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For Immediate Release, Please

Wisdom and Memories: Brookline Seniors and *The Reunion Project*
at Brookline Senior Center and Goddard House, April 3 To June 30

Nearly 50 Brookline senior women recently participated in *The Reunion Project*, a combination of art and narrative, designed to encourage older women to reflect on their memories and recognize the wisdom that comes with age.

The project culminates in an art exhibit featuring photographs and quotations that will be on display at *Gallery 93* of the Brookline Senior Center, 93 Winchester Street, Brookline and at *Gallery M* of Goddard House, 165 Chestnut Street, Brookline. The exhibit will open at both Goddard House and the Senior Center on April 3 and will run through June 30 at the Senior Center and through May 31 at Goddard House.

Photographer Lora Brody will present images, narrative, and history of the project at a reception at the Senior Center on April 20, from 6 to 8 pm. A second event in conjunction with Brookline Open Studios will take place at Goddard House on April 29 and 30 from 11 am to 5 pm. Using portrait photographs, narrative and history, photographer Lora Brody will again describe the project at 2 pm. both days. The public is invited to all events.

The Reunion Project was designed and conducted by Brody. She is a Visiting Scholar at the Brandeis Women's Studies Research Center, where she is working on a multi-media project about aging as documented in image, text and spoken word. She had previously conducted a similar project at a gathering of Wellesley College Alumnae and had noted the positive impact experienced by the participants. Brody stated, "In a society that is quick to forget that ageism diminishes the speaker as well as the potential listener, the goal of *The Reunion Project* is to give Senior Women an opportunity to examine their lives and to share their experiences with each other and with other generations."

Ginny Mazur, Community Partnership Director at Goddard House, learned about the project and recognized its potential benefits for senior women and for the community. She remarked, "When I look at the younger- and older-self photos, I imagine all the life lived in between them.

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Lora Brody was invited to conduct The Reunion Project in Brookline. The project was welcomed by Senior Center Director Ruthann Dobek, who remarked, "It's important to promote a positive image of aging with an emphasis on people's history and the wisdom people bring to their life experiences."

Frank Caro, co-chair of the BrooklineCAN Steering Committee, enthusiastically endorsed the project and BrooklineCAN (Brookline Community Aging Network) joined in as a sponsor. Caro stated, "***The Reunion Project*** calls attention to the remarkable diversity of women who participate in activities at the Brookline Senior Center. The women are highly diverse in their origins and in their life experiences."

Through the efforts of the Brookline Senior Center, Goddard House, and BrooklineCAN, nearly 50 Brookline women participated in the Brookline Reunion Project. Of the women who participated, 24 were recruited at the Senior Center and 22 were Goddard House residents. Their ages range from 65 TO 100.

Brody photographed each woman at scheduled intervals. Each woman was asked to bring a photo taken during her teen years. At that time, the participants wrote responses to a series of open-ended prompts while regarding their contemporary and teen-age photos:

"Then, I was (age)___," "Now, I am (age) ___.

"Then, I thought ___." "Now, I think ___."

"Then, I used to ___." "Now, I ___."

Brody created diptychs, using the teen-age next to the contemporary photo. The women's written responses were assembled to represent the collective voice of the group and will be on view as well.

Agnes Rogers, one of the participants, said "At 97, I've come to accept that age...it is what it is and it's not going to change...I'm just getting older and wiser."

Another participant, 88 year old Janice Denton, said, "I've come a very long way from where I started -- way down in Alabama -- to where I am today."

The impact on the participants was summed up by Lora Brody: the women "shuffled in and danced out".

The events at both the Brookline Senior Center and Goddard House are free and open to the public. For additional information contact Brookline Senior Center at (617-730-2770).

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Fact Sheet

Wisdom and Memories: Brookline Seniors and *The Reunion Project*

Summary:

The Reunion Project, on display at the Brookline Senior Center from April 3 to June 30 and at Goddard House from April 3 to May 31, features photographs and writings of nearly fifty women between ages 65 and 100. This transgenerational project was designed to encourage women to reflect on their memories and to recognize the wisdom that comes with age.

Dates & Location:

Brookline Senior Center, *Gallery 93*, 93 Winchester Street, Brookline, April 3 through June 30; Reception: April 20, 6 to 8 p.m. Artist Lora Brody presents the project with photos, narrative, and history.

Goddard House, *Gallery M*, 165 Chestnut Street, Brookline, April 3 through May 31; Reception: April 29 and 30, in conjunction with Brookline Open Studios, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Artist Lora Brody presents the project at 2 p.m. both days.

Principals and quotes:

Photographer Lora Brody designed *The Reunion Project*, conducted interviews and photographed all participants. A Visiting Scholar at the Brandeis Women's Studies Research Center, she currently is working on a multi-media project about aging, as documented in image, text and spoken word.

Brody has conducted similar projects for disparate groups, such as Wellesley College Alumnae, Temple B'nai Or Sisterhood of Morristown, NJ, Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia, KS, and Brandeis Women's Studies Research Center Scholars.

She noted the positive impact experienced by the participants: "In a society that is quick to forget that ageism diminishes the speaker as well as the potential listener, the goal of *The Reunion Project* is to give Senior Women an opportunity to examine their lives and to share their experiences with each other and with other generations."

