



**Friendship Ark**  
HOMES & COMMUNITY SERVICES

**FAITH • FAMILY • FRIENDSHIP**

Winter 2024  
VOLUME 25, ISSUE 4

## Fremont Home Ribbon Cutting and Open House

On December 5th, 2024, we celebrated the opening of our 9th home with an Ames Regional Economic Alliance ribbon cutting and open house. We appreciate everyone who came out to join us for this exciting event. It was great to welcome so many community members including current and former board members, committee members, core member parents and guardians and Friendship Ark's founder, Joe Johanns, and his daughter, Nancy, into our newest home. As we continue to work to find ways to serve core members with a variety of needs, this home was designed with a creative new floor plan in order to allow us to serve individuals with more complex needs. Special thanks to Alan Christy and HCS Builders who helped turn our vision into this beautiful home. We are excited for additional core members from our waiting list to join the Friendship Ark family in the near future. A video and additional pictures of the event are available on our social media pages.



## Coming Together for Friendsgiving

Each year, our Day Habilitation team, along with many helping hands, puts together a Friendship Ark family Friendsgiving where we gather to share a traditional, homecooked Thanksgiving meal with all of the fixings with core members, staff, volunteers and board and committee members. As we have grown over the years, our family has gotten rather large, however, we believe that it is important to come together in this way for us to continue to foster connectedness and friendship. Many thanks to our friends at Calvary United Methodist Church for the use of their space for our celebration.



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### In this Issue

Recruiting and Community Engagement Corner 2

Newly Formed Gala Committee

DiSC Training

Our Business Partners

Recognition and Retention Task Force 3

Save the Date

Shop for a Cause

Celebrating Three Leadership Ames Graduates 4

Thankful for Volunteers

Calvary Cafe 5

2024 Milestone Staff Anniversaries

Planting Seeds of Hope

Employee of the Quarter

Wish List 6

## Recruiting and Community Engagement Corner



This fall, we caught up with some of our favorite business partners and potentially some new ones. Beth, Mike and Kim visited over 30 businesses to drop off our 25th anniversary gift and information about how they can help support the mission of Friendship Ark. This quarter also had us visiting with Iowa State students at their Volunteer/Club Fest and the People to People Career Fair. Something new we attended this year was Discover Ames' vendor fair and hospitality tour. Here we learned about various venues, food and vendor options.

Staff with milestone anniversaries this quarter include: Samantha Chizek, Amanda Goodrich, Sandy Kapek, Misty Miller, Shelby Perry (1 year), Jessica McMahon, Michelle Tice (5 years), Jennifer Ellis (10 years), Aaron Russom (15 years).

This quarter we welcomed the following staff to the Friendship Ark family. Please help us in welcoming: Emerance Iradukunda, Sunday Ogunsola, Alexis Perry and Bailee Crowdy.

*By Beth Lucht, Marketing Manager*

## Announcing Newly Formed Gala Committee

One of the most exciting moments of the quarter was holding our first ever Gala Committee meeting. Please join us in thanking these individuals for their assistance in planning, what will hopefully be, our BEST gala yet: Nate Kuhn, Kelli Hecker, Annie Almquist, Kari Romero, Dariana Glasco-Boyd, Stacy Duhn, Melissa Muschick, Susan Hoshor, Matt Bohner, Tiffany Tope and Ashley Rippke. The 2025 gala is scheduled for **April 5, 2025** at the CPMI Event Center in Ames and will feature Dueling Pianos. You won't want to miss it! Watch your mailbox for a save-the-date card coming soon.

## DiSC Training for Leadership and Administrative Staff



Thanks to a generous donation toward staff development, our leadership and administrative team was able to participate in a training about our different DiSC styles, learning about our own DiSC style and how to better interact and communicate with co-workers and others who have a different DiSC style. We all enjoyed the presentation that Ann Wright, of Wright Coaching and Training Solutions, put together for us and look forward to implementing the new tools and strategies we learned about. Ann was introduced to us through our

Marketing Manager, Beth Lucht's Leadership Ames class. Thanks to St. John's by the Campus Episcopal Church for the use of their space.

