



**Friendship Ark**  
HOMES & COMMUNITY SERVICES

**FAITH • FAMILY • FRIENDSHIP**

**SPRING 2017**  
**VOLUME 18, ISSUE 1**

## A Note from Our Director

**Song of Solomon 2:11-12-** *For behold, the winter is past; the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land.*

Aw, spring is here. Even with an exceptionally mild winter, those words are music to my ears. Spring always feels like a new beginning for me. The same can be said for Friendship Ark. We officially broke ground on our 5<sup>th</sup> home on March 31<sup>st</sup>. This is truly exciting as soon, we will be able to offer the quality services of our 24-hour Supported Community Living program to five new core members from our waiting list. Several of our board members have been very busy working to raise the funds needed for construction of this new home.

Much work has been done as well on our new website which will go live in April. We hope you will visit the new site and let us know what you think. It is our hope that this new website will allow us to keep our supporters up to date on all the exciting things happening within the Friendship Ark community. We also hope this new site can be a resource for those looking for information on services, employment, philanthropy, volunteering and events. Please feel free to share ideas of additional things you might like to see on our website and be sure to like our Facebook page for even more coverage of the activities going on within Friendship Ark Homes & Community Services.

Mentioned above are all the exciting things we are looking forward to, but in this issue of the newsletter, you will also see a look back at all that happened last year as you read the insert, 2016 Impact Review.

So as the weather warms and spring unfolds, we hope you also feel a sense of excitement and renewal.

Many blessings,

*Jennifer Ellis, Executive Director*

For more information on how you can contribute to the construction of the 5<sup>th</sup> home and to visit our website, please go to [www.friendshipark.org](http://www.friendshipark.org) or contact us at [friendshipark@friendshipark.org](mailto:friendshipark@friendshipark.org).

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### In this Issue

A Night to Shine Prom	2
Groundbreaking Ceremony	
Loving What We Do	3
Save the Date - Fall Benefit	
Reiman Gardens Art Fair	
Staff Spotlight	4
5 on the 4th!	
Planned Giving	
St. Patrick's Day	5
St. Cecilia Donation	
Core Member/Staff Bond	
Representative Payee Svcs.	
SCCF Grant	
Wellness Challenge	
Wish List	6

## A Night to Shine Prom - Two Perspectives

Do you want to ride in a limousine?

Well, the Supported Community Living ladies got to do this when they went to “A Night to Shine”, a prom for individuals with disabilities that took place on the same night at several different churches. We enjoyed attending the one in Pleasant Hill, IA. This event was on the news and it was huge. When I asked one of the SCL ladies what she liked about it, she said, “It helps people with disabilities meet new people and to get out in the community and show that they are part of the community.” Every participant was escorted by a “buddy” for the night. They got to ride in a limousine, get their hair and make-up professionally done, make funny faces in a photo booth, and dance the night away. To end it all they all received a bag, water bottle and professional picture of them and their buddy. It certainly was a night to remember and we hope to be able to participate again next year!



*By Jane Barratt, SCL Coordinator*



I would like to start by stating it has been an amazing experience working for Friendship Ark. We have awesome leadership in our Executive Director Jennifer and our House Supervisors. We have awesome staff who truly care about our core members and their well-being. I started as a Live-Out Assistant and have had the opportunity to become a House Coordinator.

I have an amazing story about taking two of our core members to the Prom – Night to Shine. They were able to dress up in very pretty dresses. When we arrived they met their buddies and got their hair and make-up done. You should have seen the smiles on their faces after seeing themselves in the mirror. They had a great dinner, got to go on a limo ride, took goofy photos, and got to dance through the night.

They had such a great time, they both talked about it all the way home, neither of them slept, and they continued to talk about it all week. It was truly an amazing event for these two ladies, that they will remember forever. Thanks for such a great place to work and for all of the awesome staff we have and core members we are able to take care of.

