



Friendship Ark
HOMES & COMMUNITY SERVICES

FAITH • FAMILY • FRIENDSHIP

FALL 2020
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Serving and Persevering During COVID-19

With a resilient spirit, the steadfast resolve of our staff, and the caring support of parents and guardians, we have faced this unprecedented time. While this year has brought its share of adversity, we continue to provide the highest quality services to our core members and are dedicated to moving forward.

Our new home is set to welcome five new core members this fall, a board member's term has come to an end and we have welcomed two new ones, we have added to our administrative staff in order to continue to maintain exceptional services for our core members, our annual run/walk successfully went virtual, and we have collaborated with other local businesses and causes for some new fundraising opportunities.

The core members have experienced great disruption in their lives this summer, but Friendship Ark staff have been able to be the calm in the storm for them by maintaining routines as much as possible, offering new activities, socially distanced adventures, and ways to connect with friends and family we may not be able to see in person in order to keep everyone safe. We have gained pen pals, and Zoom sessions to participate in offerings from sources such as the Ames Public Library and County Parks as well as connect with others have become an integral part of our days. Life during COVID-19 is different, but in many ways very much the same at Friendship Ark in that the loving, caring support of our staff is helping the core members celebrate successes and navigate the challenges of each new day.

We are continuing to creatively adapt our services to our new normal and look forward to the opportunities ahead as our programs evolve to meet the needs of our core members while keeping them as safe as possible in this changed environment. We thank you for your continued support for our mission and our services.



Zoom check-ins help us to stay connected to our friends and families.

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2020 Georges Niang Golf Outing - Postponed to 2021

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 health emergency, the golf outing was moved to 2021.

The Georges Niang Golf Outing has raised over \$100,000 for three charities in recent years and we were excited to have been chosen as the 4th recipient of the golf outing's funds, however, due to the circumstances created by the ongoing COVID-19 health emergency, the team decided that the experience would not be able to reach its full potential this year, thus postponing the event to 2021. We hope that you'll be able to join us next year and will share event details as they become available. Thank you for your continued support.

Virtual QuaRUNtine 5k on the 4th a Success



Even though we could not gather in the usual way for our annual run/walk fundraising event, you showed up for us! We were thrilled that we had just as many runners and walkers signed up for the virtual event as we would typically expect for our in-person race. Additionally, we saw a significant increase in extra donations made as a part of the race. We send an enthusiastic THANK YOU to everyone who contributed to the success of this virtual race. Your support means so much to us, particularly as we face the challenges of this year and going forward. Together we will continue to move ahead to fulfill the mission of Friendship Ark.

2020 Race Sponsors

Our race sponsors greatly contribute to the success of this annual event. We thank the businesses and individuals below for their steadfast support of Friendship Ark and the services we provide.



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Lou and Cosette Scallon
Corey and Amy Schmidt

Social for a Cause with Cultivating Hope Farms



In August, we collaborated with Cultivating Hope Farms at Raspberry Hill Bed and Breakfast for a couple of evenings of socially distanced fundraising fun. We offered lawn games, kids activities, live music, farm animals, local wines and beer, and food trucks. Proceeds from the events benefitted both of our organizations. While there will be no more of these evenings this year, we hope to pick them back up next summer. Watch our newsletter and Facebook page for information. Cultivating Hope Farms' mission is to grow and support the health and well-being of persons with different abilities through care farming practices, and the core members had opportunities to visit the animals at Raspberry Hill pre-COVID-19.

Expanding Administrative Staff to Meet Growth

Since 2015, Friendship Ark has experienced a significant amount of growth, going from serving 20 core members in 4 homes to serving nearly 50 core members in 5 homes, individualized Supported Community Living, and Day Hab. With that growth came an increase in staff from approximately 35 to nearly 70. While the organization had grown significantly, only one additional position had been added to our Administrative Team, and it became apparent that we needed to manage the workflow differently. In order to ensure that our strategy would meet our needs now and into the future as efficiently as possible, we enlisted the help of Rick Brimeyer of Brimeyer, LLC to explore how to best expand our administrative team to serve the organization going forward.

In April of 2019, the Friendship Ark administrative team worked with Rick to develop an Administrative Optimization Strategy. The objective of this consultation was to “use the experience and creativity of existing team members with available data to develop a logical, shared strategy for meeting current and future needs.”

From this meeting, it was determined that we needed to add two additional positions to meet the needs of the administrative team. Administrative Assistant, Sam Chizek, was promoted to Accounting Associate and began offering support to Diane Bjorklund in the financial department in February of 2020. Currently, Sam is managing most of the Representative Payee Services for our core members and learning the other aspects of the department.

The second position that was created was an Operations Manager position. In June of 2020, Anna Enabnit, was promoted from her Supervisor position at the Johannis Home to Operations Manager. As the Operations Manager, Anna’s role will focus primarily on quality assurance. She will be a resource for the Supervisors of each program/site, working on leadership development. She will also ensure compliance with regulations as well as collecting and reporting on data related to outcomes measurement. With this new position, we will continue to evaluate our programs and ensure quality services for our core members.

