

FAITH • FAMILY • FRIENDSHIP

Ceremonial Groundbreaking Held



On September 8th we were joined by the Ames Regional Economic Alliance, The Arc of Story County, and Overflow Thrift Store as we held a ceremonial groundbreaking for the new not-for-profit campus we will be partnering with the two other agencies in. The project will convert the former JAX

Outdoors buildings at 4723 and 4803 Lincoln Way into spaces reimagined to fit each agency's needs. Phase II of our project also includes a rec space which will be available to the community. Special thanks to Dan Culhane, President and CEO of the Ames Regional Economic Alliance and Lisa Heddens, Story County Supervisor, Arc of Story County Board Member and core member parent, for their inspirational words as we embark on this journey.

In order to move ahead with this project, and provide Friendship Ark with a permanent home, we have also announced our **ARK-itects Capital Campaign** to construct this new office and rec space that will sustain our mission today and expand our impact for tomorrow.

Together, we're the ARK-itects of hope for building a future where everyone feels like they belong. Learn more at friendshipark.org/donate-now.



Going Digital to Maximize Our Impact

We are excited to share that we will be moving to a fully digital newsletter soon! **With this move we will no longer be publishing a printed paper version of this newsletter.** This change allows us to reduce printing and mailing costs, ensuring more of your generous donations go directly to our services. You'll still receive the same updates and stories in a more eco-friendly format. Thank you for your continued support as we work together to make a bigger impact!



Scan the QR Code or email us at friendshipark@friendshipark.org to subscribe to our new digital newsletter.

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Recruiting and Community Engagement Corner

Summer came and went just as fast as ever. June brought us our Calvary Café where some of our core members showed off their barista skills. In July, we held the 21st annual Bill Bergan 5k on the 4th, and in August, the Prochnow family hosted the 4th Annual Sara Ojard Memorial Golf Scramble to benefit Friendship Ark. The event was a warm one but oh so much fun, and we are beyond grateful for all the individuals that showed up to golf. That same month, we also had the opportunity to share about our Capital Campaign at Rotary, and in September, we were excited to be featured in the fall issue of TRACTION magazine, thanks to our friends from the Ames Regional Economic Alliance. The article talked about our not-for-profit campus with Overflow Thrift Store, The Arc of Story County and The Well.



Don't forget to save the date for our annual hot cocoa bar at the Lucky Star Market at Prairie Moon Winery on **December 6th and 7th**. PLUS, if you haven't marked the date on your calendar yet, our Tropical Sangria Escape will be here before you know it. The date for that event is **Saturday, April 18th, 2026**.



In addition to our staff being in the community and talking to groups, our fabulous Day Habilitation program has also been out and about. A few favorites from this quarter have been: annual ATV rides, Disney Descendants Musical, car shows, Valley Junction Farmers Market, I-Cubs games, water walking, a Dutch oven cooking class, volunteering at VBS for Lutheran Church of Hope, the Boone Races, Adventureland, the State Fair, musical fireworks/drone show in Boone, and volunteering at the water table for Runners United Nevada.



Make sure to follow us on Facebook and/or Instagram to see all of our adventures.

Staff with milestone anniversaries include: Jes Miller, Mindy Schaffner, Stacey Parks, Ashley Monahan, Kennedy Kracht, Teagan Johnson, Kira Lanphier-Helbling and Belle Walter (1 year).

Please help us in welcoming the following new staff this quarter: Conner Schomaker, Soma Germano, Myka Meri, Lacey Young, Bailey Smith, Kenzie Dunson, Autumn Fox, and Olivia Flewelling.

By Beth Lucht, Marketing Manager

Our Business Partners

Help us to thank our 2025 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.

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Learn About the Important Role of our Compliance Committee

What Is Friendship Ark's Compliance Committee?

The Friendship Ark Compliance Committee is a dedicated team of staff members tasked with ensuring the organization operates with integrity and in full compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, internal policies, and ethical standards. The committee plays a vital role in promoting a culture of accountability and continuous improvement across all programs.

Key Responsibilities

The Compliance Committee focuses on several core areas, including:

Monitoring regulatory changes and ensuring timely organizational response.

Reviewing and updating internal policies and procedures to align with current standards.

Investigating compliance concerns or potential violations.

Reviewing grievances submitted by core members and staff.

Overseeing staff compliance training to promote awareness and understanding.

Identifying risk areas and recommending strategies to mitigate them.

Supporting internal and external audits and inspections.

Committee Composition

The committee is composed of a cross-functional team, including: The Compliance Officer (QA and Compliance Manager), Human Resources, the Chief Executive Officer, Site Supervisor(s), and the Quality Assurance Assistant.

This diverse representation ensures a well-rounded perspective on compliance matters. Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) are also encouraged to participate, bringing valuable frontline insights to the table.

Meeting Frequency

The Compliance Committee meets quarterly, with the flexibility to convene more frequently if needed to address urgent matters or prepare for evaluations.

Continued on Page 4.

Thanks to Outgoing Board Member



With the end of our fiscal year on June 30th, the term of one of our Board Members has come to an end. Please

join us in thanking Jane Halliburton for her dedicated service and the positive impact she has made for Friendship Ark and our core members. As a member of our all-volunteer Board of Directors, she worked diligently to help make Friendship Ark the best it can be.

