



Friendship Ark
HOMES & COMMUNITY SERVICES

Summer 2023
VOLUME 24, ISSUE 2

FAITH • FAMILY • FRIENDSHIP

Iowa OHV Association Hosts 2nd Annual Ride for Friendship Ark



"My favorite thing was seeing Scott (my favorite driver). He is funny and teased me, and he remembered me from last year. I want to keep going back and seeing my new friends. The ATVs are fast and fun!" - Camille

Helping our core members reach their fullest potential is a phrase that you hear us talk about quite a bit at Friendship Ark. The potential our core members have goes beyond household

cleaning, cooking, volunteering in the community or working through employment. We strive to help them be a part of their community, building relationships and living fulfilled lives. Each of them deserves to attend concerts, parks and community events, as well as live on the adventurous side and feel a little adrenaline.

On June 3rd, the Iowa OHV Association teamed up with 35 core members from Friendship Ark for another amazing day of OHV riding. Our reach this year grew to more than double the number of participants over last year as we invited other area service providers to attend and feel the rush that we had experienced last year. It was exciting to meet new friends and welcome members from Imagine the Possibilities in Boone, IA, Woodward Resource Center in Woodward, IA, and Mainstream Living from here in Ames.

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"Wayne was my favorite driver, and he has the same name as my grandpa. He told stories with me.

I love ATVs, they are fast. I want to keep going because the volunteers were nice. I love them."
- Diana

"Morganne was in heaven, and it didn't

matter who drove her, she was just purely happy!" - Anne, Morganne's Staff



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Recruiting and Community Engagement Corner

It is summer and that means we are staying busy. This quarter, I had the continued privilege of connecting with Rotary members and attending diversity, equity, and inclusion meetings courtesy of United Way. Through this opportunity we have been able to enhance our knowledge around the topic of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace. This is such important work as we strive to recruit and retain employees.

In March we welcomed close to 40 Iowa State students into one of our homes to speak to them about Friendship Ark and our mission, concluding their visit with a tour of the house. This interaction led to some great conversations and students interested in employment/volunteer opportunities with us. In April Community Relations Specialist, Natalie, and Spring Intern, Delaney, attended the #GETAJOB career fair at North Grand Mall in Ames. It was a great day of meeting young individuals and introducing them to Friendship Ark. In May we were back at the Beautiful Land Market, where we offered Mother's Day and Father's Day gifts for a free will donation. This event is a wonderful way to connect with our community and raise awareness about what we do; whether that be the services we provide, employment opportunities, or ways to get involved through volunteering. **Look for us at the September 3rd and October 1st markets in the Downtown Ames Fareway parking lot as we once again host our annual Halloween Bootique. It's your opportunity to pick up some awesome Halloween costumes for a free will offering which will support our core members.**

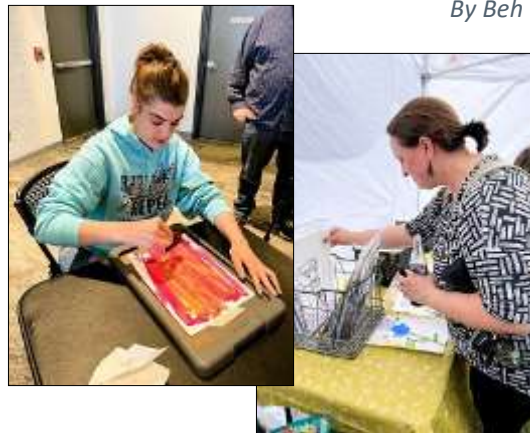
This quarter we welcomed new staff members Jacob Aberle, Aguom Abdalla, Hamida Mohamed, Sydney Pringle and Lillian Hagar to the Friendship Ark family.

Finally, help us in celebrating Kelly Lass. Kelly just celebrated her 1 year work anniversary with us.

By Beh Lucht, Recruiter/Scheduler



Mike joined Delaney and Natalie at the #GETAJOB Career Fair at North Grand Mall.



We enjoyed creating beautiful artwork for our Mother's Day/Father's Day booth at the May Beautiful Land Market in Ames.

