



# FRIENDS of the FAMILY

Take Back Tomorrow. Today.

## FALL NEWSLETTER

### IMPACTFUL WORK

*A Note from Ben Brustkern, Executive Director*

As the leaves start to turn and the weather becomes colder, we must remember that there are people in our community who do not have a place to call home and are sleeping in the cold. It is not the same as New York City or Los Angeles, but it is still an issue we must address. Housing is a human right.

Think about those days in December when you are walking to your car and it is freezing outside. The 2 minute walk feels like so much, but yet it is really just a minor inconvenience. Now shift to someone living on the street, curled up, shivering, and trying to generate comfort in any possible way. It does not have to be that way.

We can work to house people experiencing homelessness because housing is the only solution. Did you know that Friends of the Family staff go out into the community and work with people living on the street? We actively seek to find people and connect them to services. We work to provide comfort in some of the most difficult times. Street outreach is an important component of any program that serves people experiencing homelessness and we have just finished our first year of doing this work. It has made a difference in so many people's lives. Conversations, compassion, and solutions come from street outreach.

**When you support Friends of the Family you support impactful work that will end homelessness in our community.**

### 5 GOOD THINGS HAPPENING IN OUR PROGRAMS

1. We have survived another grueling grant competition. We get a chance to catch our breath for a second and refocus on the upcoming grant year.
2. We have a lot of program availability in Northeast Iowa, so it has been nice to be able to help provide so much more assistance to clients experiencing homelessness!
3. Shelter is buzzing from the positivity that the new paint has created. Shelter is brighter, feels lighter and it has created for a more upbeat environment for our shelter guests.
4. Our Crisis Advocate team continues to grow and Housing Advocates continue to work hard connecting clients with safe, permanent housing.
5. In the last few months, we have been able to get our shared housing program up and running in Black Hawk County. This program's purpose is to help individuals get into long term affordable housing. It lowers the rent and hopefully makes it easier for individuals experiencing homelessness to be able to afford their units long term.

5  
good  
things

HAPPENING IN OUR PROGRAMS



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**WE WILL BE HERE TO  
HELP NAVIGATE AND  
ADVOCATE ON BOTH  
SIDES FOR YOU AS  
A LANDLORD AND  
FOR THE CLIENT AND  
THEIR NEEDS.**

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## LANDLORD PARTNERSHIP

What does it mean to be a Landlord Partner here at Friends of the Family? It means you believe in our vision that everyone has a home. Shelter and housing are our basic needs as individuals and we rely on you, the landlord, to help us in that vision. We love working with you within our programs and are extremely grateful when you open your homes to give them safe housing.

Working as a Landlord partner is a relationship between you and Friends of the Family that we want to cultivate. In this partnership Friends of the Family, will provide case management from the point they reach out to hopefully when they achieve self-reliance. Within these practices, staff meet with clients in their unit 1-3 times a month, depending on the phase the client is in. We assist clients in achieving their goals of becoming self-sufficient and maintaining a safe and healthy home. We will be here to help navigate and advocate on both sides for you as a landlord and for the client and their needs.

As a landlord, we ask that you are willing to work with us through the application process by waiving fees. Clients generally do not have the funds to provide for them, and our funding does not cover that cost. You will be renting to someone who has continued support, so waving an application fee is a benefit that results in a long-term tenant. We ask that you communicate with our Housing Navigator and they can assist by answering your questions and concerns.

**Are you willing to help our community, and assist us in our vision, EVERYONE HAS A HOME?** We ask you to take a chance and say yes to partnering to end homelessness.

To learn more, contact Athena at [Athena@fofia.org](mailto:Athena@fofia.org).

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## END HOMELESSNESS IN BLACK HAWK COUNTY

Black Hawk County Housing Project is one of our rapid rehousing programs in Black Hawk County. The purpose of this project is to end homelessness in Black Hawk County. We are providing rental assistance to individuals experiencing literal homelessness. These are individuals and families who are sleeping on the streets, in their cars, or any place that isn't meant for human habitation.

When someone is pulled into this program a caseworker is immediately helping them look for housing. Once a client finds a unit and gets

their lease signed, the assigned advocate then does ongoing case management working on the clients' identified goals towards self-sufficiency. While doing this we also provide as many resources as possible to the individual and try to get them to connect to services that they identify they need.

This project in the past year has **assisted over 75 households** with one time utility or rental assistance with homeless prevention assistance. From 8/1/2021-8/1/2022 we have served over 73 households with on going assistance.



# Friends of the Family

## Adopt-a-Family

**Sprinkle kindness  
through this holiday  
season, support a  
family in need.**

It's time to get our 15th  
Annual Holiday Adopt-A-  
Family Program underway!  
Last year, with your help, our  
program was able to provide  
gifts to 249 adults & children  
in our community.

**TO BECOME A DONOR, PLEASE CONTACT:**

**MICHELLE SIMON**  
**MICHELLE@FOFIA.ORG**  
**319-576-2237**



## Donations Needed

- Blankets & XL twin sheets
- Towels & washcloths
- Pillows & pillow cases
- Notebooks
- Baby formula, baby food, baby bottles, sippy cups, pull-ups
- New bras, underwear and socks - all sizes
- Paper products - toilet paper, paper towels
- Cleaning products
- Hygiene products

Please connect with office manager, Monique, with donation questions or to schedule drop off at 319-576-2200 or [Monique@fofia.org](mailto:Monique@fofia.org)

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## HOUSING SERVICES HOTLINE: KEY TO ENDING HOMELESSNESS

"As a Diversion and Assessment Specialist, I spend my days answering and returning phone calls that come into our Housing Hotline. When people are experiencing homelessness or are living with other people temporarily to avoid homelessness, they call our hotline to complete an assessment so they can be placed on the Coordinated Entry list.