## Our Business Partners

Help us to thank our 2024 Business Partners at the Family Level of \$1,000 and above for their generous support of adults living with intellectual and developmental disabilities in our community. Business Partners at this level are recognized in various ways, including a quarterly mention in our newsletter. If you find yourself interacting with them or visiting their offices, let them know you appreciate their contribution.



## Recognition and Retention Taskforce: Building Team Spirit that Matters!



In May, the Recognition and Retention Task Force at Friendship Ark held a fantastic staff retreat at the beautiful Sunstream Retreat Center in Ogden. It was a great chance to focus on teamwork and how we can all work together to provide the best care for our core members and keep our houses running smoothly.

The retreat was all about bringing together staff from different departments to collaborate and tackle challenges using our diverse skills.

We enjoyed some tasty food and participated in fun group activities that sparked creativity and problem-solving. One of the best parts of the retreat was getting to know colleagues we don't usually work with. We shared our strengths and learned how everyone contributes to the team, which really helped strengthen our bond.

But the fun doesn't stop there! Throughout the year, the Recognition and Retention Task Force puts on a variety of events to celebrate and appreciate our amazing staff. One of the biggest highlights is DSP Week in September, where we recognize the hard work of our Direct Support Professionals with activities like staff bingo, dog petting sessions, breakfasts together, and even some cool new Friendship Ark swag.



We also host smaller, fun events to keep the spirit alive, like visits from Kona Ice for refreshing treats and coffee trucks for that much-needed morning boost! We look forward to enjoying these smaller events with staff throughout the year.

As the Recognition and Retention Task Force works to enhance employee satisfaction and create a culture of appreciation, events like the retreat, DSP Week, and our smaller gatherings play a huge role in building camaraderie. By getting to know each other better, we're all set to provide the best care possible to those we serve. We have had current staff members express their gratitude for our commitment to recognition after many years of feeling under valued at past jobs. As we continue to grow throughout the year, we're committed to fostering a supportive and fun work environment. Together, we're focused on making a positive impact on the lives of our core members!

*By Michelle Jackson, Human Resource Assistant*

### Save the Date



### Shop for a Cause at Moorman Clothiers



We loved spending time at Moorman Clothiers during their annual give-back event where they generously donate 10% of sales to Friendship Ark. The core members and staff engaged with

the sales team and customers throughout the morning and were treated to a delicious lunch. Thanks Moorman's!

## Celebrating Three Leadership Ames Graduates



We are excited to announce Melissa Muschick (l), Friendship Ark Board Member, Kelli Hecker (r), Gala Committee member, and Beth Lucht (m), Marketing Manager, graduated from Leadership Ames Class 37 on November 18th. Going forward, both Melissa and Kelli will help to plan a day for Class 38 and Beth will be a co-chair for classes 38 and 39.

Leadership Ames is a program facilitated by The Ames Regional Economic Alliance (AREA). We encourage you to visit their website to learn more.

We asked our three graduates what their take-aways about the program were, and here is what they had to say.

“The Leadership Ames program has allowed me to gain a new perspective on the issues and opportunities within Ames and to build connections with others who share a vision for a better community. The program allowed me to push myself out of my comfort zone and invest in my personal and professional growth. I will be forever grateful for the experience and connections built from this program.” ~ Kelli Hecker, TS Bank (Gala Committee member)

“Leadership Ames provided an incredible opportunity to connect with other driven and passionate leaders in our community. The programming did a great job exposing me to many industries and businesses that I would not have seen otherwise. I walked away with my passion for Ames reinvigorated and stronger than ever!” ~ Melissa Muschick, Discover Ames (Board Member and Gala Committee member)