*By Brian Ouverson, House Coordinator*

## Groundbreaking Ceremony

Friday, March 31st, was an exciting day for the Friendship Ark family. We held a Groundbreaking Ceremony for our fifth house! The new home is made possible only through the generous contributions of many and we are ever so thankful for their support. We look forward to serving five new core members in this location, helping them to achieve their fullest potential through faith, family and friendship.

Pictured from left: Rev. Tom Prochnow, Board Member, Alan Christy, Volunteer General Contractor, Jennifer Ellis, Executive Director, Sarah Buck, Board President



## Loving What We Do - An Employee's View of Friendship Ark

I started working with Friendship Ark, Inc. at the end of the summer of 2016, just about 8 months ago, as a full-time Live-Out Assistant at the Kansas House. Prior to being hired, I have been a caregiver, for about 9 years, to my mother who has been living with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) for about 14 years to date. I consider myself a student of philosophy and spirituality. Working at Friendship Ark has been such a breath of fresh air. As an idealist, it's often a challenge finding my way out there. You can't buy a car or rent an apartment with love and moral clarity, you know. But here at Friendship Ark my experiences have been something different. I really appreciate being a part of the strong person-centered atmosphere that is fostered and encouraged

throughout the programs, activities, and culture. My co-workers and the core members have been quickly becoming like family to me with all the challenges and all the comforts that go with it. I especially have been enjoying crafting opportunities with the core members as we have decorated Kansas House for the holidays, made collages, collaborated on a painting, made vinyl album bowls, jewelry design, and often color and do paper crafts. I consider my position one of the greatest privileges I have had in my life and I look forward to creating opportunities for growth, expression, inclusion, and community immersion for myself, my co-workers, and most importantly the core members.

*By David Pennisi, Live-Out Assistant*



### Save the Date

Mark your calendar for Friday, September 8th, 2017.

Yes, it's CyHawk eve and we will once again be gathering for our annual Fall Benefit. Plan to join us for a tailgate to support Friendship Ark to kick off game day weekend. Details to follow in our next newsletter as well as on our website and Facebook page.



### Catch us at the Garden Art Fair at Reiman Gardens

Thanks to the creative talents of our staff, we will be having a table at the Garden Art Fair at Reiman Gardens in Ames on Sunday, July 9th, 2017 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Between now and then staff and core members will be meeting every other week for art night to create items to be offered for sale at the fair. Come and enjoy the beauty of the gardens and support Friendship Ark in this endeavor.



## Staff Spotlight



Congratulations to Jim Erickson for being selected by his peers as our next Mission Award winner for the quarter. Jim was hired as a Live-Out Assistant in May 2007. A former Marine, Jim came to Ames to live closer to his family. After completing a class offered through Mainstream on the ins and outs of being a Direct Support Professional Jim interviewed and was hired at Friendship Ark. When Jim isn't working he likes to build his own computers from old computer parts. I have known Jim for almost 10 years and I had no idea that he was able to do this!

Jim says his hero is his Dad, whom Jim states is always helpful and there to be supportive in good times and in bad. Jim's role model at work is Brian O. as Brian is consistently available to all the core members and the staff. Jim has enjoyed building relationships with both the core members and co-workers, but states his favorite thing at Friendship Ark is any time he can hang out with Nick. Jim enjoys Nick's happy attitude and that he takes life as it comes, without worry. That is something that most of us aren't able to do. Jim added that he feels privileged that the core members have allowed him to be a part of their lives. Jim is a quiet but a very outgoing person; we are blessed to have him at Friendship Ark.

*By Laura Dolan, HR Manager*

## 13th Annual 5 on the 4th!

On-line registration is open for our annual 4th of July run/walk at Ada Hayden park in Ames, Iowa. The event starts at 8 a.m. with a free kids fun run at 7:45 a.m.

