



FRIENDS of the FAMILY

Take Back Tomorrow. Today.

DRIVING CHANGE

A Note from Ben Brustkern, Executive Director

We have an issue of people experiencing homelessness in our community. People are living on the street, going into emergency shelters, and fleeing domestic violence every day. It is an issue that we have fought with for so long in our communities and in our nation. We would all agree that one woman, man, or child homeless is one too many.

Recently, staff at Friends of the Family noticed an individual with a sign in a local shopping area asking for housing assistance. They stopped and talked with him about his situation and were able to do an assessment on his current situation. As they continued to talk, they learned that he had a job lined up and all he needed was a permanent residence to start that job. This led him into programming, finding housing, receiving housing assistance, and working with staff on becoming self-sufficient. For the first time in years, **he felt like he was seen and heard**, and he was so excited to start his new job and finally give his dog Charlie a home.

This is what success looks like. Your support provides Friends of the Family staff the ability to provide street outreach services, rental assistance, and case management. Creating safety for families and individuals that have struggled with housing. Your support creates gratefulness, encouragement, and overall hope. Hope that was not there days before.

Your support ensures that Everyone Has a Home.

SUMMER NEWSLETTER

APRIL-JUNE
HOUSING
STATS



689
**HOUSEHOLDS
SUPPORTED**

5 GOOD THINGS

There's always so many moving parts, as we work to drive change in all of our communities.

Here are the top five good things happening in all of our program areas:

- Will, Director of Programs, shared that we are now cutting 200+ checks every month, and each check directly helps someone obtain or maintain housing.
- Caitlyn K, Service Access Manager, shared that our housing services hotline is up and running.
- Alyssa, Crisis Services Manager, shared that we are now functioning as a housing-focused shelter.
- Caitlin A, Housing Projects Manager, shared that our outreach & diversion specialist was able to connect with a man who was living in his car and complete a housing assessment with him. Within a few weeks he was pulled into a housing program and housed in less than 2 weeks.
- Amela, Case Operations Manager, shared that having availability in Northeast Iowa to pull people into services and lower the list to less than 5 people remaining to be housed in that area.



**I'm thankful that
someone was
willing to take a
chance on me...**

JAKE'S STORY

A few months back, Jake had lost his job and was struggling to find a new job that he could get to consistently due to transportation barriers. Without a steady income, Jake had become homeless and found himself initially staying with a few family members before taking to the streets to find somewhere to sleep each night. He encountered an FOF specialist conducting street outreach who was able to do a housing assessment with him, opening the door for programming and resources. Within the week, Jake had been pulled on to a housing program in his community and was able to work with his team at FOF to start the search for housing.

Initially, Jake felt disheartened as his applications were turned down due to past evictions, not having steady income and other barriers, but a landlord who had helped other individuals working with FOF had a one bedroom that he agreed to rent to him, understanding that he had some financial assistance and a case plan to support him as he got back on his feet.

Jake worked diligently with his housing support specialist to build a plan for being able to maintain his housing on his own. He stuck to his case plan and goals, and sought resources and referrals to from his team. He gained full-time employment and within a few months was able to take over payment for the majority of his rent. Jake shared his gratitude with FOF staff, acknowledging that he was thankful that someone was willing to take a chance on him and that he has a real home again.

LANDLORD PARTNERSHIPS

As we strive towards our vision of everyone having a home, it is necessary to increase the number of permanent housing options in our communities. We are seeking landlords who are interested in partnering with Friends of the Family to provide affordable rental units for individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness in our service area.

This partnership provides rental property owners with a steady stream of revenue, ensures regular rental payments, and a consistent flow of tenants. Friends of the Family staff will facilitate the connection between the landlord and client, provide housing inspections, on-going case management, and provide general support to the client while they work towards self-sufficiency.

While in partnership with Friends of the Family and our clients, all aspects of the landlord-tenant law still apply.



