



A Note from Our Director

As we head into this holiday season, I have been reflecting on 2016 and all that has happened this past year. At the beginning of 2016, we were anticipating the privatization of Medicaid to three Managed Care Organizations: United Healthcare, Amerigroup, and Amerihealth Caritas. We were diligently working to get contracts signed and credentialing complete and on April 1st, we officially began our partnership with these three MCOs. There were some bumps in the road along the way, but our accountant worked diligently and was persistent in getting issues resolved. I am very pleased to report that through this transition, we were careful to ensure our core members were not adversely affected and continued to get the high quality services they deserve.

We had another successful year of events with our 5K on the 4th and our Fall Benefit (see page 2). I am always amazed by our board members and their leadership with organizing these events. The success of both truly would not be possible without their expertise and involvement.

In September, we finished up our first year of the Hourly Supported Community Living Program and our Community-Based Day Habilitation Program. Both of these have seen continued growth over their first year of existence. It has been inspiring to see how the Ames Community has welcomed our core members and how our core members have grown as they have an opportunity to recreate, volunteer, and be involved in their community.

At the Fall Benefit, we announced that we were re-branding with a new logo and adding Community Services to our name to include all the core members we serve. We are officially, Friendship Ark Homes & Community Services. It is our hope this new name will represent us well into the future as we continue to try and meet the needs of those in our community.

We also announced that we will be building a 5th home as we look at our ever growing waiting list. Yes, 2016 has been a year of great and exciting change. Just with the new home, there will be much to do in 2017. We look forward to meeting the challenges that lie ahead as we strive to continue our mission of celebrating the uniqueness of adults with intellectual disabilities by providing homes and community services and helping our core members reach their fullest potential through faith, family, and friendship.

From our Friendship Ark Family to yours, may you have a blessed holiday season and a very happy new year.

Jennifer Ellis, Executive Director

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Fall Benefit

Our 2016 Fall Benefit was a great success! The CPMI Event Center provided a beautiful space for our fall themed decorations. The event was a wonderful opportunity for Friendship Ark core members, staff, families, board members and supporters to socialize while enjoying delicious food and beverages as well as music by *The Host Country* and at the same time raising funds for Friendship Ark through ticket sales, live and silent auctions, and other donations.

Special thanks to our sponsors: Linda and Al Carver, Deb and Bill Fennelly, Pauline and Les Miller, Mary Greeley Medical Center, Wolfe Eye Clinic, CPMI Event Center, Championship Productions, McFarland Clinic and Wilson Toyota.



You may not know this, but we have an extensive waiting list for individuals wanting to live in one of our homes and that list just keeps growing. The Board of Directors consistently considers those needs we have not yet been able to meet. For that reason, it is with great excitement that our Executive Director Jennifer Ellis shared for the first time publicly at the Fall Benefit that we will be building our 5th home!

United Way Grant Supports Purchase of Handicapped Accessible Van

We are very excited about the new van we were able to purchase this fall which is equipped to transport wheelchair bound core members. The van has enabled these core members to visit new places in Ames and surrounding communities, opening up numerous new opportunities for them. Purchase of the van was made possible by many generous private donations as well as a grant from United Way of Story County.



Memorial Lutheran Church of Nevada Donation Helps to Bring Training In-House

In 2015, Friendship Ark received a donation from Memorial Lutheran Church in Nevada to support the purchase of First Aid/CPR Equipment. The purchase enabled us to bring this essential training in-house to better equip our staff to handle emergency situations, if necessary. Friendship Ark staff member Debra Russom completed the required course work to become a certified First Aid/CPR Trainer and is now

offering this training to groups of up to eight Friendship Ark staff at a time. We are thankful to Memorial Lutheran Church of Nevada for helping to make this training possible. Here our staff are participating in one of the training sessions. They decided to make the event a little more fun and lively by dressing up the mannequins.



DaVita Donation

At the recommendation of core member parent Sarah Ross, Friendship Ark received a donation of \$2000 from her employer, DaVita Ames Mary Greeley Dialysis Center. Thank you Sarah and DaVita!



From left: Amy Faris, DaVita Facility Administrator, Jennifer Ellis, Friendship Ark Executive Director, and Sarah Ross, Core Member Parent and DaVita Employee

Octagon Center for the Arts Festival of Trees

Core members and staff of our DayHab program participated in the Octagon Center for the Arts' Festival of Trees event. Core members painted ornaments and we traced the hands of core members and staff onto paper to decorate our tree. The theme for our tree was Faith, Family, Friendship. At the conclusion of the event, the trees were auctioned to benefit Octagon Center for the Arts programming.