Our race is a fun, family friendly event to start off your holiday activities in Ames while supporting Friendship Ark. You may register by following the links on our website or Facebook page or by visiting [www.getmeregistered.com/fiveonthefourth](http://www.getmeregistered.com/fiveonthefourth)



## Planned Giving - What's that all about?

For many, Planned Giving is a bit of a mystery. Many know that you can include a non-profit in your will/estate, which oftentimes requires the assistance of a legal professional. The daunting task of getting a hold of your attorney and paying the fees associated with changing your estate can deter people from Planned Giving.

If it's not the complication that keeps you from Planned Giving, then it may be the stage of life or your income level. People often think of Planned Giving as something that you consider later in life or for those with large incomes.

But, what if there were an easier way and any income level could give? The reality is Planned Giving can be as simple as changing the beneficiary on your retirement account or life insurance policy. Even a small percentage can make a difference. For example, you could designate 10% of either of the above mentioned to your favorite charity while the other 90% could still be designated to your family.

Don't let obstacles get in the way of leaving your legacy. If you would like more information on Planned Giving or other ways to help your favorite charity, contact us at [friendshipark@friendshipark.org](mailto:friendshipark@friendshipark.org) and we will assist you in finding the resources you need to make your philanthropic goals a reality.

## St. Patrick's Day Parade

Core members and staff enjoyed a visit to Des Moines to attend the St. Patrick's Day Parade. Our friendly personalities helped us to very quickly make some new friends.



## Core Member and Staff Bond

Our core members and staff share a strong bond. This picture shows a core member's reaction upon unexpectedly seeing an off-duty staff at the mall.



## SCCF Grant

A grant from the Story County Community Foundation enabled us to purchase the fundraising software *Donor Perfect* which will help us to more efficiently track donors and donations and manage fundraising campaigns. Thank you SCCF!

## Donation from St. Cecilia Catholic Church Supports Land Purchase



We would like to thank St. Cecilia Catholic Church in Ames for their donation of \$50,000 which supported the purchase of land for the construction of our fifth home.

## Representative Payee Services

Our core members, with assistance from staff, are continuously working to acquire new skills which will help them gain greater independence.



One of the services Friendship Ark offers is to be the Representative Payee for our core members. Our Accountant, Diane, manages these services for the core members and interacts with them and their families regularly in this capacity. Here, a core member stopped by the office to engage with Diane for a lesson on personal finance.

## Wellness Challenge

A group of staff and core members took part in this year's 10 Week Wellness Challenge through Live Healthy Iowa. Participants focused on getting healthier by increasing the amount of physical activity they did each week. They tracked their physical activity and weight from January 23rd through March 31st. This is the first group challenge in Friendship Ark's new organizational wellness program, which is being coordinated by FA Supervisor Nikki Mesenbrink.





# Friendship Ark

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## Stay Informed by E-Mail

Contact us at [friendshipark@friendshipark.org](mailto:friendshipark@friendshipark.org) to request our newsletter by e-mail. We will not share your email information with any outside entity.

## Make a Donation

\_\_\_ Yes, I/we would like to help Friendship Ark continue to serve persons with intellectual disabilities in a faith-based family home environment! Amount donated: \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Please apply my/our donation to the following:

- General Operations     Endowment Fund     Van Fund
- Core Member Outings     New House
- Rose/Lois Johannis Educational Fund (Staff Training and Education)

You may now use your credit card to make a one time or recurring monthly gift by going to our website and clicking the "Donate" button.



Like us on Facebook! This newsletter provides limited space for us to share all of the exciting things happening at Friendship Ark. Visit and like our Facebook page for more stories, news and pictures.

## Wish List

- Headphones
- Large Griddle
- New Set of Pots and Pans
- New or Gently Used Loveseat
- Deep Fat Fryer
- New or Refurbished AED Equipment for Training
- Travel Sized First Aid Kits
- Disney Movies, Animated Movies
- Musical Instruments or Toys
- DVD Player
- Desk Mat (60"x60")