



Developmental Disability Month Showcased at Ames City Hall

March has been recognized as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month since 1987, when President Ronald Reagan issued a public proclamation urging Americans to provide individuals with developmental disabilities “the encouragement and opportunities they need to lead productive lives and to achieve their full potential.”

This March, the bulletin board at Ames City Hall was curated by the City of Ames’ Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Team and featured Women’s History Month as well as Developmental Disability Month. In addition to information about prominent women in Ames’ history, the bulletin board highlighted Friendship Ark, our core members, and the services we provide, to help educate the public. Friendship Ark volunteer and City of Ames employee, Cesar Cintron, was a part of the team that created the board. Core members and staff were able to meet Cesar and other City of Ames Representatives at City Hall where Cesar shared about the display and its significance.



In light of the display and Cesar’s efforts, we asked him a few questions about the time he spends volunteering with Friendship Ark. You may find his responses on page 2.

Continued on Page 2

Seeing Only Abilities

Anne York is a member of Friendship Ark’s staff who will always challenge a core member’s perceived limitations, tirelessly thinking of ways that the core member can participate in an activity or learn a new skill. In celebration of Developmental Disability Month, we asked Anne to share with us what motivates her to keep seeking out opportunities for our core members and how she accomplishes so much with them.

Continued on Page 4

Published by Friendship Ark Homes & Community Services

Editor Martina Luppen

President Kyle Briese

Vice President Nicole Pape

Treasurer Steve Prater

Secretary Heather Botine

Board of Directors

Heather Botine

Kyle Briese

Haley Cook

Jane Halliburton

Luke Jensen

Sheila Lundt

Dr. Pauline Miller

Tom Mortice

Melissa Muschick

Nicole Pape

Steve Prater

Jon Sargent

Fr. Jim Secora

In this Issue

Developmental Disabilities Month, cont. 2

Our Business Partners

Recruiting and Community Engagement Corner 3

5k on the 4th to be Renamed

Tropical Sangria Escape Seeing Only Abilities, cont. 4

Employee of the Year 5

Tropical Sangria Escape, cont.

Valentines Day with Sigma Kappa

New Video

Employee of the Quarter

Wish List 6

New Video/Survey

Developmental Disability Month, continued

Below the responses to our questions as provided by Friendship Ark volunteer, Cesar Cintron.

Q: Why do you think it is important to share about Friendship Ark to the Ames community?

A: It is important that the Ames community knows and is aware that there are members of the same community that decide to serve other members in a very special way. The City of Ames is taking care of members of the community that have special needs with the unconditional effort of its own members. Once that importance is understood, then is when we ask ourselves, "What can I do to make this effort continue? How can I be involved?"

It is important to share that the feeling of pride, happiness and joy that any individual can experience after achieving something important to society, (no matter how big that can be), is the same feeling of pride, happiness and joy a person with developmental disabilities can experience after achieving something important to society, no matter how small that can be.

Q: What do you think the Ames community should know about people living with disabilities?

A: We all should know that people with disabilities can contribute to our society just like anyone else. We should know that their specific disability can be our greatest capability. We should learn not to feel pity or sad for any condition a person might have. Instead, we should learn to include a person with disabilities in our society and provide the same opportunities in the field of education, work force, arts, sports, just like you and me. We should know that they want to be included. But we should first embrace Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

Q: What does volunteering at Friendship Ark mean to you?

A: When I do volunteering at Friendship Ark, I realize that I am not the one providing the service. The core members are the ones that are teaching me. I learned from their freedom, I learned from their disabilities. I learned to value diversity. I learned that I need to transfer to others (family, co-workers, etc.), their transparent life, where there is no judgement, no exclusion, no hate, etc. But I am only a volunteer. There is a staff of fulltime, parttime, University students, that really work hard every single day with an unconditional service under all weather conditions, day and night, 24/7. That is commitment!!

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.



Burke Corporation

Cylosoft, Inc.

McFarland Clinic

South Story Bank & Trust

US Bank

Recruiting and Community Engagement Corner



Beth and Natalie accept a donation from Altrusa of Ames.

