



**Friendship Ark**  
HOMES & COMMUNITY SERVICES

**FAITH • FAMILY • FRIENDSHIP**

**Spring 2022**  
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## The Impact of Employment Opportunities for People Living with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD)

For people living with disabilities, employment means greater economic self-sufficiency, an opportunity to use their skills, and more active participation in community life. They are productive, loyal employees when they have employment opportunities suited to their capabilities and interests. Employing people with disabilities has been shown to benefit businesses, for example, as a result of lower turnover, increased productivity, and access to a broader pool of skilled workers. Sources: PCPID Report, 2009; National Conference of State Legislatures, 6/2021

To provide you with a glimpse into what it is like to employ people living with IDD, we asked Joel, a manager at Texas Roadhouse in Ames, to answer a few questions about his experience employing people with IDD for us. While there are a number of employers in Ames offering job opportunities to the core members, Texas Roadhouse has stood out as an employer with an exceptionally positive spirit toward making the experience a positive one for everyone involved and working through any challenges that may arise. Texas Roadhouse currently employs five individuals living with IDD. Here are Joel’s answers:

### What would be your message to other businesses who don’t employ adults with intellectual disabilities? Can you tell us about the benefits you see for Texas Roadhouse?

You’re missing out on a great, simple opportunity to give back to the community. Our employees from Friendship Ark are some of the most reliable employees we have. The joy many of them have while working is a wonderful, constant reminder that we should all be happy at our jobs.

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## Recruiting Corner

Time flies when you are having fun, and boy have we had a lot of it since the last newsletter. This quarter we have continued to invest in getting to know our community. One thing we were blessed to be a part of is being members of the Ames Noon Rotary group and the opportunity to help sell wreaths through this organization. The profits from these wreaths went to help local non-profits, one being Friendship Ark. In December we held our 2<sup>nd</sup> community engagement series event which involved area businesses partnering with a core member to decorate Gingerbread Houses. In January Natalie and I had the opportunity to attend Iowa State's Spring Welcome Fest, where we were able to reconnect with many students that visited our booth this past fall. Because of the constant contact we have been able to better build relationships which are turning into increased volunteer and employment applications for Friendship Ark.



February proved to be our busiest month yet, as we attended Iowa State's People to People Career Fair and conducted two presentations about Friendship Ark; one for a Service Home School class and one for ISU HDFs students. In addition to this, with the help of our amazing core members, we volunteered with Lutheran Church of Hope's Souper Bowl drive, where they collected over 4,000 lbs. of food for area food pantries.



Please help me in welcoming our new staff that have been hired since November: DSP's- Courtney Aden and Marisa Lageveen. We feel blessed to have these two amazing individuals join the Friendship Ark family. Congratulations to Shanell Eymer who celebrated her **one year** anniversary this quarter. We love that she is a part of the team!

*By Beth Lucht, Recruiter/Scheduler*

## Formal Gentle Teaching Training to make a Comeback at Friendship Ark!

During my time away from Friendship Ark there was one training that always stayed with me. That training was Gentle Teaching. It stayed with me so much that during my time away, I presented it at a family education camp for a local school and brought it to the hospital I worked at and led this training for teachers. You see, Gentle Teaching isn't just something you use in the workplace, but it is a training that spills over to all areas of our lives. It teaches the importance of building relationships and recognizing patterns and correlations. Most importantly it helps us to make those around us feel safe, loved, loving and engaged.

This is why on my first day when I was asked if I would serve on the Gentle Teaching task force, I enthusiastically said "yes". I still remember the excitement I had when I was asked to create the first training many years ago and was equally excited to assist in revising it and bring this formalized training back to Friendship Ark. Together with the help of my other task force members (Anna Luppen, Tara Box-Walker, Jami Mirka and Cindy Campbell), we have worked on revamping the original training and we are very excited to share it with all of the Friendship Ark staff. This training will be presented in person and will be something staff take on a regular basis. Our hope is that it will not only nourish their relationships with the core members but also their co-workers and families!

*By Beth Lucht, Recruiter/Scheduler*

## Community Engagement Events

We had a wonderful time at our Gingerbread Decorating Community Engagement Event in early December, where business representatives and community members paired up with a core member to decorate a pre-assembled gingerbread house.

**Our next event is a collaboration with one of Ames' newest businesses, Life Distilled, 301 Main Street.** It is scheduled for Tuesday, April 5th, and there are two available time-slots: 5:00-5:30 pm and 5:45-6:15 pm. Together with a core member you will have the opportunity to make your own hand soap or plant a flower bulb.



Please contact Natalie at [natalies@friendshipark.org](mailto:natalies@friendshipark.org) or 515-292-9556 by April 3rd if you would like to participate. There is no cost to attend this event.

## Ndoutoume Family Engineering Scholarship



Boris Ndoutoume visiting the house after his graduation from Iowa State University.

Have you heard? Friendship Ark now has a scholarship opportunity for our students thanks to a former employee. We have heard from many former employees that their time working at Friendship Ark has had a profound impact on them and helped to prepare them for life and their future careers. Boris Ndoutoume is the first one of them to have decided that he would like to give back by helping student employees at Friendship Ark. Boris and his company, America Best Appliances, are sponsoring the Ndoutoume Family Engineering Scholarship for Friendship Ark employees. Applicants do not have to be engineering students in order to qualify for the scholarship. We are extremely

excited about this collaboration and the opportunity it presents to our student employees. Thank you Boris and America Best Appliances for this generous gesture!

You can find America Best Appliances at [www.americabestappliances.com](http://www.americabestappliances.com)

## 5k on the 4th 2022



Mark your calendar and join us on July 4th at Ada Hayden Park for our annual 5k run/walk fundraiser. Watch for more information on our social media platforms and website.