**"It feels good to give back
to the community that's
given so much to me."
Landlord Partner**

For more information on how to become a landlord partner, contact Housing Navigator, Athena, at Athena@fofia.org or 319-576-2213.



Top Needs

- Pots & pans
- Silverware
- Towels & washcloths
- Twin XL sheets
- Hygiene products
- New bras, underwear and socks - all sizes
- Paper products - toilet paper, paper towels
- Cleaning products, laundry detergent
- Diapers - sizes 4 & 5, baby wipes, baby formula, baby food

Please connect with office manager, Monique, with donation questions or to schedule drop off at 319-576-2200 or Monique@fofia.org

GIRL SCOUTS GIVE BACK

One of the most common barriers for people who are experiencing homelessness or have left their home due to violence, is access to food. Locally, a couple young people decided to take this challenge head on.

Seventh graders Kaelyn Dixon, Madeline Sterken, and Troop Leader Kim Sterken, from the Clarksville Girl Scout Troop 20168, chose Friends of the Family as their benefactor of their Silver Award Project. They created a plan to provide food for our clients.

They first secured the funds necessary to purchase the food by writing grant proposals to area businesses. They received funds from both Casey's and POET, a local ethanol plant. They were able to stretch those dollars by getting over 500 pounds of food at a reduced cost through a local pantry, and then purchased the rest at a local store. They packed 16 bags with enough food for three meals a day for five days for a family of four. They even included a simple menu in each bag on what food to use each day to make simple, healthy meals. And with a few additional dollars, they also purchased and donated diapers and wipes.

THANK YOU Kaelyn, Madeline, and Kim!!
We appreciate your support!



DAY IN THE LIFE OF A CRISIS ADVOCATE



What led you to become a victim advocate?

A friend of mine had worked as a crisis advocate here at Friends of the Family. We were working together in Waterloo last year and she told me that I should apply because she had a feeling that I would be a good fit for FOF and I would really enjoy the position because of my past working with trafficking prevention.

What time does your day typically start?

I'm usually up by 6:30 so I have proper time to wake up before I start interacting with clients and answering phones at 8:00. I do this so I can be on top of everything I need to get done that day and so I can be providing the best support and assistance to clients without being groggy or grumpy.

How many survivors do you talk to on a daily basis? Are there constantly new survivors coming in?

I talk to anywhere from 5-15 clients per day, depending on how full the shelter is. If I were to include the survivors that I speak with just on the phone, then the number would be a bit higher.

I interact with new survivors every day. The shelter and crisis line are operating 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year and FOF is the designated emergency domestic violence/sexual assault/human trafficking shelter for Northeast Iowa. As such, we interact with most survivors seeking shelter in this region and in others.

What kinds of things do you help survivors with?

I assist survivors with assessment of sheltering needs and connect them with resources better suited to help them if coming to our shelter isn't the best option for their circumstances or situation. If coming to the shelter is the step that needs to be taken, then I start with finding them transportation to our shelter. When they are here, I help with daily necessities (i.e. hygiene products, clothes, shoes, etc.), obtaining identity documents, connecting them with food, employment, and childcare resources. I help them make difficult phone calls, schedule appointments, get their address changed with the post office, and anything else within my physical and legal capabilities. I also just enjoy having regular conversations with them about anything they want to talk about, be it hilarious or ordinary. Between clients inside the shelter, I assist with intrapersonal problem solving and conflict resolution. As well, I complete the building inspections and ensure all maintenance and accessibility needs are addressed so that clients can stay in a clean, functional, and comfortable environment.

What time do you get home? Does work follow you home?

I usually get home around 4:30/5PM and sometimes the work comes home with me, but only when I am on-call or worried about a client and trying to figure out the best way to help them with their unique circumstances. The longer I've been with FOF the more I've been able to develop mechanisms to keep work at work. One co-worker really put into perspective for me by saying "When we tire ourselves out and worry about our clients while not at work, we don't lighten their loads by a single ounce. Instead, we drain ourselves slowly and show up unable to help them to the best of our ability."