The birds are starting to chirp which means that hopefully spring is around the corner. We continued to keep an active presence in the community, and we were blessed to get involved in many ways this past quarter. Natalie and I were excited to be able to talk about Friendship Ark to the **Ames Chapter of Altrusa International**. We were honored that they chose us to be a recipient of a portion of their funds from this past year's Holiday Home Tour. This money has helped us to purchase a wheelchair scale which allows us to more accurately measure our core members' weights.

This quarter also kicked off preparations for the **Blast Back to School** program which we will be supporting for our second year. This wonderful opportunity allows our core members a chance to volunteer and for us to give back to our community. In February, we attended our second training regarding **diversity in the workplace**, courtesy of **United Way**. While at this training, we were able to learn from other organizations about what they are doing to promote diversity in the workplace. Finally, this past quarter involved connecting with many area businesses and preparing for our spring gala. We couldn't have done all of this without our spring intern, Delaney Nasalroad. Delaney has been learning a variety of skills while interning for us and was instrumental in the success of our gala. When she is not at the office, she is often found working with our core members in the homes. Please help us in welcoming her to her new internship role.

Many of our recruiting efforts not only brought in new staff, but also new volunteers. We had two additional volunteers come aboard and have connected with **RSVP**, whom we met at the **Rock on Symposium**. RSVP is a group that connects individuals 55 and older to volunteer opportunities. We are excited to get going with them in the coming months. Our team also maintained a presence at Iowa State's **Welcomefest**, the **Iowa State People to People Career Fair** and a new opportunity for us, the **Boone High School Career Fair**. We are looking forward to participating in more high school career fairs to talk to young people about what we do and what opportunities might be waiting for them after they graduate.



Beth and Delaney at the Boone High School Career Fair

This quarter we welcomed Caitlin Bellingtier, Candice Collins, Merveille Dimambu and Agum Anyuon to our staff. Finally, help us celebrate Courtney Aden and Elyse Hall. Both of these staff just celebrated their 1 year work anniversary with us.

By Beth Lucht, Recruiter/Scheduler

5k on the 4th to be Renamed in Memory of Bill Bergan

Together with Bill Bergan's family, his wife, Karen, and children Jody, Dan, Mike and Amy, we would like to announce the renaming of our annual 4th of July run/walk to **The Bill Bergan 5k on the 4th**. Bill Bergan passed away in November of 2022 after living a life that impacted many along the way. A successful and beloved head men's track & field and cross country coach at Iowa State, Bill also had a heart for individuals living with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Bill was one of our founding board members and instrumental in establishing the 5k on the 4th as a fundraiser for Friendship Ark during his term. Now in our 19th year of the event, we are honored to have his family's blessing to name the race in his memory. We hope you will join us this July 4th as we run/walk in support of Friendship Ark. Watch our website and social media pages for registration information as it becomes available.

Tropical Sangria Escape Presented By Todd & Sargent, Inc.



We had so much fun at our reimagined annual fundraising event, the Tropical Sangria Escape, on March 3rd. The event space at Prairie Moon Winery was the perfect backdrop for our tropical evening. Guests were able to enjoy two signature sangria flavors, Great Caterers of Iowa served up pork sliders, chicken skewers and chicken tacos with several sides and Fareway Meat and Grocery assembled a fantastic looking and delicious charcuterie. Several businesses and talented individuals donated cakes and cookies, many of them with amazing tropical themes for us to auction off in our cake auction.

Continued on page 5

Seeing Only Abilities, continued

I met Thomas when I first started here 4 1/2 years ago. He immediately showed me how independent he liked to be and how intelligent he was in finding ways to do what he was wanting to do. We started going from walking short distances in the house and finding what was most comfortable for both of us. Throughout the years, even when his device wasn't available for him to talk to me, he would find ways to show me what he wanted to try.

I remember taking him to a Boone race and he was trying to stand in his chair for the national anthem. I assisted him to stand like everyone else was, and his smile just lit up. After the song, he pointed to the bleachers and I assisted him to sit on them. He used my leg to balance and his smile never stopped. I talked to other staff after the race and they helped find a bleacher chair for him! Thomas thanked me after and he taught me that any of our core members could do anything they set their mind to. Thomas loves music and dances as much as he can. He watched others dancing at an Arc of Story County dance and I asked if he wanted to join. I assisted with balance and he had friends come dance with him. From then on out, he knows he can do it and loves being a part of the activities in all the ways he can.



