

Friends are the antidote to loneliness for seniors

By Paula Span, New York Times

The circle shrinks. As the years pass, older people attend too many funerals. Friendships that sustained them for decades lapse when companions and confidants retire or move away or grow ill.

These days Sylvia Frank, who moved into an independent living residence in Lower Manhattan in 2014, can email or call one longtime friend in Florida. Another, in Queens, is slipping into dementia and will most likely exclaim, “I haven’t spoken to you in months!” when, in fact, they talked the day before.

But even at advanced ages, new relationships take root. Frank’s son kept telling her that a colleague’s cousin, Judy Sanderoff, was about to move into the same facility. They sought each other out.

Now, Frank, 91, and Sanderoff, 96, eat breakfast together almost daily; they have dinner, à deux or with other friends, many evenings. Sanderoff spent Thanksgiving with Frank’s family in Brooklyn.

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