



**Friendship Ark**  
HOMES & COMMUNITY SERVICES

**FAITH • FAMILY • FRIENDSHIP**

**Fall 2023**  
**VOLUME 24, ISSUE 3**

## Engagement and Advocacy Beyond Friendship Ark

As an Executive Director, it is vitally important for me to be aware of not only our ever-changing industry, but also changes for not-for-profits in general at the federal, state, and local level. One way to do that is to be involved in various committees, work groups, boards, or other groups. Friendship Ark is a member of the Iowa Association of Community Providers (IACP). Through our IACP membership, we also have membership at the federal level through ANCOR (a national, nonprofit trade association representing more than 1,600 private community providers of services to people with disabilities), and the National Council for Mental Wellbeing. Being involved with IACP has offered me the opportunity to participate in workgroups with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) such as the HCBS Strategic Framework. Participating in these workgroups allows us a seat at the table as our services system, the strengths and challenges, are discussed and solutions are brainstormed. In addition to providing community services, Friendship Ark has an obligation to advocate for changes within the system that will be beneficial to our core members now and into the future. Being a member of IACP is incredibly valuable, but I've found even more value as I joined the Education and Training Committee and then the Board of Directors. Through the Education and Training Committee, I get to research training needs of providers throughout Iowa as well as help to plan the IACP Annual Conference and Trade Show. Being on the Board of Directors allows me to have high level input on the value that IACP brings to its members. At the local level, I have participated in the Central Iowa Community Services (CICS) Region's Adult Advisory Committee offering input to the region from the provider's perspective. I also participate in the Rotary Club of Ames, United Way's Story County Alliance for Philanthropy (SCAP), and other short term or specific collaborations. In short, I can't be effective just sitting at a desk. Advocacy and change require being involved and willing to participate. I encourage everyone to use their voice, get involved, and see how you can impact change!

*By Jennifer Ellis, Executive Director*

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## We Have Moved

As mentioned in our last newsletter, our business office moved in the month of July, and we are very excited about our new space. We are happy to share a little bit of this space with Tricia Crain and our friends of The Arc of Story County, and on August 22, 2023 we celebrated with an Ames Chamber of Commerce Ribbon Cutting ceremony. If you haven't seen our new space, stop by for a tour at 5820 Lincoln Way, Suite 101.



## The Bill Bergan 5k on the 4th

Our biggest event of the summer was unarguably **The Bill Bergan 5k on the 4th** run/walk at Ada Hayden Park in Ames. We were excited to be able to rename our race this year and honor the person that helped create it, legendary Iowa State Track and Cross-Country coach Bill Bergan. One of the absolute highlights of the race was when core member Thomas, who mostly relies on a wheelchair for transportation, was determined to walk across the finish line and collaborated with his staff to achieve his goal (see our Facebook page for the video). We had a record number of participants and are already planning for next year's 20th anniversary run. Stay tuned for a special T-Shirt release in honor of this anniversary.



## Our Business Partners

Help us to thank our 2023 Business Partners for their generous support of adults living with intellectual and developmental disabilities in our community. If you find yourself interacting with them or visiting their offices, let them know you appreciate their contribution.



## Gentle Teaching as the Basis for Building Relationship

When Nicole first started to work at Friendship Ark in 2018, the main site she was assigned to was the residence of core member Clark. Clark is someone who likes his own space and prefers to keep to himself. It takes him a little while to warm up to a new person in his life. Nicole shares that from the very beginning, she thought he was just so sweet. He would often make random faces at her from across the room and she eventually started making faces back. This is how she started to gain his trust and how she was able to form the beginnings of a positive relationship. As a next step, Nicole started to go up to him and give him high fives, and Clark would hold on to her hand. She asked if he wanted to dance, and he would either bounce around in his chair or get up with her and dance a little. Nicole shares that those two things that seemed so small and simple, were what truly helped to create a bond. When she started at Friendship Ark, this was the first job where she was working with people who are nonverbal, and she remembers thinking that she just wanted to find a way to connect with him. She believes Clark truly appreciated the effort and notices when staff are trying to make connections in addition to providing cares and the other work. While Nicole's main site has changed, she reports that she gets the biggest hug and smile from Clark almost every time she goes to his home. She feels that due to the relationship she built earlier, they still have that connection every time they see each other.

The pictures to the right were taken during a crafts outing for the core members. Clark and Nicole were just having a fun time dancing around and listening to music. Nicole shares that even though he is a little harder to get to know, Clark loves having company around him! During a more recent craft outing, Nicole was sitting next to Clark and he all of a sudden took her sandal off her foot and put it on his own. He wouldn't give it back for a while, but she feels it was a bonding moment for him. He also thought it was so funny to watch her walk around with only one shoe. Nicole wants you to know that Clark may be a little harder to get to know due to being nonverbal, but he truly is one of the sweetest core members and is so worth the effort you have to put in to make that bond/connection!!



*As told by Nicole Kelly, Direct Support Professional*

## Mark Your Calendar

We are excited to announce that the date for next year's Tropical Sangria Escape, our main annual fundraising event, has been set. Mark your calendar and plan to join us on **April 20th, 2024** at a new location with fantastic new entertainment. Watch for more details coming soon!



## Coffee Date



When a core member asks you for a coffee date, you just have to say "YES"!! Beth and Laura decided to visit Burgie's in Ames. Looks like they enjoyed their delicious treats and each other's company a lot.