Staff Spotlight



Our current winner of the mission award is Natalie Seibold. Natalie has been a part of Friendship Ark for the last 10 years, making the journey from Live-Out Assistant to Supervisor to starting our DayHab program and becoming its first Supervisor in 2015.

As I interviewed Natalie I realized that I should scrap the prepared questions and listen to her talk about the core members. There is an overabundance of joy when she talks about them; every word is respectful and friendly. For example I asked Natalie what her greatest accomplishment was and I got "Well, Elliot (her super adorable son), and starting DayHab. But, those things are just starting, I haven't accomplished anything yet. It keeps going, you should always keep growing". Or when asked her favorite memory at Friendship Ark, "Whenever you can get out and see the planning go well. It's the most wonderful moment when you get to see the

core members, especially the one having a difficult time, smile. You can see the joy they have, no worries, just happy to be alive and in the moment".

Natalie states her Dad is her hero. Although no longer with us, he very much lives in Natalie. She says "he had high expectations for us girls, but was so extremely loving that my sisters and I always knew we were his whole world". This is exactly how I would describe Natalie, as a mother and as a leader. She wants the very best for each and every core member in the DayHab program, so she sets the bar high and works hard to achieve it. However, unlike many Natalie is able to do this in the warmest and loving of ways.

Natalie loves that Friendship Ark is a comforting and supportive place to work. She states "everyone at Friendship Ark is a part of my extended family". It is my opinion that Natalie is part of creating that environment at Friendship Ark. You can't be around her and not want to be a part of what's going on. I'm personally guilty of stopping in my tracks just to watch Natalie interacting with a core member. It is guaranteed to remind you why we all work here, because Natalie is right, those core member similes are priceless. So thank you Natalie for your smile, hard work, and dedication. Friendship Ark wouldn't be the same without you.

By Laura Dolan, HR Manager

A Personalized Cookbook

This summer, I had the opportunity to work with Jamalia on her goal of healthy meal choices and a healthy lifestyle. Together we visited various libraries in the Ames area and focused on finding healthy recipes. Some days we would sit at a library to look at cookbooks we found, other times we would check them out and visit our favorite places in the community to sit and search for recipes. Jamalia would identify pictures in the books of items she would like to try and we would visit about her day to day favorite foods as well. As we found recipes she was interested in we would make copies of the ones she had selected. As her collection of recipes grew we brainstormed how to better organize them for her so it would be easy for her to use them. We decided that the idea of putting together her own, personalized cookbook would be a good way to collect her favorite recipes. We had many conversations about whether she would enjoy putting together her own cookbook so she could use it to

cook for family, friends and roommates. With a smile on her face Jamalia expressed wanting to put together a cookbook. We had a great time shopping for the necessary supplies. Together, we placed the recipes in sheet protectors and assembled them into a binder. Jamalia assisted me with creating dividers with pictures matching each section so she can easily identify them. Jamalia is very proud of her cookbook and excited to show it off.

By Amy Butterfield, FA Staff



Luminarium

This fall we visited the Architects of Air's Luminarium which was hosted at Cowles Commons in Des Moines. The Luminarium is an inflatable walk-in structure from the United Kingdom which is half the size of a football field and offers a dazzling maze of winding paths and cavernous domes.



Harvest Happiness

Craig has a love of everything farm and John Deere. For a number of years now, he has been invited to visit the farm of a staff member's family at harvest time to spend a few precious hours riding in the combine. The smile on his face is priceless and evidence of how special this time is to him each year.



Friendsgiving

Friendship Ark core members and staff worked together to make a special Thanksgiving lunch at St. John's by the Campus Episcopal Church for everyone to enjoy together. We concluded our meal by assembling a craft project which was prepared for us by an ISU student volunteer. Special thanks to St. John's for the use of the space.



Winterset - Covered Bridges

Friendship Ark staff planned a special day trip for our DayHab core members to see the Covered Bridges of Madison County. We enjoyed being outdoors, visited several of the bridges and stopped for a delicious lunch.





Friendship Ark

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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 _____

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Please apply my/our donation to the following:

- General Operations Endowment Fund
- Van Fund Core Member Outings
- Rose/Lois Johanns 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 Homes. Visit and like our Facebook page for more stories, news and pictures.

Wish List

- Headphones
- Large Griddle
- New Set of Pots and Pans
- Basketball Hoop
- 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
- Crafting Supplies