



**FRIENDS**  
of the **FAMILY**  
Everyone Has A Home

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## BEN'S LETTER

*A Note from Ben Brustkern, Executive Director*

Grants Pass! What does this mean to you? I can tell you it means a lot to us at Friends of the Family.

On June 28th the United States Supreme Court ruled in favor of Grants Pass, Oregon and opened the door for unhoused people sleeping on public property to be fined and jailed. The fear of cities and states across the U.S. following this trend is real and does not help keep HUMANS living outside safe or move in the direction of housing. Let me remind you that housing is the only solution for homelessness.

*So now what?*

We need your support to help humanize people living unsheltered. We need your support to help create more housing opportunities through donations and volunteering. We need your help to ensure that communities do not treat people living outside as if they don't belong. We need your voice to speak up if our communities choose a path of criminalization.

Being homeless is not a choice. Rent has skyrocketed across the nation and communities do not have enough housing available to meet the needs of the population. As the wealthiest country in the world, it is time for us to stand up and decide that we want to end homelessness and ensure that housing is a human right for all.

Grants Pass and criminalization is not the solution. Housing is the solution.

**Want to learn more** about Friends of the Family and our vision? Reach out to me at [ben@fofia.org](mailto:ben@fofia.org) or 319-576-2241.

## SUMMER NEWSLETTER



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## GOOD THINGS

Staff had a great day as a team at this year's Staff Skip Day! We spent the day at Backbone State Park, enjoying the beautiful weather and time together. Check us out in the picture above!

Caitlyn, Service Access Manager, shared that the new permanent supportive housing program, Always Home, has housed 9 out of the 11 spots available. This is exciting as this program only began in January of 2024.

Our team also shared that this year's winter Point In Time or PIT Census was the largest one we have ever had! We had 53 staff, volunteers and community partners that went out in 20 different counties to connect with people who may be experiencing homelessness. This is to ensure people are able to access the resources they may need and provide them with a few essentials such as hygiene items, food and water.

The Friends of the Family Admin Team have been working hard auditing files to ensure that funds are being allocated correctly and no errors have been made. This is hard work behind the scenes and makes a big difference at the organization!

## SUMMER HAPPENINGS

We've been busy here at Friends of the Family with all the summer activities. Here's a rundown of where we have been and where you can find us the rest of the summer!

**Unity in the Community:** This event is a fun opportunity we have each year to share about Friends of the Family with other service organizations in the community. We had a great time at this resource fair and love how it brings together our amazing community!

**Mason City LGBTQ+ Pride Festival:** Our Mason City staff joined other community organizations at Pride this year! Excited when we can be part of such a fantastic and inclusive event and organization.

**PIT Count:** July 31st, FOF, volunteers and other service organizations went out in many of the counties we serve to do an annual Point-In-Time or PIT Census. The purpose is to connect those who may be experiencing homelessness with the resources they need.

**National Night Out:** We are so excited to be a part of National Night Out again this year! Join us Tuesday, August 6th from 5pm-8pm at the Mason City Arena in Mason City. There will be free food, kids activities, giveaways and resource tables. Bring the whole family for this collaborative community event!

**Putt An End To Homelessness:** Make plans to join us for our 4th annual golf outing! Sign up your foursome and join us at Prairie Links Golf Course in Waverly. Friday, August 9th, 9am shotgun with lunch provided! QR Code on the back page.

**Cedar Valley Pride Fest:** Join FOF and many other community partners at CV Pride! We will have a resource table from 12pm to 6pm on Saturday, August 26th.

For all things events, visit [fofia.org/events](https://fofia.org/events)



### 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!**

- Emergency Food and Shelter National Board Program
- UW of Dubuque Area Tri-States
- Waterloo Housing Trust Fund
- Bremer County Board of Supervisors
- UW of North Central Iowa
- WSR United Way
- FEMA Cerro Gordo County
- Cedar Valley United Way
- Black Hawk County Board of Supervisors
- Toppin Family Fund
- Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation
- Women's Giving Circle

### TOP NEEDS:

- FITTED SHEETS (TWIN XL)
- SOCKS - ALL SIZES - NEW
- BATH TOWELS & WASH CLOTHS
- POTS AND PANS
- AIR MATTRESS - ANY SIZE - NEW

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)

## A YEAR OF VOLUNTEERS

During this last fiscal year, Friends of the Family had a goal of 7,700 volunteer hours. We are excited to share that we met that and then some! Our Volunteer Manager Madison, along with community organizations and businesses, were able to provide so many great opportunities for our volunteers.