How do you unwind?

I thoroughly enjoy cooking, tending to my house plants, listening to different DJ sets/mixes, and spending time with my friends. They are my preferred means of unwinding and destressing after a hectic workday or work week. My friends care for me deeply and play a large part in keeping me grounded and centered--for which I am eternally grateful.

What's the hardest part of your job?

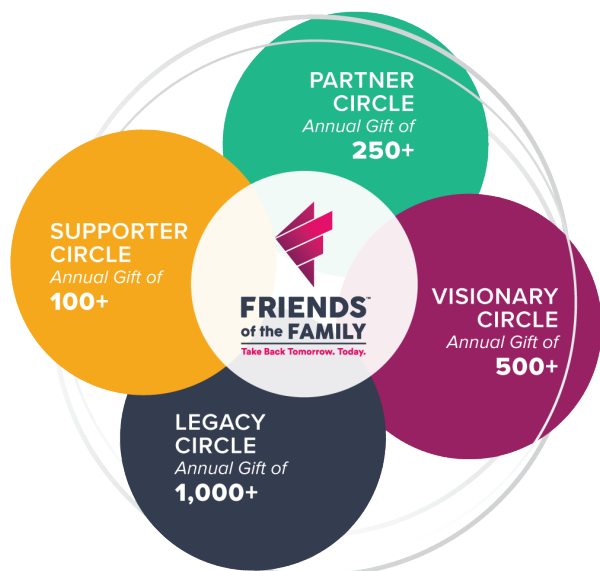
I would have to say it is not being able to know what happens after a client's time in shelter (or on the phone) with me is done. I so badly want to know what happens for them after they've left our services and I want to call and check-in on them and ask them how their children are doing and if they got that job they wanted to apply for, if they ended up being able to get a car, if they spent their first night in their own unit celebrating or sleeping, what they're most looking forward to in the coming weeks/months, and what they're still struggling with after leaving the shelter. This is personally the hardest part for me.

What's the best part of your job?

The best parts of my job are my coworkers and my clients. I have the privilege of working with every day. My clients are beautiful, funny, and resolute in all their endeavors. My coworkers are beyond exceptional in their roles within the agency and are so incredibly supportive to each other. These two factors reassure me that I am exactly where I need to be, doing exactly what I want to do.

Emily, Crisis Advocate





CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

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

LEGACY CIRCLE (\$1,000+)

Duroe Family Foundation/
Farmer's State Bank
Exchange Club of Waverly
Iowa
Farmers Win Coop (Mike &
Vicky Fonley)
Cedar Valley Auxiliary
Chad Moine
Edna Brunkhorst
Green State Foundation
Lincoln Savings Bank
St Timothy's United Methodist
Church
United Way of Dane County

VISIONARY CIRCLE (\$500+)

Bill Colwell Ford
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Constgance Dehaan
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Cynthia Campbell
Drew Kahler
Janean Skovgard
Jim Denholm
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Pam Riggs
St. John's Lutheran Church
Tony Pollastrini
United Way of Dane County
VGM Assoc LTD
Waverly Shell-Rock High
School

PARTNER CIRCLE (\$250+)

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America
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Deana Olson
Derek & Heidi Solheim
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Kris & Cheryl Einsweiler
Mary Schlicher
Michael Sands
Redeemer Lutheran Church
St John Lutheran Church

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Tad Hartz
Tamara Scharfenberg
Tim & Nancy Bathke



We are excited to be preparing for our **9th Annual A Night In...** fundraising event. Last year we were back in person and held a record breaking event with our Las Vegas theme! Tune in to our social media for the location announcement in August and ticket sale launch!

Sponsorship opportunities available now, please contact erin@fofia.org to reserve your table!

Friday, November 4, 2022, 6-9pm
Prairie Links Golf & Event Center
19 Eagle Ridge Drive Waverly

Learn more at fofia.org



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of the **FAMILY**

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