



Friendship Ark
HOMES & COMMUNITY SERVICES

FAITH • FAMILY • FRIENDSHIP

Spring 2021
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A Welcome Reprieve

March is designated as Developmental Disabilities Month. For those of us at Friendship Ark, it is a month we celebrate and hopefully bring greater awareness about our core members and those with developmental disabilities. If you've not had the opportunity, personally, to have a relationship with someone with a developmental disability, I can ensure you, you are missing out.

I remember during my first two weeks here at Friendship Ark in November of 2014, I had a moment of feeling very overwhelmed. I had left the security of a job I had been successful in to come to a new organization and a position I had never held before. I decided to take a break from the office and go visit one of the homes. I arrived at the Christy Family Home (formerly the Kansas Home) and sat on the couch. One of the core members, Megan, climbed up on the couch beside me and moved onto my lap and snuggled herself right in. In that moment, all my fears and anxieties dissipated and all seemed right with the world. Megan reminded me God had put me right where I was supposed to be and I just needed to trust in Him. Since that day, any time I get overwhelmed, frustrated, or am just struggling, I go to one of our homes and visit with the core members. They remind me what's important and help me to



clear my mind, so I can focus on our mission, which is to celebrate them and help them reach their fullest potential.

So, whether it's this March or sometime in the future, I hope you get the opportunity to also celebrate the uniqueness of an individual with intellectual or developmental disabilities. I'm confident they will leave a lasting impact on you.

Jennifer Ellis, Executive Director

Just like it is the case with all of our core members, it didn't take Megan any time at all to win over Jennifer's heart and make her feel at ease.

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2021 Georges Niang Golf Outing - New Date: Friday, July 23, 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 proceeds in 2020, 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 last year, thus postponing the event to 2021. We cannot wait to help host this incredible event to benefit Friendship Ark. Thank you for your continued support.

Join Georges, Event Emcee and Voice of the Cyclones, John Walters, Event Chairs Lyndsey Fennelly and Betsy Waite, and a host of celebrities for some friendly competition in a round of golf as we raise funds for Friendship Ark. You may participate as a golfer, be a sponsor or attend the Social Hour only. For details and registration information go to www.friendshipark.org and follow the links. **Registration is open now, and the number of participants is limited, so sign up soon.** Ames Golf & Country Club will provide an experience that aligns with state and local social distancing measures.

Golfers will receive exclusive gifts and prizes compliments of our great partner, Budget Golf.



5k on the Fourth Goes Hybrid



Grab your pod of people and join us in person or participate when, where, and with whom you like; you've got choices!

If you missed the in-person racing experience last year, we have good news for you. And, if you enjoyed being able to run or walk at the location of your choice on a day and time that is convenient for you, we have good news for you as well. Our signature summer event will be going hybrid this year, and details will be available soon. Please watch our Facebook page, website, and the next newsletter for more information.

The hybrid option will allow you to sign up to participate in person or virtually, while still supporting the core members of Friendship Ark. Additionally, our registration site will allow you to switch from in-person to hybrid and vice versa as local conditions and your comfort level change approaching race

day. We are excited about these options as they allow our runners and walkers to pivot according to their preferences. Quite a few of you joined us from far away places last year and the core members are excited to be tracking all of the states with participants on a map once again. It was so neat to see how far reaching our event got to be.

We are thankful for your continued support of this event and look forward to bringing you all of the details very soon.

A Renewed Focus on Gentle Teaching

At Friendship Ark, we are committed to providing the best quality services to our core members. We believe each core member we serve has the right to feel safe and loved in their home, with their caregivers, and in their community. We feel the best way to do this is by following the principles of Gentle Teaching.

Gentle Teaching is an approach to serving others that focuses on companionship through four pillars: safe, loved, loving, and engaged. Teaching someone to feel **safe** leads to them trusting others. Teaching someone they are **loved** helps them feel valued, regardless of their interactional challenges. Teaching someone to be **loving** towards others leads to them finding personal value in their relationships. Lastly, teaching someone to be **engaged** helps them find meaning in every day. We believe if one can feel safe and loved, be loving towards others, and engaged in their life, they will be able to reach their goals. As Direct Support Professionals, we teach these pillars through our eyes, our words, our hands, and our presence.

This last year has taught us many things, one being that we want to keep Gentle Teaching as the framework of our culture at Friendship Ark. Since the start of 2021, we have formed a task force dedicated to training our staff and spreading these principles throughout the agency. Each month, all staff discuss different Gentle Teaching topics at their site meetings and share insights from their every-day interactions with our core members and each other. Gentle Teaching is not just something that we strive to do, rather it is a way of life we are dedicated to developing and carrying into our personal lives as well.

By Anna Enabnit, Operations Manager



Auction Items Needed

If you or someone you know would like to contribute a unique item or experience to our live and silent auctions, or sponsor an item to be added to the auction for the **Georges Niang 2021 Golf Outing** to benefit Friendship Ark and help us in raising funds to continue our mission of meeting the needs of adults with intellectual disabilities, please contact our office at (515) 292-9556 or friendshipark@friendshipark.org. Donors will be recognized on event materials.