Samantha Chizek, Our New Accounting Associate



When friends told me about Friendship Ark, I did not have any experience in this field, but they insisted they knew that I would love it. I worked as a

Direct Support Professional in a home for two years while attending ISU. An internship in the Friendship Ark office led to a position as Administrative Assistant as it was decided more help was needed in the main office. Since I enjoy working with numbers and had been assisting with the Representative Payee accounts, I transitioned to the Accounting Associate position when it was added to the team.

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Our New Operations Manager, Anna Enabnit



My name is Anna Enabnit. I live in Ames with my boyfriend, Stefan, and our two cats, growing up not far from here in Radcliffe, IA. I graduated from ISU with a BS degree in Child, Adult, and Family Services and joined Friendship Ark shortly after that. I started as a House Coordinator at the Valline House, then became the Supervisor at the Johannis House, and

am now taking on the role of Operations Manager. Friendship Ark has become my home! Every day I get to spend with our core members and our staff provides me with a feeling of satisfaction and pride. I applied to be the Operations Manager because I love our core members and want to be a part of their success and happiness. My goal in this position is to provide quality improvement throughout the organization, making sure that Friendship Ark continues to be a great place to work and live. I want to foster an atmosphere based on the principles of Gentle Teaching by coaching Supervisors, House Coordinators, and staff of all sites and programs within Friendship Ark. I believe all things are possible with faith, family, and friendship! #everyoneshouldbehere

We Welcome New Board Members

With the ending of our fiscal year, Sarah Buck's term on our Board of Directors came to an end. We would like to thank Sarah for her dedicated service to Friendship Ark and the positive impact she made throughout her term. Sarah worked diligently to help make Friendship Ark the best it could be. At the same time, we extend a warm welcome to new Board Members Heather Botine and Steve Prater. We asked them to tell us in their own words how they heard about Friendship Ark, what made them consider getting involved, and what impact they hope to be able to make by becoming a board member. We hope you enjoy getting to know them by reading their responses below.



Heather Botine

I've known about Friendship Ark since the first home was built on South Duff Avenue. A women's philanthropic organization that I have belonged to for over 25 years donated time and talent to decorate the kitchen in that home and one of those women in my group is the mother of a current resident in a Friendship Ark home.

I considered getting involved because I was asked to! I know Sarah Buck through the hospital so when she contacted me I took some time to consider the invitation. I believe things happen for a reason and, even though I wasn't looking to join a second board (I also serve on the board for the Boys and Girls Clubs of Story County), I felt I needed to thoughtfully consider the ask. My circle of influence may be different than others and I know this is important when it comes to reaching donors and sharing the message of hope that Friendship Ark Homes brings.



Steve Prater

Several years ago, my wife and I got to know Mary Beth Oostenbrug through a small group at church. I was intrigued about the organization she was the Executive Director of at the time by the name of Friendship Ark. She described homelike settings where people with intellectual disabilities could live with only a few residents accompanied by very involved staff.

I had an older brother with Down syndrome who, at the time, lived in a similar type group home with Mainstream Living. After having witnessed my brother living in much larger institutions for years, I was delighted to discover that there were places where people with intellectual disabilities could live and prosper *within* a community. Places that didn't have "heavy handed" administration. Places that were not cold and dehumanizing. Places that the residents could call home. Tom's family at Mainstream Living became our family. He worked a small job, got involved in Special Olympics (became an expert bowler) and could be seen out and about the town at band concerts, 4th of July fireworks, or just buying groceries with his housemates (always a stop at the Eggo frozen waffle cooler).

Over the years I have often thought about getting involved with a group that helps serve those with intellectual disabilities. I saw so much growth and joy take place in my brother's life from people that truly cared and who

Samantha Chizek, continued

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In my new position, I have continued to work on our Representative Payee accounts, and assist Diane, our Accountant, with any projects that she may have, such as reconciliation and payroll.

My favorite part of working at Friendship Ark is helping our core members to advocate for themselves and getting to be part of the process as they work towards accomplishing new goals - personal and financial.

Friendship Ark Fun Fact

Did you know . . . Since the beginning of COVID-19 our Day Habilitation Supervisors and Coordinators have assembled over 100 boxes with activity ideas and supplies for the homes to offer a variety of options and keep our core members engaged while staying at home. Each week they research crafts, games, educational opportunities and other activities, purchase supplies, fill and deliver the boxes to the homes. Our Giving Tuesday Now fundraising campaign this spring raised enough money to cover the first eight weeks of supplies for this program.