Ruthann Dobek, director of the Brookline Council on Aging and director of the Brookline Senior Center, has been honored by the National Association of Social Workers. She notes, "It's important to promote positive images of aging with an emphasis on the history and wisdom people bring to their life experiences."

Frank Caro, Co-Chair, BrooklineCAN Steering Committee, and former chair, UMass Boston Gerontology Program: "The Reunion Project calls attention to the remarkable diversity of women who participate in activities at the Brookline Senior Center. The women are highly diverse in their origins and in their life experiences."

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Agnes Rogers, Reunion Participant:

“At 97, I've come to accept that age... it is what it is and it's not going to change...I'm just getting older and wiser.”

Janice Denton, Reunion Participant:

“I've come a very long way from where I started, way down in Alabama, to where I am today.”

Roberta Winitzer, Reunion Participant and member of BrooklineCAN Steering Committee:

“The idea of the Reunion Project seemed like a fun and important activity for BrooklineCAN and the Senior Center. The surprises? First, being asked to participate, and then, having to answer the questions. What were my dreams-goals as a teenager and who am I now???? Daunting task----- precious memories!”

David Weinberg, Curator of Brookline Senior Center, *Gallery 93, and of The Reunion*

Project: “The exhibit illustrates the difference time makes not only in the appearance of the women but also, and more uniquely, in their thinking.”

Ginny Mazur, Community Partnership Director at Goddard House, remarked, “When I look at the younger- and older-self photos, I imagine all the life lived in between them.

Julie Washburn, Program Manager, Brookline Senior Center, has known many of the women for many years. She commented, “We often only see a slice of a person's life. The Reunion Project has served as a reminder that we must strive to see each person as a whole and to recognize lives that are rich with diversity and unique experiences.”

Sponsors:

Brookline Senior Center provides a wide range of programs and services in health, arts, nutrition and recreation. The Center's goal is to help people maintain their independence so they continue to be active members of the community. The Center welcomes everyone regardless of age, income, disability, sexual, ethnic or religious background.

Goddard House, a not-for-profit, which was founded in 1849, is the oldest elder care organization in Massachusetts, and the third oldest in America. Today Goddard House Assisted Living offers older adults comfortable housing in a residential setting and the kindness and compassion that inspired its founding over a century ago.

BrooklineCAN (Brookline Community Aging Network) is a member-driven, volunteer organization, primarily for older Brookline residents. Promoting services and activities to enable independent living and improved quality of life, its principal purpose is to ensure that older Brookline residents remain a vital part of the town's social, cultural, and civic life.

Center Communities of Brookline, which offers a renewed vision for independent living, is more than just a place for seniors to live. The community benefits from being centrally located in the lively, urban environment of Brookline and is sponsored by Hebrew SeniorLife, a national expert in the field of senior living and healthcare.



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Background - Biography

Lora Brody, Photographer and Producer of The Reunion Project

Lora Brody is a Visiting Scholar at the Brandeis Women's Studies Research Center, where she is working on a multi-media project about aging as documented in image, text and spoken word.

The Reunion Project, a combination of art and narrative, designed to encourage older women to reflect on their memories and recognize the wisdom that comes with age.

The Reunion Project is an art exhibit featuring photographs and quotations of nearly 50 women. It will be on display at *Gallery 93* of the Brookline Senior Center and at *Gallery M* of Goddard House, both in Brookline. The exhibit will open at both Goddard House and the Senior Center on April 3 and will run through June 30 at the Senior Center and through May 31 at Goddard House.

Brody will present photos, narrative, and history of the project at a reception at the Senior Center on April 20, from 6 to 8 pm. A second event in conjunction with Brookline Open Studios will take place at Goddard House on April 29 and 30 from 11 am to 5 pm, where she again will describe the project using photos, narrative and history at 2 pm both days. The public is invited to all events.

About ***The Reunion Project*** Brody states, "In a society that is quick to forget that ageism diminishes the speaker as well as the potential listener, the goal of ***The Reunion Project*** is to give Senior Women an opportunity to examine their lives and to share their experiences with each other and with other generations."

In addition to ***The Reunion Project***, Brody is known for her images of Red Sox fans as well as a series of photographs that document the final decade of an iconic snack shop at Provincetown's Herring Cove Beach. Images from these portfolios have been recognized in juried shows and competitions such as the Copley Society Juried Show and PX3 Prix de la Photographie, Paris, and hang in private collections.

Images from the Fenway portfolio have been exhibited at The Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, Harvard University, The Griffin Museum of Photography, and a public installation created by The Magenta Foundation on the Boston Harbor Walk. Several of the Fenway images hang in the team's corporate offices as well as in the private collections of its executives.

Brody's photographs have been published on the cover and in feature articles in *The Boston Globe Sunday Magazine* and *The Cape Cod Times*. Her food photography has been featured in *Horticulture Magazine*, *Cape Cod Magazine* and *Cooking Light*. She is the author of twenty books relating to food and cooking, including three books of essays and recipes.

Brody is represented by Writers House in New York City, and by the Schoolhouse Gallery in Provincetown, MA.

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