



Friendship Ark
HOMES & COMMUNITY SERVICES

FAITH • FAMILY • FRIENDSHIP

Winter 2020
VOLUME 21, ISSUE 4

A Topsy Turvy Covid Year

Our resiliency has sure been put to the test in 2020, but we have found out that we can be masters of the “pivot” in uncertain times.

The year has been full of challenges, but it has also surprised us with many blessings. We couldn’t have imagined at the beginning of the year that we would experience a public health emergency such as COVID-19. The pandemic made it necessary for our Day Habilitation program to close in March and remain closed throughout 2020. We do not know when we will be able to reopen that program or what it will look like in the future, but we know that we miss all of our friends that are a part of Friendship Ark through the Day Habilitation program. We miss the adventures and events in the Ames community and beyond that we were able to participate in and are hopeful that we will be able to get back to them sometime soon.

A lot of effort has been put forth to keep our core members and staff healthy, both emotionally and physically, while our opportunities to engage in activities outside of our homes have been extremely limited. Our staff have done an amazing job of trying to provide meaningful activities for our core members while avoiding unnecessary risks to their health. This has been challenging, but they have met that challenge with a lot of creativity. We’ve managed to stay connected to family and friends through virtual “gatherings” when meeting in-person wasn’t an option.

This fall, construction of the Dotson home was completed and we were able to welcome five new core members. The new members of the Friendship Ark family are settling into a routine and getting to know each other. We look forward to opportunities for them to meet the other members of the Friendship Ark family when pandemic conditions allow.

As we head into 2021, we ask that you keep Friendship Ark in your thoughts and prayers as we navigate what comes next. We wish everyone the happiest of Holidays and hope you all stay healthy and well! We continue to long for days ahead when we can be together and engage with our community once again!

Jennifer Ellis, Executive Director



Despite the challenges of 2020, we’re still smiling.

Published by Friendship Ark Homes & Community Services

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2020 Georges Niang Golf Outing - Postponed to 2021

Due to the COVID-19 health emergency in 2020, the golf outing was moved to 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 funds 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 this year, thus postponing the event to 2021. We hope that you'll be able to join us next year and will share event details as they become available. We cannot wait to be able to gather with all of Friendship Ark's supporters once again. Thank you for your continued support.

New Home Ribbon Cutting and Open House



Five core members from our waiting list found a new home this fall with the opening of our recently completed Dotson House. The construction of this home started with generous donations from the Becker Family Foundation and United Way of Story County and was further supported by many monetary and in-kind gifts. We would like to thank everyone who was involved with making the dream of a sixth

home a reality. Our new core members are quickly establishing friendships and have been welcomed with open arms into the greater Friendship Ark family.

On October 20th, 2020, we were able to celebrate the opening of the new home with a virtual and in-person ribbon cutting and open house. Many thanks to the Ames Chamber of Commerce for helping us host and facilitate this event. Visit our Facebook page for a video tour of the new home.



Our wonderfully thoughtful neighbors at the new home dropped off this awesome welcome basket to us.

Engaging in Socially Distanced Community Service



One way we found we were able to serve our community in a socially distanced way this fall was to take advantage of some lovely weather to rake leaves for a fellow Ames community member. The core members love to be helpful and enjoyed being outdoors. As a bonus, there was a puppy we could pet and visit with.

A Day in the Life of a Friendship Ark Core Member

Come along as we share a glimpse into what a typical day has in store for a core member with Friendship Ark. We hope you enjoy learning more about how our core members might spend their days with us. If this core member could tell you all about their day, this is what they might say:

Hi, it's nice to meet you! This morning I woke up early. I like to get up and get my day started! I made myself oatmeal in the kitchen and my staff helped to make sure my oatmeal cooked up hot and yummy. Today I chose to top my oatmeal with honey and cinnamon sugar. Sometimes I get really crazy and put some sprinkles or marshmallows in my oatmeal!

I ate my breakfast in the dining room and visited with my staff about our day ahead. After breakfast I got dressed and my staff helped me brush my teeth and do my hair. When I was ready for the day, my special staff arrived. She takes me out to do activities with just the two of us! I love having this time with my staff and I get to choose what we do! Today, the weather was nice, so I chose to visit Jester Park in Granger, IA. We explored the park and even got to see some big bison. I love animals, so I was really excited!

After my outing, my staff took me home and I ate lunch with my staff and housemates. When lunch was done, I helped clean up the table and then picked out a movie to watch. Frozen is my favorite, so I chose this movie and sang along "LET IT GO, LET IT GO!!" After watching the movie, I decided to go for a walk in my neighborhood. My staff walked with me and I collected leaves and waved hello to my neighbors. When I got back to the house, staff was making dinner. I was hungry so I had a little snack and then spent some time in my room. I ate my dinner with my staff and housemates. Tonight we had meatloaf, mashed potatoes, green beans and pears. I thought all of this was really yummy so I ate it all up.