Ames Anglers Donate Fishing Equipment

The Ames Anglers responded to our wish list from the last newsletter by donating fishing rods and tackle for the core members to use. The Anglers even made sure to sort the tackle neatly into a tackle box for us and explain how the different lures are used. Jim Trow (c) and Ted Tedesco (r) delivered the equipment to our office location where our Accounting Associate, Sam Chizek (l), was happy to accept the donation. We look forward to many fun excursions and big catches using our new gear. Fishing is a wonderful activity that we can participate in while social distancing and the core members have already enjoyed several outings over the summer.



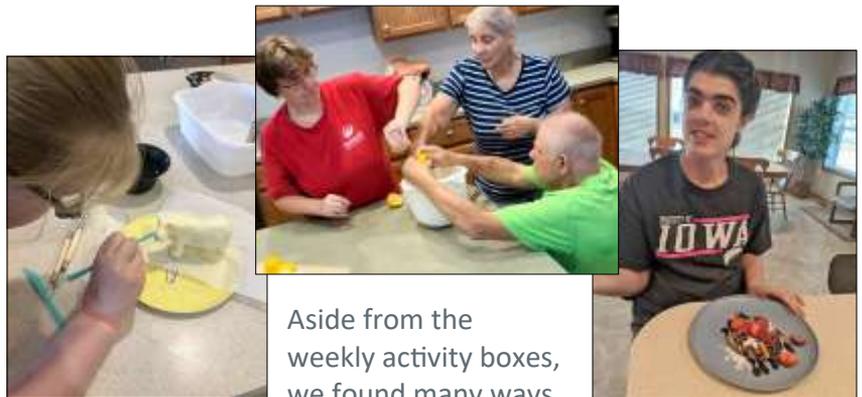
Sam Chizek (l), Jim Trow (c), and Ted Tedesco (r)

Steve Prater, continued

could offer more time and TLC to him. I somehow hoped that I would be able to carve out some time in my life for folks that take life at a little different speed than me. One day after church, Diane Bjorklund (a fellow parishioner at St. John's Episcopal Parish) and I got to talking about Friendship Ark. There was a lot of resonance. A few weeks later she asked if I might allow her to give my name to the nominating committee to be considered for a Board of Directors position. It seemed right.

I am not sure what kind of impact I will have by serving on this board, but I hope that my background as a retired architect may assist in keeping the physical structures, where our core members live, in great condition. I also hope that I may be able to assist with making sure renovations or future plans allow for the best access for those that may also have difficult physical limitations. I am really hoping though that I will have a chance to get to know many of the core members and staff of FAI's several facilities. I hope that they will have an impact on me.

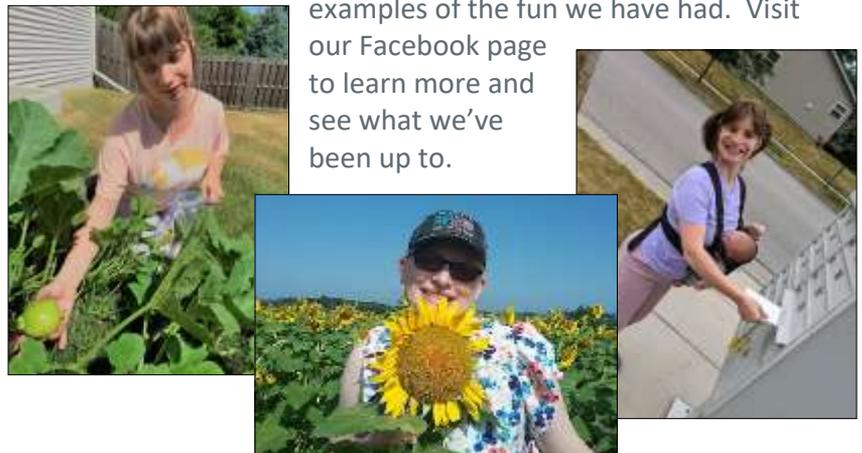
A Socially Distanced Summer



Aside from the weekly activity boxes, we found many ways

to stay busy and active this summer. We had our own state fair week, complete with funnel cakes, butter cow sculpting and lemonade. We planted pumpkins and are watching them grow, we visited beautiful fields of sunflowers, and we made new pen pal friends and wrote them letters. Of course these are just a few

examples of the fun we have had. Visit our Facebook page to learn more and see what we've been up to.



Longtime supporters of Friendship Ark, the Ames Golden K Kiwanis, stopped by our office to present us with their annual contribution for 2020.



Friendship Ark

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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

- Bath Towels
- Utility Shelving for Garage
- 50-750 Piece Puzzles
- Book Cases
- Patio Furniture
- Board Games and Card Games
- Sturdy Recumbent Exercise Bike
- Craft Supplies - Construction Paper, Card Stock, Blank Greeting Cards, Glitter, Glitter Glue, Glue Sticks, Elmers Glue, Rubber Cement, String for Bead Necklaces, Assortment of Beads, Stencils, Rubber Stamps and Ink Pads, Window Paint
- Picture Hanging Frames
- Latch Hook Kits