Donations to Friendship Ark are tax-deductible under current IRS regulations.

Valentine's Day Treats



We wanted our amazing staff to know that "They're the Bomb", so each staff was treated to a homemade hot cocoa bomb this Valentine's Day.

After we made all of the treats for staff, we showed the core members how to make them, and they created their own hot cocoa bombs to give to someone they care about.

Lessons and Blessings

March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month and we are celebrating the wonderful impact persons with disabilities have made on our lives by sharing contributions from parents, board members, and staff that tell us what they have learned from or how they have been blessed by a person with a disability. For more expressions of gratitude for people with disabilities in our lives visit our Facebook page at FriendshipArkHCS.

I have been more than blessed to work with individuals with disabilities. They have taught me there is ALWAYS another way to think of a situation. They have offered laughter and unconditional love like no other group of friends I have ever known. Every day is new, and every day offers a new chance to learn from others. - Denise, FA Staff

What we have learned: patience, empathy, understanding. What we have gained: unconditional love, pure joy. - Mary, Parent

I've learned the value of patience and caring tremendously, but the most I have learned is to love unconditionally. - Darrell, FA Staff

Those whom society names "special needs" are instead "special gifts". Their trusting unconditional love are gifts to our society and world too often trapped in selfishness, ego, fear, distrust, prejudice, and revenge. In God's eyes, who more embodies being fashioned in the divine image? - Fr. Jim, Board Member

Working with the core members I have truly learned to live in the moment. I love that most times they don't see the divide in the political parties or the hate in society but rather love, and that is the world I want to share with them. I am so grateful to spend my time with the Friendship Ark family. - Natalie, FA Staff

I have learned that the strength of the human spirit is an amazing and beautiful thing! - Marce, Parent

Friendship Ark Halloween Pop-Up Fundraiser

Are you busy doing some spring cleaning and decluttering? Well, we have the perfect donation opportunity for you as you come across Halloween costumes from previous years (child/adult/pet), accessories or décor, as well as vintage clothing, fun hats, glasses, jewelry, etc. for those DIY costumes. These items could go a long ways towards making our first Halloween Pop-Up Fundraiser a success this fall.

Donations can be dropped off at our office, or let us know your address and we will have our core members stop with staff for a porch pick-up! Thanks so much for your continued support! To arrange for a pick-up please call 515-292-9556 or email Natalie at natalies@friendshipark.org.



Did You Know?

Homecooked meals are one of the benefits our staff get to enjoy while working in our homes. While the meals are a wonderful benefit for our staff, they also end up being a treasured benefit to our core members. In our homes, meals are taken family-style around the big dining room table. Core members and staff gather and enjoy the majority of meals together, just like many other families do every day.

Celebrating Influential Women in History

In recognition of International Women's Day, we learned about Influential Women in History using paper doll cut-out pages. Each core member looked through our collection on the table and chose as many as they wanted to learn about! We read the information cards telling us about each woman, and many times discussed further details such as whether Sacagawea and Pocahontas were the same person. We thought it was neat how Sacagawea led Lewis and Clark on their expedition. One of our houses kept going back to the table for more cards and our discussion went on for almost an hour! At the end we asked each core member to choose which woman they liked the most or were inspired by.



In December, we created posters, pocket hugs and treat bags and dropped them off to Mary Greeley Medical Center to encourage our local Healthcare Heroes in light of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. The core members were excited to make our special delivery.



Core Members and Staff Receive the COVID-19 Vaccine



Core members and staff supported each other and put on their brave faces (although you can't see them behind the masks) before rolling up their sleeves to receive the vaccine.

Homes Create Diversity Walls

As a part of our diversity activities and discussions in conjunction with Black History Month this February, each home created a "We Can Change the World" wreath and inspirational artwork, which they then turned into a diversity wall in the homes. The project resulted in some insightful observations and sparked some great conversations among core members and staff.



Donations from Coca Cola and Hach

Ames business neighbors Atlantic Coca Cola Bottling of Ames and Hach Company coordinated their efforts when Atlantic Coca Cola Bottling donated an entire pallet of hand sanitizer and Hach



Company had several tables and chairs available to donate. We appreciate the donations and are thankful for our village of helpers.



Friendship Ark

HOMES & COMMUNITY SERVICES

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U.S. Postage
PAID
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Permit 293



Stay Informed by E-Mail

Contact us at friendshipark@friendshipark.org to request our newsletter by e-mail. We will not share your email information with any outside entity.

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 _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

E-Mail _____

Please apply my/our donation to the following:

- General Operations Endowment Fund New House
- Core Member Outings Transportation Fund
- Rose/Lois Johanns 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.



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

- Lego Blocks
- K'nex Sets
- Sturdy Recumbent Exercise Bike
- Basement Activities—Large Dice, Bag Toss, Inflatable Dart Board, etc.
- Exercise equipment to start a small home gym.
- Yoga Mats
- Omm Soundbar
- Wooden Barstools with Backs
- Large Non-Stick Frying Pan (New)
- Adult Coloring Books
- Puzzles (up to 500 pieces)
- Games that can be played by two players.