



Friendship Ark
HOMES & COMMUNITY SERVICES

FAITH • FAMILY • FRIENDSHIP

Fall 2022
VOLUME 23, ISSUE 3

Chevron Renewable Energy Group Commits to a Pledge of \$50,000 Toward New Home

We are excited to announce the generous support of Chevron Renewable Energy Group toward the building of our 8th home, scheduled to be constructed in 2023. With a waiting list of 50 referrals for 24-hour and/or hourly SCL supports, we appreciate Chevron Renewable Energy Group’s belief in our mission and their commitment to adults living with intellectual and developmental disabilities in our community. **Thank you Chevron Renewable Energy Group** for making an impact on our world and in the neighborhoods of our city.



Chevron Renewable Energy Group is leading the energy and transportation industries’ transition to lower carbon by converting renewable resources into high-quality fuels. They are an international producer of lower carbon fuels that significantly lower greenhouse gas emissions to immediately reduce carbon impact. Chevron Renewable Energy Group utilizes a global integrated procurement, distribution and logistics network to operate 11 biorefineries in the U.S. and Europe. In 2021, the business produced 480 million gallons delivering 4.1 million metric tons of carbon reduction. Chevron acquired Renewable Energy Group in June 2022.

We hope you are as excited as we are to see this newest house being built and to meet the core members that will call it home. For updates, or to contribute to the building of the home, please visit our website at www.friendshipark.org or follow us on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn.

Blessed by Volunteering

I volunteer because I want to make a difference; this is a common thought when looking for an opportunity to serve others and give back to the community. However, when individuals choose to spend their time with our core members at Friendship Ark, they don’t realize the impact of love and support they receive in return. We want to introduce you to two of our current volunteers at Friendship Ark.

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Friendship Ark Staff Attends Gentle Teaching Conference

In August, Friendship Ark was able to send two members of the Gentle Teaching Task Force to the Gentle Teaching International Conference in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Janett McCreery and Tara Box-Walker had the pleasure of spending 3 days at the conference, expanding their knowledge of Gentle Teaching and making connections with other providers. The conference consisted of several “break-out” sessions with different presenters that focused on the core principles of Gentle Teaching from varying perspectives. Read below to hear more about Tara and Janett’s experience:

Q: How did attending the conference impact your understanding of Gentle Teaching?

A: It reminded us that Gentle Teaching is more than just a tool used to serve those with intellectual disabilities; we can use it with anyone in everyday life. The conference refreshed our memory about thinking outside the box instead of focusing on the behavior; we can instead focus on being engaged and finding the underlying issues behind the behavior.

Q: What was your favorite session (name of session) and why?

A: Peter Leidy, Touching the Heart of our Work. He sang about looking past the challenging behaviors. He even showed a video called “Whose Life Is It Anyways?” This reminded us to think about how we would feel if someone tried to control our lives.

Q: How will the knowledge you gained at the conference impact your participation on the GT Task Force or within FA as a whole?

A: We both were engaged naturally in the community and FA, but now it opens our eyes on a broader spectrum. We will continue to teach what we learned, practice what we preach, and learn during the sessions with the task force. We want to share our knowledge with everyone, not just the task force.

Q: What is something NEW that you learned in regard to Gentle Teaching?

A: We should not focus on the actual challenging behavior that is occurring when a core member is in crisis! As stated above, we should find the underlying cause and focus on our relationship with that person. We also learned that guardians need Gentle Teaching, too, and that we should fill their buckets using the four pillars (safe, loved, loving, engaged).



By Anna Luppen, Operations Manager

Our Business Partners

Help us to thank our 2022 Business Partners for their generous support of adults living with intellectual and developmental disabilities in our community. If you find yourself interacting with them or visiting their offices, let them know you appreciate their commitment.



Beautiful Land Market

Cylosoft, Inc.

Fareway Meat and Grocery

Greater Iowa Credit Union

Knapp Tedesco Insurance

Mary Greeley Medical Center

First National Bank

Prestige Builders

Recruiting Corner

School has begun and fall is quickly on its heels. With school starting we have seen a surge in applicants and been blessed to be involved in several great recruiting/community relations events. Natalie and I enjoyed getting to welcome back over 2000 students at Iowa State's WelcomeFest this year and met a good number of the hundreds more at Iowa State's Volunteer/Clubfest the following week. It was fun to engage with them and tell them what Friendship Ark is all about. This has led to more great applicants for both employment and volunteering. In addition to speaking to larger groups, I have had the opportunity to speak to smaller groups as well. During the month of July, I spoke to a local P.E.O. group about Friendship Ark. Some had heard about Friendship Ark while others had not, and they had many great questions. I also continue to be active in Rotary, which has been another great blessing because it is just another opportunity to explain who we are and what we do. Finally, our HR team divided and conquered this quarter and went to Chamber and Iowa Workforce presentations on how to best reach veterans and refugees.

