



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Honoring Nursing Home Lives Lost  
Senator Kirsten Gillibrand and Age Wave CEO Ken Dychtwald join  
A Free Virtual Event  
Thursday, May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

(New York, NY) - Staggering. Incomprehensible. Recently, the number of nursing home deaths was determined to be 182,000 and climbing. In response, Gray Panthers is presenting a National Day of Remembrance, a virtual event, Thursday, May 20, 2021 from 5-6 PM ET, during Older Americans Month. This represents an opportunity for the nation to collectively grieve while raising public awareness of the need for nursing home transformation. Out of grief can come change.

Notables in the event program include: Senator Kirsten Gillibrand; testimonials from nursing home residents, staff, and families; interfaith clergy, including Reverend Lynn Casteel Harper from Riverside Church; National Medal of Arts recipient, Ralph Lemon; Age Wave CEO Ken Dychtwald; Gray Panthers NYC President Jack Kupferman; and others eager to lend their talents and support.

In response to this initiative, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand remarks, "It is so important to pause for a moment to reflect on the lives we have lost and to commit to doing everything we can to honor their memories. For me that means continuing to the important work of getting our older adults and the people who care for them the relief support and resources they need and deserve. It's one of my top priorities as the member of the Senate Aging Committee".

As Ken Dychtwald, CEO of Age Wave and a long-time Gray Panther, reflects, "With the aging of America, we have more elders in nursing homes than any other time in history. How sad that COVID-19 has taken nearly 200,00 souls in these settings. And how sad for the nearly 1 M family members who weren't able to tell their elder loved one – just how much they were loved and will be deeply missed. This is a time to pause – and share respect – and to collectively grieve - for the terrible loss we have just witnessed."

The pandemic painfully revealed structural, operational and other failures which necessitate the reimagining of long term care systems. Commenting on the need for this initiative, Jack Kupferman, President of Gray Panthers NYC notes "We must be able to express that basic human need – to collectively grieve and honor our loved ones.-This issue affects everybody – young and old, urban and rural, every member of society. We welcome all to join us on May 20<sup>th</sup> to honor nursing home lives lost."

Led by Gray Panthers NYC, sponsors include: Riverside Church, New York; Ronald Fatoullah Associates.

- For Press inquiries, contact Barbara Bullard, [barbara@b-bullard.com](mailto:barbara@b-bullard.com), 917-340-8707.
- Per request, interviews are available.
- To register for the free virtual event: <https://hnhl.eventbrite.com>
- To support the Nursing Home Transformation effort: <https://graypanthersnyc.org>

About the Gray Panthers NYC



Activism and Advocacy Against Ageism. The Gray Panthers envisions a world where the old and the young have much to contribute to make our society more just and humane, and in which each reinforces the other in goals, strategy, and action.