Friends in 1974 while working as a volunteer social worker at the YWCA in the Frankford section of Philadelphia. Her first caseload of 11 shut-ins included people who were not able to care for themselves including Minnie, who was blind and unable to walk; Dorothy, who was developmentally impaired; and Ruth, who suffered from multiple sclerosis, was confined to a wheelchair and suffered from emotional illness. All their friends and relatives had moved on, passed away, or abandoned them. Each was alone and hungry.

Rita wanted to alleviate their suffering, so she cooked meals, froze them, and personally delivered them to the shut-ins. She would sit and talk with her new “friends” because they were so troubled and desperately lonely.

As a truly grass-roots non-profit endeavor, Rita grew Aid for Friends by enlisting the help of her friends in the Christian Family Movement, St. Jerome’s Parish, and the Frankford YWCA. Under her leadership they provided meals and friendship to more and more people who were isolated and unable to care for themselves. With the growing support of the volunteer network and monetary donors the program grew to encompass the five-county Greater Philadelphia Region. With growth came movement from the tiny original headquarters at the Frankford YWCA, to St. Jerome Mobile Units, to Holme Circle Shopping Center, and now the 30,000 square foot office and warehouse known as the Aid for Friends Frail Elderly Outreach Center.

Aid for Friends has delivered more than 13 million meals to over 12,000 homebound individuals during its 35 year history. Volunteer visitors have logged more than 1.6 million hours providing compassionate support, and ***all Aid for Friends meals and services are free to our “client/friends”***. Today, an adult volunteer network of cooks, drivers, visitors, coordinators, and office and maintenance personnel numbering 16,600 is bolstered by youngsters from many schools and youth organizations. Aid for Friends also works closely with 268 outside organizations consisting of churches, synagogues and civic groups that participate in the volunteer network by collecting and distributing the frozen home-cooked meals to the homebound.

# **Programs and Services**

Since the population being served by Aid for Friends is primarily frail and vulnerable a number of support projects have been established over the years. All of these programs are free to our “friends/clients”.

## **I. BRINGING FOOD AND FRIENDSHIP TO THE HOMEBOUND**

- Food and Friendship (1974)
- Inner City Meal Centers (1978)
- Operation Quick Serve (2000)
- Caregiver Support Program (1999)

## **II. FOOD SUPPLY**

- Orange Juice Project (1991)
- Homemade Soups (1982)
- Inner-City Breakfast Bag Project (1995)
- Demonstration/Production Kitchen (2003)

## **III. OUTREACH SERVICES**

- Essential Items and Services (1974)
- Mental Health Outreach Program (2001)
- Emergency Financial Assistance (1977)
- Safety Project (1995)
- Small Home Repairs Program (2001)

## **IV. TOKENS OF FRIENDSHIP**

- Gifts of Warmth (1975)
- Birthday Card Project (2004)



## **Significance of the Logo**

**ANGEL WINGS:** Form a heart to show the love that exists among our volunteers, staff, and client/friends.

**ANGEL:** What so many “client/friends” call our volunteers.

**SHEAF OF WHEAT:** Represents the food that AFF provides.

**EXTENDED RIGHT HAND:** The symbol of our reaching out in friendship and other aid.