

# FAITH • FAMILY • FRIENDSHIP

## 2025 Tropical Sangria Escape a Great Success

Once again, our annual farewell to winter bash was a fantastically good time and helped us to raise over \$83,000 in support of our mission of helping adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities achieve their fullest potential through faith, family and friendship.



A heartfelt thank you to every person and business who supported our event! It is hard to describe the incredible feeling of goodwill and harmony in the room when we all come together for a common goal. If you haven't attended our gala yet, you are missing out! **Be sure to mark your calendar for April 18, 2026, and watch for ticket information in early 2026.**



Special thanks to our presenting sponsors, AgCertain and Fareway; event supporters, Discover Ames Community Grant Program, AHBA, Danfoss and Mary Greeley Medical Center; vendors, CPMI Event Center, Apres Bar Co., Fareway and Whorlow Entertainment; our gala committee members, our volunteers, everyone who attended (we sold out in less than a

week), and everyone who donated to make our fundraiser a success! We could not put on such an amazing event without the generous support of many. Our hearts are full and we can't wait to do it all again next year.

*Continued on page 4.*

## Going Digital to Maximize Our Impact

We are excited to share that we will be moving to a fully digital newsletter starting with the **Winter 2025** edition! This change allows us to reduce printing and mailing costs, ensuring more of your generous donations go directly to our services. You'll still receive the same updates and stories in a more eco-friendly format. Thank you for your continued support as we work together to make a bigger impact!



Scan the QR Code or email us at [friendshipark@friendshipark.org](mailto:friendshipark@friendshipark.org) to subscribe to our new digital newsletter.

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## Recruiting and Community Engagement Corner

Spring is always a busy time for us with our annual gala, which you can read more about on pages 1 and 4. We continue to stay active in our community by trying to find ways to connect with others and share about Friendship Ark. One way we do that is by attending various Ames Alliance events such as the Women in Leadership series, 1 Million Cups, ribbon cuttings and business after hours. This quarter we had fun attending the Alliance's new web launch for their Live in Ames page. We encourage you to check it out at: [liveinamesarea.com](http://liveinamesarea.com). It is a great resource for our region. Another way we share about Friendship Ark is by giving presentations. In March we presented to a nursing group from Iowa State and in April we were invited to present to the Ames morning Kiwanis group. Do you have a group you're a part of? Don't hesitate to email us at [friendshipark@friendshipark.org](mailto:friendshipark@friendshipark.org), and we would be happy to have someone come speak to your group or organization.

**Don't forget to save the date for our annual pop up "BOO"tique at the Lucky Star Market on October 5th from 11am-4pm.**



*Visiting Imagination Alley in Jefferson.*

In addition to our staff being in the community and talking to groups, our fabulous Day Habilitation program is also out and about. A few favorites from this quarter have been: Night to Shine, attending a reptile show, exploring Imagination Alley in Jefferson, interacting with the new art exhibit Optik at Cowles Commons in downtown Des Moines, discovering weekly bingo at the Legion in Nevada, Special Olympics, planting flowers at Daley Park, seeing the magnificent and STINKY Stink Floyd at Reiman Gardens, St. Patrick's Day, May Day and Easter celebrations. It was a busy quarter but a FUN one! Make sure to follow us on Facebook to see all of our adventures.



*Stink Floyd at Reiman Gardens.*

Staff with milestone anniversaries include: Amy Arthur - 1 year, Cristeena Elkin and Nicole Kelly - 5 years.

This quarter we welcomed the following staff to the Friendship Ark family. Please help us in welcoming: Darcy Lamp, Karri Humphrey, Cesar Lechuga, Katelyn Ellis, and Mercedes Miller.

*By Beth Lucht, Marketing Manager*

## Our Business Partners

Help us to thank our 2025 Business Partners at the Family Level of \$1,000 and above for their generous support of adults living with intellectual and developmental disabilities in our community. Business Partners at this level are recognized in various ways, including a quarterly mention in our newsletter. If you find yourself interacting with them or visiting their offices, let them know you appreciate their contribution.



## Our Ongoing Commitment to Safety

At Friendship Ark, the safety of our employees and core members is always top of mind. We are proud to maintain a proactive and collaborative approach to preventing accidents and promoting well-being across all our programs. Our Safety Committee is made up of representatives from each site and program, along with leadership from Quality Assurance and Compliance, Human Resources, Program Management, and the Chief Executive Officer. This diverse group meets quarterly to review safety trends, both within our organization and across the industry.

Each meeting covers a wide range of safety-related topics, including:

- Vehicle accidents
- Home maintenance and safety concerns
- Core member incident reports (major and minor)
- Emergency procedures and monthly safety drills
- Staff injuries and incident reports
- Safety training opportunities

We also explore grant opportunities to fund safety initiatives and collaborate with our marketing and fundraising team to submit proposals when applicable.

A major focus of each meeting is reviewing incident reports involving both staff and core members. By identifying trends and brainstorming solutions, the committee develops strategies to reduce future incidents. The input from team members at all levels—from Direct Support Professionals to the Chief Executive Officer—ensures well-rounded, practical solutions.

Committee representatives then share these insights with their teams and may even bring ideas to person-centered support meetings, involving families, guardians, and case managers in the process.

In the past quarter, the committee coordinated several important maintenance projects including the annual fire extinguisher servicing, dryer vent cleaning, and full-site safety inspections by The Cincinnati Insurance Companies.

Looking ahead, we're excited to install a wheelchair stair lift at the Johannis home, which will significantly improve accessibility for core members using wheelchairs, especially in emergency situations.