This quarter we welcomed several great staff to the Friendship Ark family. Please help us in welcoming: Cheryl Soto, Laura Millage, Khaylor Fleck, and Kacie Hoskins to Friendship Ark. We also welcomed back two returning staff members: Jean Jules Ewore Mboumba and Taylor Hufford.

Finally, help us in celebrating this quarter's staff work anniversaries: Mike Mensing (1), Beth Lucht (1), Franck Biyogue Bi Ndoutoume (1), Courtney Nelson (1), Maison Vasquez (1), Ella Meyer (1), Lindsey Culp (1), and Diane Bjorklund (15).

By Beth Lucht, Recruiter/Scheduler

First Ndoutoume Family Engineering Scholarship Recipient Announced

This summer, we were excited to announce the recipient of the very first Ndoutoume Family Engineering Scholarship for Friendship Ark staff, Emile Albert Kum Chi. Thanks to the Ndoutoume Family and America Best Appliances for making this opportunity possible. We are grateful for Emile and the care he provides to our core members. When asked what this scholarship means to him, Emile responded: "For me this scholarship is much more than financial help, but also an act of trust, appreciation, motivation; and it will always be a reminder that someone believes in me; and this is something." Congratulations, Emile!



Emile receiving his scholarship check from Jennifer Ellis, FA Executive Director.

Iowa State Fair



We attended the first ever Sensory Friendly Morning at

the Iowa State Fair this year. What a great opportunity for our core members to experience the fair in an environment better suited to their needs. We thank the Iowa State Fair and ChildServe for making this option possible.

2022 5k on the 4th Went Virtual Due to Storms

Sadly, for the first time in 17 years, the weather on the 4th of July in Ames was not conducive to holding our event. The thunder and lightning were relentless that morning, leaving us no choice but to move the run to a virtual format. Thanks to everyone who supported our race regardless, ensuring that the fundraising portion for our mission still took place. We are thankful for your loyalty and hope to see everyone for the 2023 5k on the 4th next year.



Blessed by Volunteering, continued



Kenna is a Senior at Iowa State, majoring in Kinesiology. Following her undergrad, she hopes to attend medical school. She is on the ISU Dance team and teaches dance classes at Dancin' with Roxie in Ankeny. Hearing about her dance background, we asked Kenna if she would be willing to teach a class to our core members. She was quick to say she would love that, and each week our core members meet with Kenna, dancing to a choreographed song that she teaches core members and staff or just moving to the beat of their own drum. Kenna will ask our core members for song requests and come prepared the following week to teach them a dance. The smiles, laughter and energy around Kenna's dance class is something you must be there for to experience.

When we asked Kenna how it is going, she said, "Volunteering at Friendship Ark has been a great experience. The members and staff have all been welcoming and I would consider them to be friends. They make any activity a great time and volunteering never fails to make my day. I'm very thankful to be a part of such a great program and can't wait to continue!"

Peggy has been volunteering with us for just about a year now. She comes one or more times each week to help lead a craft activity and adds so much love, kindness and support to our core members. Peggy is a retired nurse of 40+ years. She says she took a few years off to raise her 3 children and then ran a practice in Stratford with her husband for 20 years. Peggy is also an amazing artist and loves to share her talents with our core members and staff.

Peggy says that many tell her, "They are lucky to have you." She says, "Oh I am the lucky one. I get so much more out of volunteering than I put into it. Each time I leave it gives me an overwhelming feeling that I am worth something; I have purpose." Peggy goes on to say, she has never seen so much love. "The staff and members, it is a whole caring bunch. Staff are teaching them how to love by showing them love."

Did I mention that Peggy is 86 years young? Many are envious of her drive and energy!



Together, Kenna and Peggy are enriching our core members' lives by bringing their individual talents to Friendship Ark, we are so grateful for the time, love and support you give to Friendship Ark. Thank you for being a part of our family! If you, too, would like to volunteer with Friendship Ark, contact Natalie at 515-292-9556 or natalies@friendshipark.org to find out about opportunities to get involved.

By Natalie Seibold, Community Relations Specialist and Volunteer Coordinator

Did You Know?

63% of our staff are full-time employees receiving great benefits, including a generous paid time off package, health, dental, life insurance and a 401-k plan and 36% of our workforce has been with Friendship Ark for 5 years or longer, making Friendship Ark a conscientious employer and a fantastic place to work and grow your career.

Lutheran Church of Hope - Ames Vacation Bible School

The core members loved volunteering at Lutheran Church of Hope - Ames' VBS this summer. We helped with the water table, handing out snacks and playing games with the kids. It was wonderful to be able to serve and feel included in their community.



Helping with Area Running Events

We think we've found our calling when it comes to supporting local running events by volunteering our time. We are amazing at manning the water table! This summer we had the opportunity to work with the Ames Triathlon as well as several races organized by Runners United Nevada. We had a blast serving water and cheering on the participants and hope to continue to be able to support these events going forward.

