



Friendship Ark
HOMES & COMMUNITY SERVICES

FAITH • FAMILY • FRIENDSHIP

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A Friendship Ark Homecoming

My name is **Beth Lucht**, and I am the new recruiter/scheduler for Friendship Ark. In my interview, when asked how I planned to encourage people to want to work here, I responded, “That is the easy part, because I am a returning employee which means I am coming back for a reason, so I got that going for me as a good go to point, but really all you need to do is meet one of our core members and this job will win you over”. You see Friendship Ark becomes less of a job and more like an extension of your family.



Beth Lucht

My journey with Friendship Ark started way before I even knew Friendship Ark existed. I was visiting a dear friend in the hospital when their mom went to walk me out, and she said, “Are you happy with what you are doing? I really think you need to go apply at Friendship Ark; can I give the executive director your number?” I said yes, and it wasn’t long before I got a phone call, interviewed, and was asked to be Friendship Ark’s first supervisor. I oversaw three sites at the time and quickly fell in love with everything about Friendship Ark. When my husband’s job led us to move three hours away in 2007, I had to say goodbye with more than a few tears in my eyes. I knew then I was leaving some place special. Fast forward to 2020, and we were blessed to move back to Ames. Immediately, my brain went to Friendship Ark and keeping an eye out for open positions. Then, in July of 2021, the recruiter/scheduler job opening popped up, and I just knew I had to apply.

So, what makes Friendship Ark so special? Why do people come back? For me it is the core values of the organization. Faith, Family and Friendship. There is something special about Friendship Ark; God truly is here in this place. God is here when you get to watch the staff light up talking about a core member accomplishing a goal or overcoming an obstacle in their life, God is here when I am immediately greeted by hugs and “hey you’s” and talks about John Deere tractors, God is here when you see staff supporting one another in both their work life and personal lives.

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A Friendship Ark Homecoming, continued

Friendships that are established are lifelong. The biggest reason I came back though is I missed my other family. There are still staff here that I helped to train and hire, and that makes me beam with pride to see how they have grown. There are core members that I remember, that when I tell them I missed them they make sure to tell me, "I bet you did!" Then there are all the new core members that I've met that have welcomed me like they have known me their whole lives. They make my heart smile. I truly know I am back where I belong! If you want a job that is more than just a job, but makes you feel like family, then Friendship Ark is the place to be, and I feel so blessed to be back and a part of this wonderful family!

By Beth Lucht, Scheduler/Recruiter

Beth is not the only former staff who decided to return to Friendship Ark this summer. Below, hear from Tara Box-Walker, and next newsletter, Lindsey Culp, who will each be taking on the role of supervisor for a house. Welcome home ladies, we've missed you and are excited you're back.

My name is **Tara Box-Walker**, and I worked for Friendship Ark as a Direct Support Professional, and later as a Weekend Coordinator at what is now the Christy Family home, and eventually as a House Coordinator at the Coolidge House which has now moved to the Johannis House location. I have always said that Friendship Ark was my second family. I worked at Friendship Ark the first time because my friend handed me an application and told me to get it in by the end of the week, because I would be good at the job. During this time, I decided to get my CNA and pursue the medical field. I stayed on doing some PRN shifts at Friendship Ark as long as I could handle school and two jobs; the other job being at the hospital. I enjoyed my time at the hospital, but felt something was missing. When going back for my Master's Degree, I reached out to Friendship Ark Human Resource Manager, Laura, and let her know, that if the right position became available, I would come back in a heartbeat. I graduated in May and at the end of July I heard about Supervisor position openings at Friendship Ark. Friendship Ark is about the Gentle Teaching approach, and I have always carried that with me. Within the month of interviewing, I had a number of "signs" telling me to come back to Friendship Ark fulltime.



Tara Box-Walker with Core Members

By Tara Box-Walker, Supervisor

Friendship Ark to Host Halloween Bootique

Come and see us for an economical and sustainable way to outfit yourself and your entire friend group or family at our first annual Bootique. We have been collecting gently used costumes and unique apparel and will be offering them for a free will donation at the times and locations listed below. This is a wonderful hands-on fundraising opportunity for the core members as they can help sort and arrange the costumes and be present at the events. Thank you for your support!

Sunday, October 3, 2021, Beautiful Land Market, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Saturday, October 9, 2021, Ames Main Street Farmer's Market, 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Saturday, October 16, 2021, Ames Main Street Farmer's Market, 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

If you would like to contribute costumes to this effort, donations will be accepted at the events during the dates, times and locations listed above or you may drop them off at our office at 130 S. Sheldon Ave., Ste. 203, Ames, Mon.-Fri., 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.



Gentle Teaching - A Parent's Perspective

Life is full of "if onlys." Most come out of regrets and wishing we could change a decision we made. I have one "if only" that has sprung from wishing I had known something even though I am confident I did the best I could with what I did know. That big "if only" is wishing I had known about Gentle Teaching in the first years that a precious little redhead entered our family. 15 years ago I saw a classified ad for a 12-year-old girl who was looking for a forever family. After a long two-year journey we adopted her. Nothing we were taught in foster care classes prepared us for the ups and downs that came with being her parents. After a few good years things began to spiral downward into a very dark place. There were many behavior escalations, tears, tantrums and unhappiness that we were unequipped to address. In our daughter's second of four unsuccessful placements I became a Friendship Ark employee. Over the course of my almost 5 years here I have come to treasure the Gentle Teaching approach. If only we had known in greater depth the four pillars of **safe, loved, loving** and **engaged**, and the tools of **our eyes, our words, our hands**, and **our presence** we would have parented differently. We would have said yes as often as possible. We would have validated her feelings and fears even when they were irrational. We would have helped her identify how to become loving and engaged after she felt safer, more valuable, and more validated than what our best efforts were producing. Employing Gentle Teaching has brought more healing than anything else we ever tried. After two more disastrous placements Courtney has now landed at Friendship Ark. Now she has the philosophy and culture of Gentle Teaching full-time whether she is in the care of her loving staff or home with us. It is transformational!

