



Friendship Ark
HOMES & COMMUNITY SERVICES

FAITH • FAMILY • FRIENDSHIP

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A COVID-19 Inspired Reset

Sometimes, a forced break in routine turns out to be a good thing. When COVID-19 closed our communities and required us to stay home last year, we had to suspend our Day Habilitation program, which offers community integration experiences to our core members, indefinitely. At the time, our Day Habilitation staff shifted to providing activity boxes of fun experiences virtually and within our homes. As conditions improved this spring, we decided to take a step back and evaluate how we could safely re-enter the community and make our previous program even more person-centered and engaging for the core members.

Pre-pandemic, the core members would participate in groups of 1-5, with each group deciding between a number of pre-planned activities each day. The participants in the groups would pretty much stay the same from day to day and the core members would often have to reach a compromise as not everyone had the same favorite activities. The program also ran between the hours of 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. from Monday-Friday, limiting us to daytime offerings, during the week.

Enter our creative Day Habilitation team who guided the slow roll-out of a new structure for our community inclusion activities among our residential core members this spring. In this pilot program, we are offering a schedule of activities developed with input from the core members from which participants can choose. They sign up and participate only in the activities they are interested in, resulting in them trying new things with a variety of peers and staff. Core members have been able to explore new hobbies and form new friendships based on common interests. Offerings have included attending the gym, parks, zoo, museums and area events, and including evening and weekend hours has allowed us to attend Iowa State Softball games, the Boone races, the Cyclone Stampede Rodeo and the Renaissance Faire in Des Moines. As the pandemic situation continues to improve and we work to make the new structure the best it can be, we are hopeful that we will be able to incorporate more volunteer activities as well as offer community inclusion programming to core members outside of our homes once again. See our residential core members' reactions to the new structure on Page 5.

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Golf, Do Good, Meet Georges Niang



Have you seen Georges' personal invitation on our Facebook page? No? Well, you better log in and check it out; and then sign up to join us at the **2021 Georges Niang Golf Outing**. Each registered team will have the opportunity to take a picture with Georges. Golfers will receive exclusive gifts and prizes compliments of our great partner, Budget Golf.



Join Georges, Event Emcee and Voice of the Cyclones, **John Walters**, Event Chairs **Lyndsey Fennelly** and **Betsy Waite**, and a host of celebrities 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, and the number of participants is limited, so sign up today.** Ames Golf & Country Club will provide an experience that aligns with state and local Covid-19 guidelines.

The event will also feature live and silent auctions, with the silent auction being open to anyone online, while the live auction will be available to event attendees only. Watch our social media pages for announcements on some very exciting auction items.

Silent Auction Goes Online

We are excited to bring you the silent auction portion of our charity event in an online format. The silent auction will go live at 5 p.m. on Thursday, July 15th, 2021 and close at 12 p.m. on Friday, July 23rd, 2021. In the meantime, you can prepare by setting up an account for bidding at www.32auctions.com/GNGO21, then watch our social media pages for information on available auction items as the event gets closer. Thank you for your support.



5k on the Fourth - Hybrid Edition - Registration is Open

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. 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.



What's it like to be an Intern with Friendship Ark?

Bailey Fisher joined our team as an Intern in January, and we asked her to share about her experience from her perspective with you. Below, hear directly from Bailey about her journey with Friendship Ark.

“The opportunity I was given to intern with Friendship Ark has forever changed and impacted my perspective on working alongside individuals with intellectual disabilities. I came into this internship with some experience in this field while attending Iowa State and knew I wanted to pursue it further. Once I heard about Friendship Ark, I knew it would be the perfect place to explore my interests!

My internship focused mainly on helping adapt a community inclusion program for our core members that provided them with a wide variety of activities they would enjoy while also following both city and state regulations. At first, I was unsure that activity planning and coordinating would be of interest to me, but was excited to try something new. As we planned activities and carried them out in the community, it was clear that our core members really missed this aspect of their lives that the pandemic changed. Seeing them experience life outside of their homes after a year of unknowns, my passion quickly grew and I became even more excited to plan activities that would bring our core members hope for normalcy post-covid.

While attending these activities, I began to capture the adventures of our core members through pictures and videos for Friendship Ark's social media use. Because of this, I have been able to help Friendship Ark expand their social media platform with Instagram and all its features. This day and age, social media is a great tool for others to catch a glimpse and experience a day in the life of our core members.

Overall, I feel so blessed to have had this opportunity. Our core members have taught me more than I could've ever imagined and I will never forget the impact they've had on my life. It is through Friendship Ark that I have found immense joy and what truly fills my cup.”