Coordinated Entry is a list used to prioritize individuals experiencing homelessness or imminent homelessness. To be placed on the list an assessment called a VI-SPDAT must be completed with the person interested in services. While not a guarantee of services, being placed on the list gives the caller the potential for being pulled into a housing program.

Our assessments take about twenty minutes to complete via phone, although some assessments will take longer. We also offer other services when speaking with clients, such as Progressive

Engagement funding, which is a one-time payment made to assist a client who will then be able to maintain self-sufficiency following brief assistance. Another thing we work with clients on is determining if there are other options for them that do not include shelter or living on the streets. Sometimes, when a person is in crisis, they benefit from someone guiding them through potential other options they may have such as friends or relatives they might stay with and talking about what it would take for them to be able to stay with someone.

This is a rewarding position because as a Diversion and Assessment Specialist **I am a bridge between homelessness and housing programs, connecting people to the services they are seeking and offering resources when the need is immediate.**

- Courtney, Diversion & Assessment Specialist





## DAY IN THE LIFE

### **Describe your role.**

My role is to oversee our data and documentation for our Continuum of Care programs, as well as providing case management training to agency staff for our housing and shelter programs.

### **What led you to become a case operations manager?**

My passion towards case management led me to this position. I wanted to improve our day to day case management that we were providing at the time, and this position would allow me to evolve how we did that as an agency.

### **What programs do you oversee?**

I oversee our Continuum of Care HUD programs (COC). Currently, I over see our Safely Home, Turning Point, Permanent Supportive Housing, and Rapid Housing Initiative of North Central Iowa programs.

### **How do you start each day?**

I start each day with checking emails, voicemails and reviewing my calendar for the day/ week to prepare for what's to come that day.

### **What sort of things do you help team members with?**

I help my team with daily case management questions as well any training related to Continuum of Care programming and the documentation we collect.

### **Are there specific community partners or resources you work consistently with?**

I have worked towards building relationships with local section 8 offices and we have been able to build a successful collaboration with services.

### **What is the most enjoyable part of your role?**

The most enjoyable part of my role is getting to witness/ observe the entire housing process from start to finish. I get a unique perspective to get to see the process from behind the scenes and I'm just so proud of all the work being done at the agency.

### **What is the most stressful part of your role?**

The most stressful part of my role would be maintaining the program data and ensuring we are hitting all our requirements that grants are requesting.

### **Does work follow you home?**

I think doing the work we do that its impossible to not take work home with you, but I have found a great balance and am able to unwind and shut off.

### **How do you unwind?**

I like to typically spend time with friends and family, going on walks, traveling often and enjoying time away from work.

— Amela, Case Operations Manager —

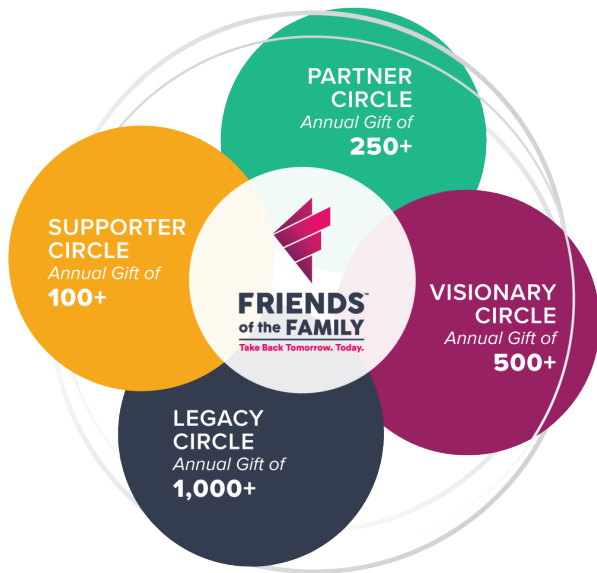


## FUNDING PARTNERS

Friends of the Family relies on funding from local partners to meet the needs of people affected by violence and homelessness. **Thank you!**

*CUNA Mutual Foundation  
Veridian Credit Union  
Crime Victim Assistance Division  
HUD – Continuum of Care  
Waterloo Housing Trust Fund  
FEMA – BHC*

*FEMA – Bremer  
FEMA – Cerro Gordo  
Leighty Foundation  
Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa -  
Anonymous Fund*



## CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

**THANK YOU** to our third quarter donors! It is with your support that we are able to ensure that **EVERYONE HAS A HOME.**

### LEGACY CIRCLE (\$1,000+)

McKenna Pro  
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Kris & Cheryl Einsweiler  
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Purchase your tickets TODAY:  
[fofia.org/news-events/a-night-in](https://fofia.org/news-events/a-night-in-italy)

Our annual fundraiser, A Night In Italy, brought to you by Farmers State Bank, is a fun and exciting night themed around all things Italy!! We will have live and silent auction items, great food, drinks, and entertainment! Each \$40 ticket is entered to win a 1 in 500 chance at a trip to Italy - (paid out in a \$2,000 travel voucher just in case Italy isn't your thing + \$200 Visa gift card). You do NOT need to be present to win!

Our goal is to raise \$50,000 to support our critical services for individuals in crisis due to domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, and homelessness. Help us reach our vision of ensuring EVERYONE HAS A HOME.

11.04.2022

A NIGHT IN...ITALY



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of the **FAMILY**  
Take Back Tomorrow. Today.



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of the **FAMILY**

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