By Cindy Campbell, Direct Support Professional and Parent

17th Annual 5k on the Fourth



The atmosphere was festive as many of you helped us to kick off the 4th of July holiday with our annual run/walk at Ada Hayden Park in Ames. Katelyn Ellis sang the National Anthem and core member Joel led us in prayer before runners and walkers took to the starting line. The core members were excited for everyone to finish the race and eagerly waited so

they could cheer them on as they got close to the finish line. The biggest cheers though greeted core member Erin as she ran alongside her dad for the last portion of the race and core member Tye as he crossed the finish line assisted by his team. It was so good to be able to meet in person again. Together, we raised over \$5,000 in support of Friendship Ark Homes and our mission.



New Board Members

The end of our fiscal year means we welcome Tom Mortice and Luke Jensen to our Board of Directors, and extend a heartfelt thank you to outgoing board members, Deb Fennelly and Beth Wessel-Kroeschell, for their service and dedication to Friendship Ark. Learn more about Tom and Luke at www.friendshipark.org.

Skunk River Cycles Helps Get Us Road Ready

Skunk River Cycles recently repaired a donated tandem bike for us. The repair was completed faster than anticipated, owner Ronn Ritz delivered the bike to a home himself, and donated the associated charges as well as an air pump. What a kind and compassionate gesture. Thank you!!



Pandemic Inspired Sheep Therapy Turns Into State Fair Experience

FA staff Eugene's creative effort to keep the core members active and engaged during the pandemic came full circle this summer when core members had the opportunity to help show sheep at the Iowa State Fair. This was an amazing and unique opportunity for everyone involved. Below, Eugene tells about this special day.

Even after a year of pandemic cancellations, this fair ended up not being what it was supposed to be. My grandson, Jordan, who has been instrumental in working with the core members during sheep therapy, broke his foot, which could have canceled the entire event for us. When the core members found out he was hurt, they wanted to pitch in and help any way they could. I feel blessed that sheep therapy has allowed my family to see the joy my job brings to me. Jordan has a special bond with each one of the core members because of the sheep, and he gets to see them in a special light, and I am thankful for that. We went to the fair so they could shine and accomplish something that Covid-19 prevented them from doing last year. What I'm the most proud of is that they went in the ring and competed just like everyone else. It wasn't a Special Olympics class, it was a class for everyone. The Iowa State Fair open jackpot show is one of the toughest shows in the country. My goal for them was just to go in and have fun and place in the middle. Well, they proved me wrong. They proved to me that they don't settle for average. They did so well, they all three made the champion drive and my son, who has never shown a sheep in his life, had to go in to the champion drive. I could see the fear in my son's eyes and the look he gave me saying I had lost my mind. Core member Camille looked at him and said, "I got you brother, you just stick with me". The confidence they have gained and the impact on the fair I will cherish forever. I can't thank you enough for this opportunity. Here are the results. Camille: Champion Shropshire; Caroline: Champion Suffolk; Missy: Res Champion Dorset.

By Eugene Larson, Direct Support Professional



Did You Know?

Many of our core members are employed in the Ames Community! Having a job gives those who are able to work purpose, and they are each very proud of what they do. We appreciate their employers for providing them with the opportunity. Many thanks to BBops, Caseys, Choice Employment, Cinemark Movies, Courtyard by Marriott, Danfoss, HyVee, Fareway, Independence Village, Texas Roadhouse, TJ Maxx, Village Inn, and WalMart.

Fletcher Home



Having launched several core members from 24-hour care in one of our homes into an independent living environment with staff on only an hourly basis, we have learned that this can be a challenging transition for both, parents/guardians and the core member alike, and that some adults living with intellectual and developmental disabilities would do better when this transition is a more gradual one. To address this need, we are excited to announce the opening of our Fletcher House. The Fletcher House will operate as a transitional home, with less staff assistance and supervision than 24-hour care, yet not a fully independent living situation. When fully occupied, this location will serve four core members. Watch for more information on the Fletcher House on our social media pages and in future newsletters.

Kickball Buddies



With a little help from her friends, Kyra had a fantastic time at our kickball and picnic gathering with her peers this summer. We truly enjoy the opportunities that the new Ames Miracle Playground and Field provides for us.

Georges Niang Golf Outing Success Surpasses All Expectations

Thanks to Georges Niang's commitment to giving back to the Ames community, golf outing co-chairs, Lyndsey Fennelly and Betsy Waite, the collaboration with Ames Golf & Country Club, a number of celebrity golfers, a host of generous sponsors (see last page for a list), one-hundred golfers and numerous live and silent auction participants, this year's golf outing raised a record total of **\$75,000** for Friendship Ark and the services we provide for our core members. The overwhelming support and generosity of everyone involved with this event left us speechless! It was a fantastic day.

Sponsors provided entertainment at their hole and Georges made the rounds, interacting with participants, sponsors, as well as a number of our core members who had volunteered to host activities at a few of the holes. The core members loved the experience and will fondly remember this special day. Below some highlights; for a full gallery of photos from the outing, please visit our Facebook page.



*Photo Credit:
Totally Twisted Sisters*



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