## Recruiting and Community Engagement Corner

Summer is coming to an end and the first leaves are starting to fall, even though some days it still feels like mid-summer. Friendship Ark continues to make a commitment to being out in the community and learning about other businesses and how we can be of service to others. One way we have been a service to others is by playing an active role on the **Blast Back to School Committee**. This committee aims to alleviate some of the financial burdens that buying school supplies can have on families. Not only did I have a chance to be a committee member, I also had a chance to get our core members involved with the help of Anne and Natalie from our DayHab program. Our core members helped count and sort supplies, and my friend, core member Bill, helped me the day before the big distribution event to unload our storage units to get things ready.

Our DayHab team is incredibly creative in finding ways that everyone can participate in an activity. Craig, Travis and Caroline were a part of the team that helped to sort and count school supplies for Blast Back to School.



We also continue to be actively involved in **Rotary** and had the opportunity to participate in some **Ames Chamber of Commerce** events as well.

One of my favorite things of the quarter was celebrating our staff by bringing the **Kona Ice** truck to the office and offering free Kona Ice to all our staff to say THANK YOU for all they do! Finally, our HR Assistant Michelle and I had the privilege of welcoming back Iowa State students at **Welcome Fest** and got to meet some potential volunteers at **Club/Volunteer Fest** at the end of August. What we are really loving is that we are hearing more and more students say, “YES! I have heard of Friendship Ark”, and we love their enthusiasm about getting involved with our organization.



Kona Ice was a delicious way to show staff how much they are appreciated.

This quarter we welcomed the following staff to the Friendship Ark family. Please help us in welcoming: Sara Copeland (Supervisor-Intermediate Homes), Jonathan Acevedo (DSP), Julia Daub (DSP), Saja Ibrahim (DSP), Rhonda Koughn (DSP), Sophia Riker (DSP), Karigan Rossiter (DSP), Kashia Tuel (Site Coordinator), and Hannah Velazquez (DSP).

Finally, join us in celebrating our Christy Family House Supervisor Tadd Kingsbury for 10 years with Friendship Ark.

*By Beth Lucht, Marketing Manager*

## Recipient of Ndoutoume Family Engineering Scholarship Announced

We are excited to announce the recipient of the second Ndoutoume Family Engineering Scholarship for Friendship Ark staff, Kathyne Bartholomew. Thanks to the Ndoutoume Family and America Best Appliances for making this opportunity possible. Kathyne has been with Friendship Ark for 6 1/2 years. She is enrolled to obtain her Masters Degree in Social Work with future plans of working with children as a therapist, specializing in children with intellectual/behavioral disabilities and children who have experienced trauma. We are grateful for Kathyne and the care she provides to our core members.



## Volunteers Needed

We are currently in need of help with the following:

- Installation of a shelf.
- Installation of a Little Library outside one of our homes.
- Several general maintenance projects.

We are also looking for a permanent volunteer who would be willing to help us with general handyman needs as they arise (minor home repair and maintenance projects). This is a wonderful way to help our core members by ensuring that maintenance expenses for our homes are kept to a minimum. If you are interested in assisting us in this way, please contact Beth Lucht at (515)292-9556 or [bethl@friendshipark.org](mailto:bethl@friendshipark.org).

## Celebrating Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week



We spent the week of September 10-16th celebrating and thanking our dedicated and hard-working

Direct Support Professionals (DSPs). They are the ones that help to make each core member feel loved and each person within a home feel like a family. If you have a DSP in your life or in the life of a loved one, please remember to thank them today and every day. Our celebration lasted all week long! On Monday, Tom's Coffee Truck stopped by for delicious free coffee, tea, hot chocolate, cider, and lemonade. Tuesday we provided stress relief with the cutest little stress balls. Wednesday we contributed to relaxation with a bag of movie snacks (popcorn, M&Ms and pop). Thursday we went all out with a visit from the Funny Onion food truck for a free lunch, goodie bags with thank you notes and a T-Shirt and the most fantastic "Barbie" inspired photo booth. On Friday we wrapped things up with the Dutch Oven Bakery's amazingly delicious apple bread. Thanks again to all of our DSPs. Friendship Ark would not be what it is without you!

## Employee of the Quarter

Congratulations to Friendship Ark's Employee of the Quarter for the second quarter of 2023, Tonya Potter. Tonya's nomination recognized her for consistently going above and beyond. She always has a smile



on her face and a pep in her step. Tonya helps our core members thrive and is never afraid to take on a challenge! Thank you, Tonya, for your faithful commitment to the core members and to Friendship Ark. In recognition of her award, Tonya received a gift of \$100 and will be eligible to be selected for the Employee of the Year award. Nominations for Employee of the Quarter and Employee of the Year awards can be submitted by any staff of Friendship Ark and winners are selected by a diverse committee of staff peers.



**Friendship Ark**  
HOMES & COMMUNITY SERVICES

5820 Lincoln Way, Suite 101  
Ames, Iowa 50014  
P 515.292.9556  
friendshipark@friendshipark.org

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## Wish List

- Uno Cards (Multiple Decks)
- Skipbo Cards (Multiple Decks)
- New Deep Freeze (greater than 5 cu ft)
- Murder Mystery Books
- Lawn Games
- Garage Organizers
- Small Organizing Baskets
- High Quality Treadmill (with longer running surface)
- Halloween Costumes, Unique Clothing Items, Dance Costumes (for our Halloween Boutique fundraising events)



This newsletter provides limited space for us to share all of the exciting things happening at Friendship Ark. Find more stories, news and pictures on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. Don't miss a thing, follow us today!