



**Friendship Ark**  
HOMES & COMMUNITY SERVICES

**FAITH • FAMILY • FRIENDSHIP**

Winter 2021  
VOLUME 22, ISSUE 4

## From Unique Idea to Reality - Our Fletcher Home



Chloe in her new home.

November 2021 marked my 7th year with Friendship Ark. We've seen a lot of growth and change in that 7 years. With that, ensuring that we continue to provide the highest quality of services and supports has remained a priority. All the while, our waiting lists grow.

Approximately 3 years ago, I was looking at our waiting list and frustrated that even with our growth, we weren't making a dent. There was

more need than we could keep up with. As I reviewed that list, I realized that several on the list could potentially be successful without 24/7 supports. I also knew that we would need to win over parents and guardians to the idea of a more independent setting if this idea was going to take hold.

We started with a few meetings with parents that I identified might be interested or whose son or daughter I thought might be right for this level of support. We began by just introducing the concept. Over the next couple of years, we had several more meetings to continue those conversations and then COVID-19 hit. The conversations came to a halt as we all tried to navigate the pandemic.

In the fall of 2020, I was contacted by a set of parents from those initial meetings who expressed an interest in picking that concept back up and continuing to explore it. I also reached out to another set of parents who I believed might be ready to pursue this level of support as well. We met several times, as did their daughters. We educated ourselves on Night Owl Support Systems and the technology that could be used to provide safety and support overnight. We also began the arduous task of looking for a home in a very competitive housing market.

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Diana in her new home.

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## Recruiting Corner

It is hard to believe that another quarter has already rolled around. In an effort to connect with the community and obtain some great staff, I have had the opportunity to participate in a number of exciting events in the community, many alongside our Community Relations Specialist, Natalie. Since starting in July, we have participated in Iowa State's Welcome Fest, Club Fest and their People to People career fair. These have been wonderful ways to connect with the college students and introduce them to Friendship Ark. We have had several amazing opportunities develop from these events, ranging from volunteer groups, to possible interns, to employees.

Another area of focus is getting more connected with some of our local churches. One church that has welcomed us, now on a couple of occasions, is Lutheran Church of Hope. We had a great time bringing some of the core members with us to Kairos, their college ministry group, and getting plugged in there. The core members had a blast talking about why they thought everyone should come hang out with them and enjoyed getting to worship with the college students as well. In addition to Kairos, we were invited to attend their Mission Fair and participate in their trunk-or-treat. These events have led to the hiring of some amazing employees and connected us to some great new volunteers.



Beth, Natalie, and the gang at Kairos.



The core members loved seeing all the children at the Trunk-or-Treat.

Finally, we attended a job fair put on by the Ames Chamber of Commerce at North Grand Mall and set up our Halloween "Bootique" at the Beautiful Land Market and Farmer's Market in October. These proved to be a great way to not only fundraise but create community awareness about what we do and what employment and volunteer options we have available.



The **Halloween Bootique** was a wonderful opportunity for us to meet and interact with members of our community.

## Recruiting Corner, continued

Please help me in welcoming our new staff that have been hired since August. Direct Support Professionals - Courtney Nelson, Maison Vasquez, Ella Meyer, Emile Kum Chi, Delaney Nasalroad, Janelle Wright, Khailah, Phompong, Abraham Kuol, Taylor Hufford and Shannon Sproule. Site Coordinators - Josh Tuel, Chantal Freel, and Cole Hilpipre. Supervisors - Lindsey Culp.

### We would also like to take a moment to recognize our 2021 staff anniversaries:

Celebrating **one year** with Friendship Ark were Arthur Bell, Melissa Burnett-Larkins, Cristee Elkin, Jules Mboumba, Humphrey Foncham, Nakia Green, Annah Henry, Nicole Kelly, Kim Miles, Brittany Olson, Terri Opperman, Khaitrina Phompong, Ted Reader, Elly Robinson, Madisyn Rostro, Nitanga Safi, Vanessa Smith, Skyler Soppe and Amber Young.

*By Beth Lucht, Recruiter/Scheduler*



Patty Alley



Cindy Campbell



Breanna Dubendorf



Abbey Kingsbury



Kathy Lonergan Beaman



Anna Luppen



Judi Meinhardt



Alicia Overton



Cindy Wismer



Denise Cardella



Marsha Garrison



Chelsea Apland



Andy Nichols



Natalie Seibold

We thank all of our staff for their dedicated service to, relentless advocacy and unconditional love for the core members. You are what makes Friendship Ark great and we are blessed to have you as a part of the family.

## Volunteers Clean Vans



The Renew Community Church youth group made five of our vans sparkle. We are very thankful for their help.

## Shop for a Cause

Many thanks to Moorman Clothiers for hosting us for a second year at Ames Main Street's Shop for a Cause event. It is a great opportunity to raise awareness and fundraise for Friendship Ark.



## From Unique Idea to Reality - Our Fletcher Home, continued

Whether it's financial constraints, staff shortages, or some other challenge, we continue to strive for the highest quality services while looking for opportunities to improve and meet the needs of adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.