*By Anna Luppen, Quality Assurance and Compliance Manager*

## Coming Up



## Scan to Learn More



## Friendship Ark Announces ARK-itect Fundraising Campaign

At Friendship Ark, our past and future core members are the reason we continue to grow and be innovative and work to build bridges of inclusion. All of our decisions are made with their needs in mind. We're not just building walls—we're building a future filled with dignity, belonging, and opportunities for adults with intellectual disabilities. Through our ARK-itects Capital Campaign, we invite you to help construct a new office and rec space that will sustain our mission today and expand our impact for tomorrow. Together, we're the ARK-itects of hope for building a future where everyone feels like they belong. Learn more at [www.friendshipark.org/donate-now](http://www.friendshipark.org/donate-now).



## Tropical Sangria Escape, continued



As this year's gala also marked the celebration of our 25th anniversary, we shared a very special look back while also recognizing the continued need for our services as evidenced by a waiting list of over 100 individuals. If you haven't had a chance to view our video yet, we invite you to set aside twenty minutes of your time to learn about our beginnings, hear from core members and their families, supporters and board members, and find out about the tremendous need that still exists. We

promise you will be positively impacted by this engaging view into who we are, where we started, and why it is important for us to continue our work.

You may find the video on our Facebook page, by scanning the QR code to the right or by visiting the link below:



[youtube.com/watch?v=aaZE4ZYhwqo](https://youtube.com/watch?v=aaZE4ZYhwqo)



*Our gala committee worked tirelessly to make this year's gala the best one yet.*

## Event Support from the Discover Ames Community Grant Program

The Discover Ames Community Grant Program has been a faithful supporter of our community events, the Tropical Sangria Escape and the Bill Bergan 5k on the 4th for many years. Their contributions ensure that we are able to put on quality events while making sure more of the funds raised can go toward the services we provide.

*The Discover Ames Community Grant Program has sponsored the timing at our race and the music at our gala for several years. This support contributes greatly to the success of these events.*



## Grants and Donations Help to Enhance Safety and Accessibility

We are grateful for businesses and organizations helping us implement improvement projects to provide our core members with better safety and accessibility in our homes. This spring, we were able to use funds from United Way of Story County, SFM Insurance and IMT Insurance to help us start to cross some of these projects off our wish list.



*A grant from United Way of Story County helped us install an accessible step-in tub in one of our homes.*

*IMT Insurance awarded us a grant toward the purchase and installation of a platform wheelchair stairlift in one of our homes.*



*SFM Insurance presented us with funds to purchase fire safety blankets to keep core members safe in case of a fire emergency.*

## Grilling Season



Summer is for grilling and Bill will cook up some delicious meals for his housemate and himself at the housemate's request or even after just getting home from a 3-mile bike ride. He's

been perfecting this skill and loves to show it off and share the yummy food with others.



## Bill Bergan 5k on the 4th

Thanks to everyone who showed up to make our 2025 Bill Bergan 5k on the 4th a success. We had a great race day with perfect weather. Special thanks to Charlie Bergan for addressing the participants before the race, to Katelyn and Maddie Ellis for their rendition of the National Anthem, to core member Joel for saying a blessing, to our sponsors and supporters Discover Ames, Mary Greeley Medical Center, Downtown Fareway, Fitness Sports and Sign Gypsies, and the many volunteers without whom this event would not be possible. Congratulations to all of the winners! We hope you enjoyed our race and can't wait to see everyone again next year. It's a wonderful way to start your holiday. Watch for pictures to be posted to our Facebook page soon.

## Meet Our Spring Intern, Carlie Spore



We would like to tell you about someone VERY instrumental in helping us with our gala this year, and that is our intern Carlie Spore. Carlie was such a blessing to Friendship Ark during her time with us as an intern this spring.

She immediately jumped right in and the core members instantly connected with her. Our interns spend time working with the core members as well as helping our marketing team. We were thrilled to have her as our spring intern and want to thank her for a great semester. We asked Carlie a few questions and, while the entire interview is too long to share with you here, you can find it on our Facebook page. To find it easily, scan the QR code below.

One of the questions we asked Carlie was what her favorite part of being an intern at Friendship Ark was, and she said, "My favorite thing about being an intern at Friendship Ark is hearing core members laugh! Whether from hitting a balloon, listening to a book, or telling jokes, laughter from core members is always the best part of my day".



## Employee of the Quarter

Congratulations to Friendship Ark's Employee of the Quarter for the first quarter of 2025, Kennedy Kracht. Kennedy's nomination recognized her for demonstrating all the best attributes of a Friendship Ark employee when she stepped up to fill an unfamiliar shift. Kennedy displayed amazing communication, efficiency and prioritization skills while working. Kennedy is a valuable employee and a joy to work with! We appreciate Kennedy's faithful commitment to the core members and to Friendship Ark. In recognition of her award, Kennedy 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 awards can be submitted by any staff of Friendship Ark and winners are selected by a diverse committee of staff peers. All Employee of the Quarter winners for the year are eligible to be selected as Employee of the Year.





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## Make a Donation

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
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Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

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: \_\_\_\_\_

Please apply my/our donation to the following:

- ☐ General Operations ☐ New House ☐ Core Member Outings
- ☐ Transportation Fund ☐ Rose/Lois Johannis Educational Fund (Staff Training and Education)
- ☐ I would like to learn more about making a planned gift.
- ☐ Friendship Ark is a part of my estate planning.

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

Donations to our Endowment Fund should be made out to Story County Community Foundation and sent directly to SCCF at P.O. Box 1666, Ames, IA 50010-1666, indicating Friendship Ark Endowment Fund in the notes section of your check.



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!

## Wish List

For your convenience, we have created a Wish List on Amazon. You may select the items you would like to donate and have them shipped directly to us by using the QR Code.

If you would like to place an order for items from our Wish List scan here:



If you would like to make a donation by credit card scan here:

