



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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Good Friend Announces Board of Directors

WAUKESHA — Good Friend, Inc., a new non-profit whose purpose is to create autism awareness, teach acceptance, and foster empathy for children with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs), has assembled its founding five-member board of directors. Ken Genin (Waukesha), Lynnette Kalmadge (Waukesha), Gail Kolvenbach (St. Francis), Les Schamens (Delafield), and Cheri Sylla (Brookfield) join co-founders Chelsea Budde (Waukesha) and Denise Schamens (Brookfield), both mothers to children with ASDs, in their mission to eradicate disability harassment by promoting understanding to elementary-aged students.

Ken Genin has lived in Waukesha since 1985, and is now employed there as well. Having spent the last three years as the Development Director at The Women's Center, he worked the previous three decades as an executive, focused primarily on marketing and sales, in the food and feed ingredient business. Born in Madison, Wis., Genin graduated from the University of Wisconsin in 1972 with a B.A. in Business Administration. He and his wife Linda have two grown daughters.

Lynnette Kalmadge has lived in Waukesha, Wis., since 1997 with her husband of 12 years, Kyle, and their two children. She graduated with honors from St. Norbert College in De Pere, Wis., in 1993, with a B.B.A. in International Business. She worked in the telecommunications field before moving into the staffing industry in 1997. Two years later, Kalmadge stepped back from a her full-time career to focus on her family. She now enjoys a flexible part-time work schedule, writing newsletters, maintaining the website for Nissen Staffing Continuum in Waukesha, and teaching fitness classes at the Waukesha YMCA. In addition to her role on the Good Friend board, Kalmadge has been active in the Heyer Elementary Parent Teacher Association (PTA), where she now serves as its president. She is also a frequent volunteer at St. John's Lutheran Church in Brookfield and a board member of its preschool.

Gail Kolvenbach resides in St. Francis, Wis., with Paul, her husband of 27 years, along with their four children (ages 16-21). Upon the birth of her son Paul who has special needs, she immediately began her role as advocate. Struggling with the responsibilities of a first-time mom and a child with special needs, she knew she needed further assistance. This task became frustrating due to limited information, training, and resources in the community. Her journey and experiences along the way motivated her to assist families to help shorten their journey by providing them with information, training and resources on a volunteer basis. She also

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continues to be involved at the local and state level serving on several disability related councils and boards. Her attendance at workshops and conferences keeps her up to date on disability related issues, reveals new resources, and gives her the opportunity to connect with families.

Les Schamens and his wife Jeannette have been married for 43 years. They are the parents of four grown, married children, and the grandparents of ten grandchildren. Schamens has an Associate Degree in Business and is the owner of Badger Blueprint Company with offices in Waukesha and Oconomowoc, Wis. In addition to serving on the Board of Directors for Good Friend, Inc., Schamens is the past president of the North Central Reprographic Association, and is the Chairman of the Parish Pastoral Council at the Basilica of Saint Josaphat in Milwaukee.

For the past four years, Cheri Sylla has been supporting families and educators in the special education process and disability areas as the Parent Education Consultant for Cooperative Educational Services Agency #1 (CESA #1) in Brookfield, Wis. She and her husband, David, have four sons (ages 18, 17, and twins, 14). One of her sons has an intellectual disability and epilepsy and attends his local high school. She also serves on the Board of Education of the Elmbrook School District and has done so for over seven years. An active member of the communities she serves, Sylla is also affiliated with Wisconsin Association of School Boards, Best Buddies Wisconsin, Association for the Rights of Citizens with Handicaps (ARCh), Milwaukee County Transition Advisory Board (MCTAB), and the Ozaukee and Waukesha Counties' Transition Advisory Councils (TAC). She earned her B.S. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1987.

“We are very proud of this outstanding board,” says Chelsea Budde, who acts as the Chairperson. “Their commitment to improving humanity in general and the educational experience specifically is a driving force behind Good Friend’s mission.”

For more information regarding Good Friend, visit www.goodfriendinc.com.

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