After dinner my staff helped me take my shower. They help make sure I'm clean and safe when I'm showering. I like to relax in the evenings so I snuggled up on the couch and watched some of my favorite shows. It's been a busy and fun day and I was getting really tired. My staff reminded me to brush my teeth and then helped me into bed. I asked my staff to tuck me in and give me a big hug and then I was ready to go to sleep. I can't wait for tomorrow. It will be another fun day!

Auction Items Needed

If you or someone you know would like to contribute a unique item or experience to our live and silent auctions 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.

Grotto Road Trip



In our quest to find exciting, yet socially distanced things to do with the core members we took a trip to The Shrine of the Grotto of Redemption in West Bend, IA. The core members were amazed by the structures that can be seen there.

Finding the Blessings in the COVID-19 Pandemic

During the lock-down in the spring, we asked our core members and staff about the impact that COVID-19 and the resulting restrictions have had on their lives and shared some of their comments with you at that time. Reflecting on our blessings at this time of year, here are staff's answers to the question of what some of the benefits of the pandemic situation have been for them:

I have gotten to understand some of the core members better.

The pandemic has slowed life down, forcing me to be more in the moment. Instead of worrying about the 100's of to-dos each week, I have been able to spend more time outside with our children. My husband and I have gotten more time to reconnect in a way we haven't in years! I want to carry these lessons with me when things begin to pick up again.

I think that the biggest benefit for myself has been having a little more flexibility to go on a walk in the middle of the day with my dog and then return to work after. I think that this whole situation has taught us all that it is so important to take care of ourselves—physically and mental health wise—especially when other people are needing your support.

The slower pace has reduced my stress level, it's kind of refreshing to have some time off the hamster wheel. I have had the opportunity to spend more quality time with my family, eating dinner with my teenagers every night! I appreciate nature, and think more of others

during this time as well. I think we, as a society, are giving more thought as to how our actions impact those around us.

I am able to focus without human distractions when working on a specific project. Spending more hours with my four legged family members—3 of our dogs are rescues and they have had more freedom to play during the day compared to “mom” being at work.

I've learned to live with less and realized that some things are actually “necessary”. I value friendships more. I've been able to communicate more with friends because everything has slowed down.

There is rest in slowing down and having focused priorities.

More time with my family has been the biggest blessing. This pandemic has caused me to re-evaluate my work/life balance and realize I could do better. I will never get this time with my children back, so I am so grateful to have had this extended time with them.

A Creative Exercise Option

When a core member had a birthday recently, his mom inquired about some good ideas for a birthday present. Just like many of us, this core member finds it difficult to incorporate regular exercise into his day. So staff shared the innovative idea for a Plinko game (one of his favorites) sized just right for stretching and bending. His family arranged for this game to be built to size and we now have a really fun time getting our daily movement in.



Countdown to Christmas Prayer Chain

The core members, with the help of staff, created Countdown to Christmas Prayer Chains. We wrote the name of someone we wanted to pray for on each of the loops and each day before Christmas we remove a loop and pray for the person listed. The core members put great thought into selecting whom they wanted to pray for this advent season.



This incredible apple tower is just one of the many creative adventures our DayHab team has brought to the homes as a part of our weekly activity boxes over the course of the pandemic.



Celebrating Holidays with Friendship Ark

Holiday celebrations during a pandemic year have looked very different for us, but thanks to the creativity of our staff, we have still been able to have lot of fun.



We carved and painted pumpkins and had a decorating contest, and we had a travelling Halloween with each home stopping by the other FA homes.



We cooked together and enjoyed a Thanksgiving feast, and took a road trip to Jolly Holiday Lights.





Friendship Ark

HOMES & COMMUNITY SERVICES

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____ 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 _____

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City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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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 Sets
- Utility Shelving for Garage
- Sturdy Recumbent Exercise Bike
- Craft Supplies - Construction Paper, Card Stock, Blank Greeting Cards, Glitter, Glitter Glue, Glue Sticks, Elmers Glue, Rubber Cement, String for Bead Necklaces, Assortment of Beads, Stencils, Rubber Stamps and Ink Pads, Window Paint, Latch Hook Kits
- Bath Towels and Towel Sets
- Book Cases
- Basement Activities—Large Dice, Bag Toss, Inflatable Dart Board, etc.
- Exercise equipment to start a small home gym.