Needless to say, less than a year later, we had purchased the Fletcher Home and Diana and Chloe moved in on August 8th to begin their new journeys. Hopefully, you had the opportunity to read more about their individual stories in our Annual Appeal (you can also find it on our website if you missed it).

*By Jennifer Ellis, Executive Director*



Diana and Chloe are excited about the opportunities their new home will provide.

## Gentle Teaching - A Helpful Tool for Everyone

Over the last year, we have spoken a great deal about Gentle Teaching as the foundation for the services we provide at Friendship Ark. As a reminder, Gentle Teaching is the expression of the psychology of interdependence which assumes that each human being hungers for a feeling of belonging and companionship, and that the relationships we form are the foundation for developing our basic values. Although the principles of Gentle Teaching are an integral part of being a Direct Support Professional at Friendship Ark, studying and implementing them can also help shape who we are outside of our work. Through repeated interactions with others in our lives (children, spouses, friends, siblings, community members, etc.) we have formed connections, good and bad. To live a life of gentleness is to show love with no restrictions, boundaries, or barriers. It's to recognize dignity, worth, presence, and participation of others. It's to use words that are uplifting and positive. It's to encourage growth within one another from a place of support. These acts can strengthen each and every relationship in our lives. Will you choose to live a life of gentleness today?

*By Anna Luppen, Operations Manager*

## Community Engagement Events

One of our goals this year was to strengthen our relationship with community members and businesses. On September 30th, we hosted our first social event of what we plan to be a series of quarterly engagement opportunities throughout the year. At these events, you will be able to participate in an activity with some of our core members and learn more about Friendship Ark. We would like to thank all who were able to attend our Cider and S'mores event. Businesses represented were Knapp Tedesco Insurance, Burke Corporation, First National Bank and Wolfe Eye Clinic.

If you would like to participate in future events, please contact [natalies@friendshipark.org](mailto:natalies@friendshipark.org) to be added to our mailing list.

## Did You Know?

Many of our core members enjoy the same interests and hobbies as you. Consider a volunteer opportunity with Friendship Ark to make a new friend and share your passions and interests with a core member. For more information, contact Natalie Seibold at [natalies@friendshipark.org](mailto:natalies@friendshipark.org).



Dr. Lou Scallon of Wolfe Eye Clinic shares some cider and conversation with core member Maddie.

## Friendsgiving at FA

We mingled, shared a traditional Thanksgiving feast, played games and enjoyed the company of new volunteer, Peggy, during our annual Friendsgiving celebration. The core members cherish the occasions when we gather the entire Friendship Ark family together and they can spend time with all of their friends.



## A Special Bond

Many of our staff develop strong friendships with the core members and a core member instinctively knows when a staff “gets them”. You can tell by the look on Steve’s face in these pictures that he and new site coordinator, Cole, share such a friendship. When featured on our Facebook page recently, Cole stated that he loves being able to make a difference in the core members’ lives and that there’s nothing more satisfying in life than making others smile each and every day! If you missed this post, hop on over to our Facebook page and look it up.



## A Homecoming Summer

Lindsey Culp is the third former employee from some time ago who returned to the Friendship Ark family this summer. (We told you about the other two, Beth Lucht and Tara Box-Walker, in our Fall Newsletter. If you missed it you can find it on our website.) We asked Lindsey to share about her decision to come back and her love and passion for the core members with you.



Lindsey with her family.

Having left Friendship Ark in 2015 after serving two years as a House Coordinator at the Valline Home, I knew I wanted to come back someday because of the impression it had left on me in just two short years. I’m so honored to be able to return as a Site Supervisor for the Westfield Home.

During my time away from Friendship Ark, I got married and had two children, one of whom was diagnosed with a condition called Lissencephaly.

Having a child with disabilities gives me an insider’s view as to what I believe care for this diverse population should look like, and Friendship Ark truly encompasses those values. I look forward to embarking on this journey and experiencing all this organization has to offer, again!

## Administrative and Site Supervisor Team Gives to Food at First Pass Along Party

Friendship Ark’s office staff and site supervisors gathered in early December to celebrate the season. We enjoyed delicious food, a game, and each others’ company. Each person in attendance brought an item to donate to Food at First’s Pass Along Party and we ended up with a good selection of toys, games, and household items.





# Friendship Ark

HOMES & COMMUNITY SERVICES

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## 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.



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

- Pool Table and Arcade Games
- Piano Keyboard with Stand
- Folding Chairs, Step Stool
- Picture Frames and Wall Art
- Exercise Equipment, Supplies for Adult Ball Pit (call or email for details)
- Utility Shelving
- Garage fridge for storage of large supply of dairy products
- Puzzles
- Bike Maintenance Supplies
- Projector for Movies
- Wii Sensor Bar
- Window Paint
- Punch Bowl, Large Cutting Board, Blender for Smoothies, Pizza Pan, Crockpot, Non-Stick Pans, Large Cooking Pot, Kitchen Wash/Dish Cloths