Building Our 10th Home

We are excited to announce that we will be starting construction for our 10th home this fall. With the support of several generous donations, this home is already FULLY FUNDED! We look forward to serving additional core members from our waiting list in the spring of 2026.



Learn About the Important Role of Our Compliance Committee, cont.

Recent Focus

Earlier this year, the committee's primary focus was to prepare for the CARF International Survey, which was scheduled for July 2025. CARF surveyors visited Friendship Ark to assess how well we meet internationally recognized standards for quality services. Their review included evaluating organizational policies and procedures and interviewing core members, staff, families, and community partners.

Given its oversight role, the Compliance Committee was instrumental in ensuring Friendship Ark was well-prepared for this important evaluation.

By Anna Luppen, Quality Assurance and Compliance Manager

FA Earns Three-Year Accreditation from CARF

This summer, Friendship Ark was awarded a Three-Year Accreditation from CARF International for all of our programs. This accreditation decision represents the highest level of accreditation that can be given to an organization and shows our organization's substantial conformance to the CARF standards. An organization receiving a Three-Year Accreditation has gone through a rigorous peer-review process. It has demonstrated to a team of surveyors during an on-site visit its commitment to offering programs and services that are measurable, accountable, and of the highest quality.

The outcome report from our survey praised Friendship Ark as a respected, innovative and community-driven provider, which is a direct reflection of the passion, care and commitment our staff bring every day. We were recognized as a leader in the field and a provider of choice for adults with disabilities in Story County and beyond.

CARF International is an independent, nonprofit accreditor of health and human services whose mission is to promote the quality, value and optimal outcomes of services through a consultative accreditation process and continuous improvement services that center on enhancing the lives of persons served.

Founded in 1966 as the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities, and now known as CARF International, the accrediting body establishes consumer-focused standards to help organizations measure and improve the quality of their programs and services.



Blessed by Recreation and Fitness Donations



Missy is ready to explore area bike trails on this recumbent trike. The generous donors blessed us with two trikes and many accessories, including a hitch to transport them with. The trikes will allow core

members who may find riding a two wheeled bicycle difficult to enjoy the outdoors in this way. Having two trikes ensures that staff is able to go along for the ride. We are thankful for the caring gift!



Bill couldn't wait to try out the elliptical machine, which was donated recently, so he got a quick session in before work. Movement is

essential for maintaining our health, and Bill and his housemates will benefit greatly from this donor's kind gift, especially during the cold winter months. We are grateful for the thoughtful donation.

Giving Back



Boris Ndoutoume was an employee with FA from 2016-2017 while also attending ISU and, after moving on to the next chapter in his life, decided to give back by sponsoring a scholarship for those following in his footsteps. Because of his generosity, scholarships have been awarded to student employees at FA for the past four years. When he stopped to drop off the check this summer, he visited some of the sites where the core members were very happy to see him. Thanks for recognizing the efforts of student employees, Boris!

Scholarship Recipient Announced



The winner of this year's Ndoutoume Family Engineering Scholarship for Friendship Ark employees who are also students in an accredited post secondary education program is Kira Lanphier-Helbling.

Kira is enrolled at Western Governors University and is equivalent to a sophomore in her current program. She is working toward a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Special Education and Elementary Education (Dual Licensure). In response to our question, Kira told us "Receiving this scholarship means the world to me. It brings me one step closer to my goal of supporting and empowering individuals with disabilities through education. I'm so grateful for the opportunity to keep growing and making a difference". Congratulations, Kira!

Volunteers Help Complete Projects

We are grateful for the work of these volunteer groups. Their efforts have made a difference in the lives of our core members.



A group from **We Heart Ames** worked hard to clean up the landscaping around several of our homes. We Heart Ames is made up of volunteers from various area churches and is focused on God's people in Ames coming together to show our city what God's incredible, no-strings-attached love looks like. It is their desire to be one of the best friends our city has ever had and show the love of Jesus to Ames.



We also had help from employees of **Story Construction** in the form of sanding and refinishing a dining room table. Their effort was a part of United Way of Story County's Day of Caring which aims to bring together 100s of volunteers who fan out across Story County to tackle hands-on service projects that lift up local nonprofits, improve community spaces, and show what's possible when we work together.

Employee of the Quarter

Congratulations to Friendship Ark's Employee of the Quarter for the second quarter of 2025, Isaac Helbling. Isaac's nomination recognized him for going above and beyond to ensure our core members' safety, fun and autonomy. He is flexible, willingly supports other sites, and takes initiative in helping core members participate in special activities. His calm, steady presence brings comfort to those around him, and we truly appreciate all he does! We are thankful for Isaac's faithful commitment to the core members and to Friendship Ark. In recognition of his award, Isaac 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.





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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: _____

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) ☐ ARK-itect Capital Campaign
- ☐ 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!

Ways to Support Our Mission

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.

Scan here to place an order for items from our Wish List.



Scan here to donate to the ARK-itect Capital Campaign.



Scan here to make a general donation by credit card.