“I was truly humbled by the fact that I was chosen for this opportunity and feel proud to call myself a Leadership Ames graduate, but it wouldn’t have been the same experience without my classmates. They inspired me to be a leader and to not be afraid to speak up. For me, Leadership Ames has helped

me grow in confidence in making connections and ignited a fire in me to want to be a stronger leader in my field. It is a part of the program to create a Life Purpose Statement at the beginning of the year and to revisit and revise it on the last day. Mine was “To create a safe place where people feel seen, loved and heard without judgment and made to feel like they belong”. As I reflected on that statement, I truly felt this from my class this year. It also reminded me how I have let my faith and Gentle Teaching guide my life and really how engrained that had become in my life since being introduced to the concept almost 20 years ago during my first time at Friendship Ark. Gentle Teaching is a core piece to Friendship Ark and is how I choose to show up and want to make people feel both now and in the future! Thanks, Alliance, for this opportunity to participate in Leadership Ames.” ~ Beth Lucht, Marketing Manager

*By Beth Lucht, Marketing Manager/Leadership Ames Graduate*

## Thankful for Volunteers

This fall, we had several volunteers help to bake goodies for our annual Boutique booth at the Beautiful Land Market and a group of volunteers from Ames Fitness prepared a Thanksgiving meal for core members who were not going home for the holiday and their staff. Thank you for giving of your time and talents to support our mission!



## Calvary Cafe



This fall included another installment of our popular Calvary Café which is hosted and supported by Calvary United

Methodist Church in Ames. Several core members have an interest in coffee shops and being baristas for a day helps them combine that passion with the opportunity to learn to follow a recipe and practice their social skills. Our guests at the café are core members, parents and guardians, FA staff and church members. Offerings at the fall café included peppermint mocha, a nutty turkey coffee, hot chocolate and various treats which were available for a free-will offering. Our gathering even included a Thanksgiving skit by core member Joel and staff member Jami (visit our social media pages to view a video).

## Planting Seeds of Hope



We hope you were inspired by the story of Craig's family, who planted Seeds of Hope by moving him into a Friendship Ark home almost 25 years ago, providing him with a forever home. Will you help us to serve more core members, like Craig, from our waiting list? The full story is available on our website and social media channels. Please note that donations must be postmarked no later than December 31, 2024 in order to be attributed to the 2024 tax year.

## 2024 Milestone Staff Anniversaries



Martina Luppen  
Marketing Assistant



Aaron Russom  
Site Coordinator



Jennifer Ellis  
Executive Director



Eugene Larson  
DSP\*



Jessica McMahon  
DSP\*



Jami Mirka  
DSP\*



Jennifer Pohl  
Site Coordinator



Michelle Tice  
DSP\*



Anne York  
Site Coordinator

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. *\*DSP = Direct Support Professional*

## Employee of the Quarter

Congratulations to Friendship Ark's Employee of the Quarter for the third quarter of 2024, Katy Coburn. Katy's nomination recognized her because she is someone who gives her whole



heart and is a whirlwind of positive energy. Katy consistently goes above and beyond for everyone. She is always willing to lend a helping hand, and her genuine care for others shines through in everything she does. We appreciate Katy's faithful commitment to the core members and to Friendship Ark. In recognition of her award, Katy received a gift of \$100 and will be eligible to be selected for the Employee of the Year award. Nominations for Employee of the Quarter awards can be submitted by any staff of Friendship Ark and winners are selected by a diverse committee of staff peers. All Employee of the Quarter winners for the year are eligible to be selected as Employee of the Year.



# Friendship Ark

HOMES & COMMUNITY SERVICES

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## Make a Donation

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
- 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.

Donations to our Endowment Fund should be made out to Story County Community Foundation and sent directly to SCCF at P.O. Box 1666, Ames, IA 50010-1666, indicating Friendship Ark Endowment Fund in the notes section of your check.



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

## Wish List

For your convenience, we have created a Wish List on Amazon. You may select the items you would like to donate and have them shipped directly to us by using the QR Code.

If you would like to place an order for items from our Wish List scan here:



If you would like to make a donation by credit card scan here:



### PLEASE NOTE:

Payments must be postmarked on or before December 31, 2024 in order for your donation to be attributed to the 2024 tax year.