## Spring Cleaning? Remember FA Bootique!

Will you be doing any spring cleaning? Keep us in mind if you run across any Halloween costumes or unique clothing items that would make a good costume. We will be collecting items for our fall Bootique fundraiser. Contact 515-292-9556 for drop-off or pick-up arrangements.



## Impact of Employment Opportunities, continued

You have graciously worked through barriers while employing adults with disabilities, we appreciate your support through this and your willingness to help our core members develop into exceptional employees. Iowa is an at-will employment state, yet you take the time to work through these barriers, why is that?

Honestly, there aren't many barriers to work through. The support we get from job coaches and house staff makes it very easy to correct actions or change work performance. It might take a little extra time and patience on the shift, but it's another reminder that we should treat all employees with a little extra time and patience.

**What is something we can do as an organization to support Texas Roadhouse in employing people with intellectual disabilities?**

I don't think anything is necessary. We're happy to be a part of the community!

**What is something that has surprised you or that you have learned by employing individuals living with disabilities?**

I love the daily reminders that we should be happy, love our jobs, and live every day to the max! And I've definitely become a better manager with all staff members due to my management of staff with intellectual disabilities.

Having a job gives the core members who are able to work purpose, and they are each very proud of what they do. **We visited with Shane and Ben to find out what having a job at Texas Roadhouse means to them.**

Shane shared that he has been employed at Texas Roadhouse as a Lead Service Assistant for 5 years and "loves his job". His position sometimes allows him to train other staff. As a part of his duties, he clears tables, runs food, mops the floors and performs various other tasks as he is always willing to help. You may also find him dressing up as the Armadillo during events. Shane feels his managers "understand his disability and advocate for him; they don't tolerate bullying". Shane states that he was bullied a lot in school, so it is important to him that he doesn't have to deal with that at work. Having a job has helped create opportunities to socialize with others and work through emotions when working on a team. Shane feels his team understands his ADHD. Shane was awarded Roadie of the Month in June of 2021.

Ben also works at Texas Roadhouse and shared that he "loves his job" and that his co-workers and the customers are very nice. Ben looks forward to seeing his co-workers each week and was sure to mention that the food is really good as well. Ben's job is loading the dishwasher and busing tables. He likes that his managers have helped him learn new tasks and are helping him to stay focused at work. Ben shared that his manager, Joel, makes him smile and that it is his favorite when Joel tells him he is WWE Intercontinental Champion. If you know Ben at all, wrestling is one of his passions.

Interested in learning more about employing individuals with IDD? Contact our office at [friendshipark@friendshipark.org](mailto:friendshipark@friendshipark.org) or 515-292-9556 to learn more.

## Did You Know?

An easy way to include Friendship Ark in your giving or estate planning is to designate us as a beneficiary on your life insurance. Even designating just 5-10% of the insurance amount to Friendship Ark makes a big impact, and your other beneficiaries are still able to receive the majority of the money to be paid out.

## Survey QR Code

Thank you for your response.



## Springtime Adventures

All of us were very happy when the weather spoiled us with some much needed sunshine and warm temperatures in mid March. Everyone was eager to get out and about.



Cole took these gentlemen on a "guys trip" to Des Moines where they explored the sculpture park and enjoyed a picnic lunch.



Katy and Judi tried their skills at a round of miniature golf.



Khaitrina and Tye went on an ice cream date and walk at the park and enjoyed driving with music and the windows down.

## FA Supporter Survey

We want to be sure we are communicating with you in the manner and with the frequency you prefer, and recognizing your contributions to our success in ways that are meaningful to you in order to make your experience with Friendship Ark a positive one. Please take a moment to answer the questions below so that we may better serve you. **Please list your contact information on the back of this page and submit the survey to Friendship Ark, 130 S. Sheldon Ave., Ste. 203, Ames, IA 50014 or use the QR code on the left to complete the survey electronically.** Thank you for your participation. Please circle your answers.

**How do you prefer to receive information about current events at Friendship Ark (newsletter) / fundraising activities?**

News

Mail  
Email

Fundraising

Mail    Email    Phone  
Text Message    Social Media

**How often do you want to hear about current events (newsletter) / fundraising activities at Friendship Ark?**

News

1x/week or more  
Once a month  
A few times a year  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

Fundraising

1x/week or more  
Once a month  
A few times a year  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

**How would you like to be recognized for your contributions to Friendship Ark? Please circle all that apply.**

Mention on website  
Mention on social media  
Donor appreciation event  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

Mention in newsletter  
Gift (tangible item)

**What type of event would make you feel most appreciated as a supporter? Please circle all that apply.**

Sit down dinner  
Cocktail hour type event with entertainment and activity (i.e. charcuterie, wine tasting)  
Family picnic type event with opportunities to interact with core members (including outdoor games)  
Open House to learn more about our homes and services  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

**What type of event would you be most likely to attend as a fundraising event? Please circle all that apply.**

Sit down dinner  
Cocktail hour type event with entertainment and activity (i.e. charcuterie, wine tasting)  
Family picnic type event with opportunities to interact with core members (including outdoor games)  
Open House to learn more about our homes and services  
Other \_\_\_\_\_



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## Stay Informed by E-Mail

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

## Make a Donation / Survey Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
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     Endowment Fund     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.



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 and Instagram. Don't miss a thing, follow us today!

## Wish List

- New non-stick Pots and Pans
- New Toaster
- Puzzles
- Card Games
- Arts and Crafts Kits
- Deck Furniture
- Waist High Raised Garden Bed Boxes
- Resistance Bands
- Medicine Balls
- Aerobic Steps
- Free Weights (up to 10 lbs)