Our Business Partners

Help us to thank our 2023 Business Partners for their generous support of adults living with intellectual and developmental disabilities in our community. If you find yourself interacting with them or visiting their offices, let them know you appreciate their contribution.



New Year, Same Focus - A Culture of Gentleness

As we have navigated through the first half of 2023, we continue to focus on educating our Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) about how to apply Gentle Teaching to the services they provide. Having a “**Culture of Gentleness**” is our goal, and to get there we need confident DSPs leading the way. Let me introduce you to one of these DSPs, Jami Mirka. Jami provides services in our 24-hour residential homes as well as in our hourly Supported Community Living program. She is also a member of the Gentle Teaching Task Force and has assisted with creating and modifying the Gentle Teaching Phase 1 training which began in 2022. Here is what Jami shared with us about the impact Gentle Teaching has had on her relationships with the core members:



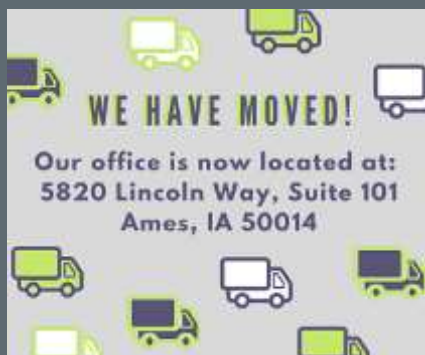
Gentle Teaching has helped Jami to form a strong bond with many of the core members.

“It has been a blessing, especially on those days that things don’t go as planned. When I have built trust with a core member, we are able to work together to handle the unexpected. Earlier this year, a core member and I arrived at the location of a preferred activity to discover that the parking lot was a sheet of ice and that it was not safe to get out of the van and proceed with the activity. I expressed how sorry I was that we couldn’t do the activity, and shared that I was concerned about her safety and didn’t want her to fall, and worked with her to come up with an alternate activity. Because of our relationship, I believe that she trusted that it wasn’t safe to do the activity that day, that we would be able to do it again in the future, and that it was okay.”

An important part of creating a “**Culture of Gentleness**” is being able to reflect on our interactions with each other. Since coming to Friendship Ark, Jami has learned that challenging situations can be approached differently with the principles of Gentle Teaching.

Jami told us, “I can now use the tools of Gentle Teaching. I can encourage good choices but remember it is their choice. I can point out the natural consequences of their actions and let them choose. I can use my words, eyes, and body language to show understanding and encouragement instead of having a harsher approach.”

By Anna Luppen, Operations Manager



After many years in the previous location, we have outgrown the space. We are excited to get settled into our new offices.

Van Purchase Made Possible by Story County Community Foundation Grant

Karen Sevde, Marcy Nelson, and Daryle Vegge visited our office this spring to see the new 7 passenger wheelchair accessible van we were able to purchase with grant money we were awarded by the Story County Community Foundation for our community mobility project. Our vehicles allow the core members to access their community for medical appointments, to do personal shopping, to volunteer, or to participate in community events.



Iowa OHV Association Hosts 2nd Annual Ride for Friendship Ark, cont.

The Iowa OHV association brought volunteers from all over Iowa, as well as Arizona, South Dakota, Wisconsin and even Canada. Each came with their personal UTV, donating the gas and time to make this event possible. We are so appreciative of their dedication and passion. It is always a pleasure working with Dan Kleen from Pocahontas, IA, who is a part of the Iowa OHV Association and helps coordinate the all-day event for our core members. "Our Friendship Ark ride is the most anticipated event of the year for our volunteers. It was a day of a million smiles. We are already looking forward to next year's ride." said Kleen. Feeling the sense of adrenaline and experiencing something new can lead to boosting our self-confidence, helping to control our negative emotions and move beyond the fear and anxiety of completing daily tasks or trying something new. This experience for our core members goes beyond a smile, it helps build their confidence and grow their sense of belonging, being a part of something they never thought they could do. We would like to thank everyone who helped, with special thanks to Suz and Carolin for hosting the event at their home outside of Boone, IA, Camp Hantesa, and Struthers Bros Kawasaki-Suzuki-Triumph out of Des Moines, Iowa, who donated 30 brand new helmets. When a community comes together, we inspire change and growth within one another.