Do you know of an opportunity for us to volunteer and serve? Contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Natalie Seibold, at natalies@friendshipark.org or 515-292-9556.



Summer Community Engagement Event

Our Summer Community Engagement Event featured a grill-out with games. We welcomed representatives from two new community organizations, Fareway Meat Market and Lutheran Church of Hope, who joined us to learn more about Friendship Ark and to meet the core members. Needless to say, the weather was perfect, the food was delicious, and we all had a lot of fun.



Interested in joining us for our Fall Community Engagement Event? Follow us on social media for updates or email Natalie Seibold at natalies@friendshipark.org to be added to the invitation list. Come and spend a little time with us. We can't wait to meet you!

Volunteering with Blast Back to School Fair



Our core members helped to sort, count, pick-up, and deliver school supplies for the Story County Blast Back to School Fair. The mission of the Fair is to help relieve the burden of back to school expenses for local families of K-12 students in Story County.

Employee of the Quarter

Congratulations to Friendship Ark's Employee of the Quarter for the second quarter of 2022, Janett McCreery. Janett's nomination recognized her for being kind, hardworking, and dedicated to not only her job but the core members. Janett shows passion in the work she does in many ways. She radiates positivity onto others. Thank you, Janett, for your faithful commitment to the core members and to Friendship Ark. In recognition of her award, Janett 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 and Employee of the Year awards can be submitted by any staff of Friendship Ark and winners are selected by a diverse committee of staff peers.





Friendship Ark

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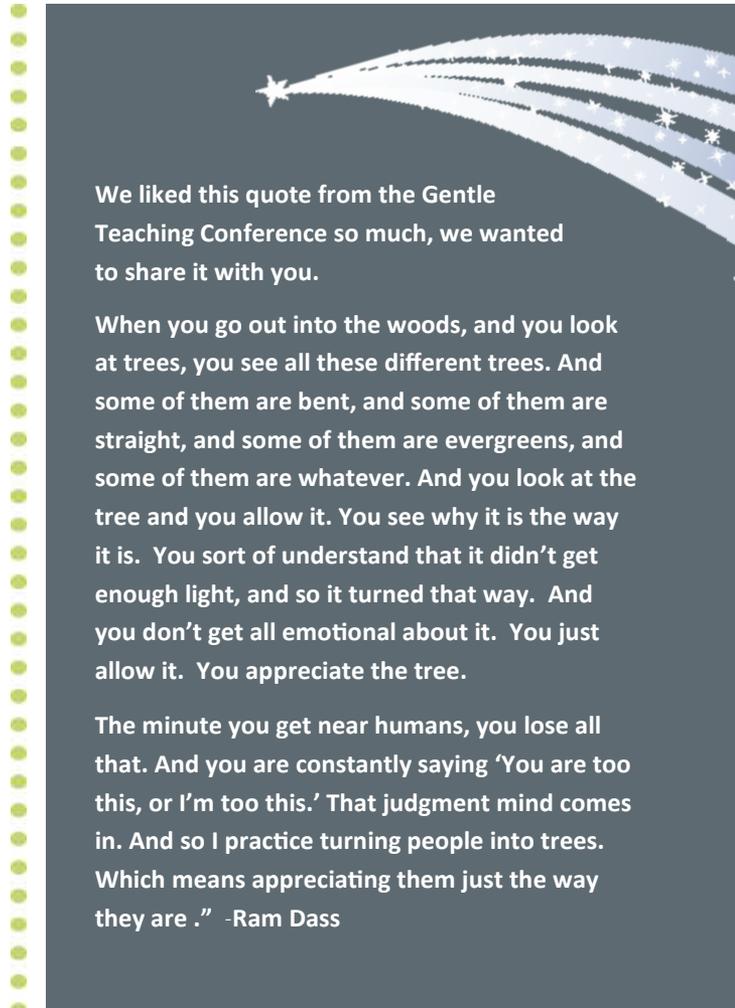


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This newsletter provides limited space for us to share all of the exciting things happening at Friendship Ark. Find more stories, news and pictures on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. Don't miss a thing, follow us today!



We liked this quote from the Gentle Teaching Conference so much, we wanted to share it with you.

When you go out into the woods, and you look at trees, you see all these different trees. And some of them are bent, and some of them are straight, and some of them are evergreens, and some of them are whatever. And you look at the tree and you allow it. You see why it is the way it is. You sort of understand that it didn't get enough light, and so it turned that way. And you don't get all emotional about it. You just allow it. You appreciate the tree.

The minute you get near humans, you lose all that. And you are constantly saying 'You are too this, or I'm too this.' That judgment mind comes in. And so I practice turning people into trees. Which means appreciating them just the way they are ." -Ram Dass