

Introduction to Organization and Project

The Spread Wings Foundation is a 501 (c)(3) educational trust based in New York and Massachusetts, serving all ages throughout the United States. It was established by Robert Gambie in 2015. Mr. Gambie spent his career on Wall Street working in both finance and photography. He served as the official photographer for the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and is the published author of ten books. The Spread Wings Foundation uses this unique book collection as a tool to connect generations, serving youths to seniors primarily in MA, NY, and New England. We have two principal missions: to help young people develop an interest in finance inspiring them to become entrepreneurs and business owners; and to support seniors as they age.

The books *Nantucket Impressions* and *Wall Street* are the focus of our Seniors' Book Project. The format of these books is a collection of photographs with historical text. According to Alzheimers.net, visual aids, especially photos can stimulate short and long-term memories. The research supports that looking at photos and reminiscing on different times in their lives benefits those dealing with memory loss. It helps to anchor a person to the present moment, remind them of memories, and keep them at the forefront of their mind. This is a wonderful way to help those with dementia rediscover their sense of identity and belonging. It also offers caregivers a way to engage with seniors who struggle with memory loss. One of the principal missions of the Spread Wings Foundation is to support seniors as they age. Our current project focuses on supporting seniors during the holiday season through the gift of books to support memory, mental health, and quality of life.

The Need and the Solution

The U.S. Census estimates that as many as 27% of adults age 65+ live alone. Loneliness is often due to a lack of meaningful connections with other people, impacting both physical & mental health. Recent research by the National Institute of Mental Health has shown that a lack of social connection is also associated with an increased risk of disease, anxiety, depression, dementia, and even suicide. It also revealed that people with mental health conditions are more than twice as likely to be lonely as people who have strong mental health. Aging brings with it disconnection from community as loved ones and friends grow ill or pass away. Loss of mobility results in lost independence and less opportunity to socialize. The holidays present an especially difficult time for seniors, increasing feelings of isolation and loneliness.

Our senior population is faced with isolation and loneliness, especially during the holidays.

According to a 2024 Medicare nationwide survey, 57% of seniors 65 and older in the U.S. feel lonely. One in ten seniors reported feeling lonely every day. Seniors reported the primary causes are loss of friends, passing of a loved one, lack of social opportunities, distance from family, and feeling forgotten about. Sadly, 44% of seniors experience loneliness during the holidays, with Christmas Day reported as the hardest. One quarter of seniors do not get to see family and friends over the holidays. Our Senior Book Project focuses on donating the photography books *Nantucket Impressions* and *Wall Street* to seniors in NY, MA and throughout New England as a holiday gift to help them feel remembered. For some seniors, it is the only holiday gift they receive. The photographs of New York City and the island of Nantucket stir memories of working and vacationing with their loved ones. The historical text helps them remember the details of these locations. These visual aids can stimulate short- and long-term memories in a senior struggling with memory loss, dementia or Alzheimer's.

The Goals, Evaluation and Impact

Our 2025 goal at the Spread Wings Foundation is to donate our photography books to senior support groups, assisted living facilities, memory care centers & housing organizations in NY, MA, and throughout New England. We primarily focus on donating books prior to the holiday season but offer book donations throughout the year. The goal is to provide seniors with a gift to help them feel remembered during the holidays. The gift of a photography book offers them the opportunity to remember places & interests from their past. It opens discussion & connection with other seniors in their community or with their caregivers if they live alone. During 2023, we contributed more than 4,000 books to seniors throughout New England. In 2024 we distributed over 8,000 books in New England and NY. We contacted and donated books to Councils on Aging, Alzheimer & Parkinson Support Groups, Elder Services, Senior Centers, Assisted Living Facilities, Skilled Nursing Facilities, Memory Care Units, Senior Housing Authorities, Nantucket Hospital, and Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital Cape Cod. Our November mailing was sent out to past & new organizations offering book donations again for the 2024 Holiday Season. We offered books to over 700 locations in NY, and 300 in MA. Our goal as we head into 2025 is to give more than 15,000 books to seniors as a gift, so they can feel remembered at the holidays and throughout the year.

This is an ongoing project with 2025 being the current funding period. The Spread Wings Foundation relies on the support of corporations, foundations, charitable trusts, and

individual donors. We would not be able to serve our seniors and fulfill our mission without these generous contributions. Funds received will be utilized in 2025 to pay for the supply of books at cost, and shipping. The total annual cost of our program is budgeted for the year 2025 at \$205,000. We are seeking donations from a variety of sources and request grant funding to help support the Seniors' Book Project and our Spread Wings Foundation mission to connect generations and support seniors.

Robert R. Gambee, the Spread Wings Foundation President and primary operations officer evaluates the organization's outreach throughout the year by reviewing the number of programs supported, the regional distribution of these programs, the number of books donated, and the number and ages served. We are also specifically interested in tracking the number of books donated to memory care facilities. Our current goals are: (1) The Spread Wings Foundation will donate more than 15,000 books to seniors by the end of 2025. (2) The Spread Wings Foundation intends to donate books to at least 50% of the senior living facilities in the state of New York by the end of 2025. (3) The Spread Wings Foundation intends to donate books to at least 50% of the senior living facilities in MA by the end of 2025. (4) The Foundation will expand our geographic reach donating books to seniors living outside of NY, MA, and New England. (5) The Foundation intends that at least 25% of the total book donations in 2025 will be to memory care units.

Future Funding

At Spread Wings Foundation we are dedicated to sustaining our mission by volunteering our time and pursuing as many funding avenues as possible to continue our mission for the next generation. We have implemented the following strategies for 2025 and beyond to accomplish this:

- 1) applying for grant funding. We have been introducing corporations, foundations, and charitable trusts to our mission through Letters of Introduction, Letters of Inquiry, submitting grant proposals, and submitting online grant applications.
- 2) We have added a Donor Advised Fund button through Fidelity to our website to create a presence with DAF donors.
- 3) We are exploring non-profit marketing tools and programs to further support our mission over the next five years.
- 4) Recognizing donors according to their wishes. This includes acknowledgment on our website and our annual mailing to book recipient organizations, press releases issued to local media outlets, and inclusion in our annual financial reports.