

Friendship Ark Homes & Community Services

FY'20 Report to the Story County Board of Supervisors

Mission: Friendship Ark celebrates the uniqueness of adults with intellectual disabilities by providing homes and community services. We help our core members reach their fullest potential through faith, family, and friendship.

Organizational Highlights: In FY'20, we continued to see modest growth in our overall numbers and continue to have a waiting list in all three programs (program specific numbers below). Growth has slowed primarily due to being short staffed, which is an issue for providers all across the state and even on a national level. We continue to work with legislators and State officials to work on solutions to address this workforce shortage of Direct Support Professionals.

We broke ground on our 6th home at 845 Dotson Place. The new house will be just west of the Ames Middle School. We are expecting construction to be complete in late summer or early fall and will be able to move 5 individuals from our waiting list into that home soon after construction is complete. Funds to complete this home were provided by private donations, a grant from United Way of Story County, and funds from the Story County Housing Trust.

We continued working with the Ames Public Library on our community advocacy project to install an adult changing table. We ran into some additional obstacles in identify a location within the library. Once an area was selected, there were additional costs such as bringing water to the location for hand washing. We applied for a grant through the Rotary Club of Ames and were awarded the additional funds needed to complete this project. The project is currently in process and we hope it will be finished and available for the public very soon.

Our annual 5 on the 4th will be virtual in 2020 for the first time ever due to COVID-19. We were also notified that Friendship Ark had been selected as the charity partner for the Georges Niang Golf Outing, which has been postponed to August 31st, 2020 and will be held at the Ames Golf and Country Club. Because we are partnering for this event, we will not be hosting our annual Fall Benefit in 2020 but are considering some new options for fundraising in FY'21.

We welcomed three new board members in FY'20: Jane Hallibuton, Jim Black, and Steve Prater. Heather Botine will also join the board starting in July, as Sarah Buck finishes her 2nd term. Sarah will be sincerely missed as she has held leadership positions on the board throughout her two terms and has been instrumental on the Major Gifts Committee. We wish Sarah the best and welcome our new board members.

Challenges: Iowa Total Care, a Managed Care Company, joined the state Medicaid system in July 2019. Each time there is a change with managed care or the companies that administer Medicaid funds, there is an impact to Friendship Ark and the members we serve. While we continue to work with our partners, there are still payment issues and delays. For example, we still have claims from the first quarter of FY'20 (July 2019-September 2019), which have yet to be paid in full by Iowa Total Care.

COVID-19 presented us with significant challenges in FY'20 as it did for everyone else. Our Day Hab program closed in mid-March and has yet to re-open. We began mitigation efforts, which included restricting visitors in our homes. We were able to retain all staff and transferred those that had primarily worked in the Day Hab program to fill in at the homes as our members were now there 24/7. We worked to provide activities that could be done virtually, in the home, or outside to try and keep our members occupied and engaged. We are slowly working through the challenges of re-opening but want to do so in a way that keeps our members and staff safe. We continue to monitor the cases of COVID-19 in and around Story County as we make plans, in addition to following the guidelines given to us by the State through the Iowa Department of Public Health and the Department of Human Services.

Supported Community Living -24 hour (group homes) and 15 minute unit (individual's apartment/home)

Program Description: Supported community living (SCL) services are provided within the member's home and community, according to the individualized member's needs as identified in the approved service plan. Core members work with staff on personal, home, and community skills, personal management skills, communication and advocacy skills, transportation skills, and socialization skills.

Number Served: We currently serve 25 core members living in our home, however three of those individuals have moved back in with family during the pandemic, because of the restrictions on visitors. We currently have 29 on our waiting list for a spot in one of our homes. We are serving 17 individuals in the 15 minute unit program. 6 of these individuals still live at home with family, while the other 11 live in their own apartments. We have 12 on the waiting list for this program.

Outcomes: Our core members made progress on their goals 82% of the time those goals were run throughout 2019/2020. We also began keeping track of how often attempt to run goals were done as apposed how often they could have been run. Goals were run an average of 61% of possible attempts. For example, if a goal was to be run daily or 7 times/week, it was run an average of just over 4 days/week. Many factors play into this such as choice of the member, health of the member, other activities or things happening in the household. We felt collecting this data gave us a better picture of the overall success rate on goals and can help us see trends that may be preventing members from learning skills.

Successes: Being able to continue with the planned construction of the 6th home and keeping our core members and staff healthy during the COVID pandemic have been significant successes this year. We anticipate that things will not be "back to normal" any time soon but continue to work hard to keep our core members happy during these challenging times.

Day Habilitation

Program Description: Day Habilitation Services are provided outside a member's residential setting in the community and are designed to foster the acquisition of skills, building positive social behavior and interpersonal competence, greater independence, and personal choices. Supports are provided either in small groups or one on one for those that need that level of support. Activities include volunteering, participating in community events, and visiting local businesses or organizations.

Number Served: We were serving 39 core members in this program, 26 from our residential programs and 13 from other organizations or still living at home with their families. We have 12 on our waiting list. Most of these are needing one on one support, which we must hire additional staff to accommodate.

Outcomes: All Day Hab core members made progress on 90 % of the goals they were working on throughout FY'20. Each core member works on community integration, making choices, social skills and healthy relationships with peers, and many work on volunteering.

Successes: We have continued to grow the volunteer opportunities for our core members through the Day Hab program. This year our core members volunteered at the following organizations or events: United Way of Story County collecting food for the food drive and making May Day baskets and delivering them to local nursing homes, ringing bells for the Salvation Army, taking care of the flower bed at Daly Park and helping to fill the containers on Main Street, and returning cans for recycling from MGMC. In addition to volunteer opportunities, our members have participated in several community events and continue to enjoy spending time at local favorites like the Ames Public Library, Reiman Gardens, and the many parks and recreational areas. As you can see, our core members are a vital part of their community and enjoy participating in these various opportunities.