One of our responsibilities when we accept the job offer is to help each person reach their fullest potential. If we can step outside the box and provide all the chances (and different ways to try something), we can help accomplish new experiences and abilities. We will struggle making connections if we enter their lives to choose the barriers they have. (I believe none of us like being told we can't do something. Usually, that makes us more

persistent to prove to people that they are wrong.) By providing as many options and chances as possible, we help each individual we serve see how proud they feel when they do something they didn't think they could. I find myself often putting myself in their place and thinking how something they are wanting to do could work. We also have a great brainstorming network within the company to help find options that I hadn't thought of myself. Just because something doesn't work the first, second or third time, doesn't mean there isn't another way to accomplish the task. I have learned to slow down because most accomplishments won't happen overnight. With any goals set, there are small steps to achieve to find the success. The smiles that follow when they succeed are worth all the effort we choose to put into our work!



Anne and Thomas dance at the Tropical Sangria Escape.

By Anne York, Community Inclusion Coordinator

Employee of the Year



Congratulations to Friendship Ark's Employee of the Year for 2022, Cindy Wismer. Friendship Ark would like to thank Cindy for all of her hard work

and years of dedication. Friendship Ark appreciates her commitment to our core members, fellow staff, and the organization as a whole. In recognition of her award, Cindy received a gift of \$500. 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.

Valentines Day with Sigma Kappa

Remember our Friendsgiving with Sigma Kappa Sorority - Iowa State University? We were so excited when they reached out to help us spread the love this past Valentines Day!

Together, we met in Carver Hall to craft valentines cards for a local retirement community and decorate sugar cookies!! We had so much fun and love the connections we are making with Sigma Kappa! The next day we delivered them to the Northridge Village Commons Building.



Tropical Sangria Escape, continued



MC, Steve Sullivan, led us through the evening and Kelly Jackson conducted an exciting live auction. A highlight of the evening was the opportunity for guests to bid on a chance to play with the band which several of them thoroughly enjoyed. Local favorites, the Burnin' Sensations provided entertainment, and many guests gathered on the dance

floor as they played. It was heart-warming to see several core member parents enjoying a dance with their children. Thanks to our presenting sponsor, Todd & Sargent, Inc., our business partners, auction item donors, cake donors, and everyone who so generously supported this event, it was one of our most successful ones to date. Thank you for caring about our core members and being a part of our mission! Please visit our Facebook page for a picture gallery of the event.



Introducing Our New Video

With the help of B&G Productions in Ames, we have created a new video and we just know you'll love it! Check it out at <https://youtu.be/nOGVW9hu-aE> or see back page for QR code.

Employee of the Quarter

Congratulations to Friendship Ark's Employee of the Quarter for the fourth quarter of 2022, Delaney Nasalroad. Delaney's nomination recognized her for always being able to form amazing bonds with the core members. She never shies away from challenges but instead meets



them with excitement. Delaney always puts the core members first. Thank you, Delaney, for your faithful commitment to the core members and to Friendship Ark. In recognition of her award, Delaney 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

HOMES & COMMUNITY SERVICES

130 S Sheldon Ave, Suite 203
Ames, Iowa 50014
P 515.292.9556
friendshipark@friendshipark.org

Non-Profit Org
U.S. Postage
PAID
Ames, IA
50010
Permit 293

Address Service Requested



Stay Informed by E-Mail

Contact us at friendshipark@friendshipark.org to request our newsletter by e-mail. We will not share your email information with any outside entity.

Make a Donation / Survey Information

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 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)
- Living Room Couches (New)
- Living Room Rugs (New)
- Rocking Chair/Glider
- Blankets for Basement Hangout
- Halloween Costumes, Unique Clothing Items, Dance Costumes (for our 2023 Halloween Boutique fundraising event).

Check out our new Friendship Ark video!



If you attended the gala we would love your feedback!



Scan the QR code above!!