By Natalie Seibold, Community Relations Specialist

2023 Staff Retreat



Friendship Ark's Recognition and Retention Committee planned a staff retreat in May 2023 at Sunstream Retreat Center in Ogden, IA. During the planning stages our committee wanted to offer a retreat that embodied togetherness. We landed on the theme of 'Better Together'. Sunstream offered a variety of activities that encouraged collaboration, teamwork, and a chance to connect with each other. We signed up for the Challenge Course which involved mental, physical, and communication challenges. Part of the Challenge Course was the A-Frame challenge which involved moving a wooden

A-Frame 100 feet, using only ropes while a staff member was balancing in the middle! Some of the feedback received from our staff was:

"I thought the retreat was amazing and I enjoyed getting to know more about myself and others as well. I would love to do this again and visit Sunstream again. I thought their ideas were great for having everyone work together. I was blown away by how the day went and how much I enjoyed it!" - Kole

"Such a wonderful experience to have with our amazing team! Here's to many more years of love, learning and fun for all at FA!" - Janett

"I had so much fun, learned a little about me and a lot about my coworkers!" - Tara

Our retreat allowed our team to work together as one, allowing us to live out our theme of "Better Together."

*By Michelle Jackson-Worrick,
Human Resource Assistant*



Easter Celebration



With the help of the **Iowa State Autism Awareness Club**, we hosted a family Easter celebration for core members and staff and their families as well as our volunteers this spring. There

were many activities, including eggs stuffed with brussels sprouts and cherry tomatoes (our event happened to be on April Fools Day). Thanks to everyone who came out to make new friends and memories with us.

New Home Construction to be Completed This Fall

This group of future housemates had a chance to get to know each other and experience an exclusive tour of their future home recently. Their house will be our second home with intermediate supports; having staff stop in on an hourly basis with an electronic overnight monitoring system to help provide security. Construction should wrap up this fall and they cannot wait to move in.



Calvary Cafe

Calvary United Methodist Church in Ames has supported Friendship Ark in a number of different ways for several years now and this year, members of their Mission Committee decided that it would be wonderful to get to know the core members better through a series of planned events.

Core members Joel and Bretton love visiting coffee shops and playing cards during their supported outings and wondered what it would be like to make their own fancy coffee drinks.



Soon, with a staff member's creative input, the idea of the Calvary Café took shape. Joel and Bretton decided on some delicious drink options, practiced making them, and shopped for the ingredients. Their friend, and fellow core member, Lucy, has always wanted to be a hostess at Hickory Park, so she was invited to join the Café crew as well. The Calvary Café's free will offering customers are members of the congregation and their friends, staff, core members and their families. At our second gathering, we served 34 drinks and there was an art demonstration and activity by Judith Bunyi. We have had a lot of fun with our café and hope to continue to perfect our skills and serve up more delicious drinks. Thanks, Calvary United Methodist Church, for the awesome opportunity!

Employee of the Quarter

Congratulations to Friendship Ark's Employee of the Quarter for the first quarter of 2023, Judi Meinhardt. Judi's nomination recognized her not only for being a hard worker, but also being very compassionate in what she does; always making the core members feel like they belong



and special. No matter what life tosses at Judi, she always comes to work with a smile. Thank you, Judi, for your faithful commitment to the core members and to Friendship Ark. In recognition of her award, Judi 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 and Employee of the Year awards can be submitted by any staff of Friendship Ark and winners are selected by a diverse committee of staff peers.



Friendship Ark

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

Wish List

- Uno Cards (Multiple Decks)
- Skipbo Cards (Multiple Decks)
- New Pergola, Canopy or Patio Umbrella for shade during lunches on the deck.
- Raised Flower/Gardening Beds
- Organizing Totes
- New Rubbermaid Containers
- New Silverware Set
- Ninja Creami
- Pruners for trimming trees.
- Furniture Dolly
- Small Organizing Baskets
- Sunscreen
- Halloween Costumes, Unique Clothing Items, Dance Costumes (for our 2023 Halloween Boutique fundraising event).