Bailey will be leaving us in July and will be moving with her husband to Ohio. We have enjoyed getting to know her and having her as a part of our team during her time with us, and we sincerely hope that she will stay in touch and visit us if she should find herself in Ames once again.



Sponsors Needed

Promote your business at the Georges Niang Golf Outing by being a hole, beverage cart or score card sponsor. Hole sponsors may host an activity at their hole. Follow the link at www.friendshipark.org to learn more and to sign up.

Security Savings Bank Donation



Security Savings Bank recently allowed each employee to gift \$100 to the non-profit of their choice. We thank Security Savings Bank for the gift and Kim Robinson for selecting us.

Gentle Teaching in Action

Gentle Teaching is an approach to serving others that focuses on companionship through four pillars: **safe, loved, loving, and engaged**. Our Gentle Teaching taskforce is working to spread Gentle Teaching throughout Friendship Ark by modeling and asking questions; using meetings to discuss; making it a lifestyle; finding teaching moments in every day interactions; and self-reflecting.

Natalie Seibold, FA Community Relations Specialist, shares an instance of Gentle Teaching in Action she experienced at Friendship Ark this spring. “While planting flowers at Daley Park, I had the opportunity to watch FA staff Cristeena and core member Becky work together. I have worked here since Becky joined the Friendship Ark family in 2014, and during this time have not seen Becky be so hands on throughout a 1-2 hour task. Cristeena went above and beyond! She was focused on Becky throughout the entire activity and came up with creative ways for Becky to be involved. They were a team, together. Becky tore off the bottom root ball on about 30-40 flowers to break them up and then handed them to Cristeena who planted them. With verbal and gestural direction, Becky scooped handfuls of mulch out of the bag and placed it around the flowers with Cristeena. Becky watered the flowers once they were finished! During some downtime, Cristeena played music and together with other peers and staff they danced and clapped their hands (an activity Becky is known to thoroughly enjoy)! Becky was eager to help and attentive to Cristeena, just as Cristeena was to Becky. I could tell they had established this relationship! It felt like the renderings of Gentle Teaching from the trust and love I could feel watching them work together.”



This is the sixth year we have planted and are caring for the flower bed at Daley Park in Ames. Take a look and admire our handywork when you find yourself in the area. Many thanks to Holub Garden and Greenhouse for providing the flowers each year.

Did You Know?

Since April, our Community Inclusion team has offered a total of **63 different activities** to our residential core members, providing each of them with an individualized experience based on their own, personal preferences. Options have included: visiting the Omaha Zoo, attending the Renaissance Faire in Des Moines, the Cyclone Stampede Rodeo, a Kentucky Derby celebration complete with table top horse races, hat decorating and non-alcoholic mint juleps, garage sales, fishing, bowling, crafts, and more.

April Fools Pranks

We had a fantastic time playing pranks on April Fool's Day this year. Below, our friends from Knapp Tedesco Insurance, who were the recipients of a pan of fabulous brown "E"s. Thanks for being such good sports. We also thank Tricia Crain of The Arc of Story County who received a toothpaste filled Oreo and Anna Magnusson of Able Up Iowa who was really concerned when we brought her some (fake) poo we said her cute puppy, Floyd, left behind. Visit our Facebook and Instagram pages for video of our fun!



Farm Life at Home

Cultivating Hope Farms brought a mamma duck and her three ducklings to Friendship Ark for a week-long opportunity to experience the farm at our home. We even got to name the ducklings. Meet Lucy, Selucia and Deputy Ducky!



Thoughts from Residential Core Members On the Revised Community Inclusion Pilot Program

"No negatives, I just love it!"



Cyclone Stampede Rodeo



Omaha Zoo

"I like being around different people who enjoy the same activities as I do."

"Nothing I don't like. I like all of it. There are a lot of activities to pick from."



Pella Tulip Time

"I like being in new groups every activity so I can see different people all the time."

"I enjoy it!"

"I like getting to pick whatever activities I participate in and passing on the ones I don't like."



Easter Crafts



Friendship Ark

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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 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.



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
- Bicycle Pump
- Patio Set
- Garage Shelves
- Merge Games 30-in-One Game Set for Nintendo Switch
- Hasbro Game Night for Nintendo Switch
- Under-Bed Storage Totes
- Instapot
- New Pots and Pans
- Small Bowls
- Markers
- Storage Cabinet for Games
- Outdoor Balls
- Multi-Picture Picture Frames