This fiscal year ended with 7,831.67 hours given by 349 volunteers! That's 7,831.67 hours that our amazing volunteers, interns, and community gave to Friends of the Family. We are always blown away by the support we receive in all the areas we serve and we couldn't continue to do the work we do without it!

Next year we have an even bigger goal: 11,000 volunteer hours!! We plan to focus much of our volunteering in our programs and services area. This will provide a chance for volunteers to have opportunities for longer projects and hours. There will, of course, still be many different and unique opportunities that will be available for those wishing to volunteer for shorter projects as well.

You can check out our open opportunities on our website. Click the link below to see where you could give your time or reach out to Madison, our Volunteer Manager, at [madison@fofia.org](mailto:madison@fofia.org) or 319-576-2232.

**"I VOLUNTEER AT FOF  
BECAUSE I LOVE THEIR  
MISSION AND AM GLAD TO BE  
A SMALL PART OF IT."**

-Julie  
FOF Volunteer



# 7,831.67 Volunteer Hours



## Breakfast With Friends

Our very first Breakfast With Friends was a success! Friends of the Family partnered with Veterans from North Iowa Southern Minnesota Veteran Stand Down to cook up some free breakfast for the Mason City Community.

All were welcome and all came to join us for some eggs, ham and pancakes. It was a fun opportunity to connect with community members from the Mason City area, share some information about Friends of the Family and partake in amazing conversations.

Special thanks to First Congregational United Church of Christ in Mason City for letting us use their parking lot, chairs, tables and kitchen, Kraft and Smithfield for donating the yummy food and all the volunteers who helped make this a fantastic event!



We hope to do more events like this in the future so be on the look out for more opportunities to join us!

## WHERE WE'VE BEEN WHERE WE'LL BE



## Putt An End to Homelessness

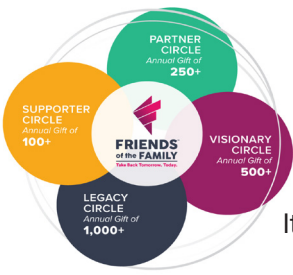
We are gearing up for our 4th Annual PUTT An End to Homelessness!

This year we are playing at Prairie Links Golf Course in Waverly with a 9am shotgun start. This is a 4-person best shot and there will be lots of prizes, pin events, games and more! Lunch is provided so bring your clubs and your appetites!

All funds raised from this event go towards our vision of Everyone Has A Home. To a future where no one is waiting for services and we can end homelessness through housing.



Cost is \$400 per team and you can still sign up! You can visit our website at [www.fofia.org](http://www.fofia.org), hop on Facebook or LinkedIn and check out our event pages or click the link in our bio on Instagram; all will get you where you need to be to sign your team up today. We'll see you on the course where we can all PUTT An End to Homeless!



## CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

**THANK YOU** for supporting Circle of Friends!

It is with your help that we are able to ensure that **EVERYONE HAS A HOME.**

Sometimes making a way is *tough*. Whether that's making your way through one day, a hard time or just life, it's tough. There are barriers to overcome, battles to be fought, and obstacles that seemingly come out of nowhere.

And sometimes making a way is *clear*. Like when you're late and all the lights turn green, when you expect a long wait time at a busy restaurant and you are sat right away, or when Friends of the Family makes a way for someone who feels like there isn't one.

Program participants and staff work through *tough together*, ensuring that everyone who needs services can find success. Your gift is essential to ensure more people like Jasmin have a safe, stable home.

*Together*, we can make a way for someone living on the street. Together, we can make a way for someone fleeing violence. *Together*, we can make a way for Friends of the Family to reach our 10-year vision of Everyone Has a Home.

Thank you for becoming a member of Circle of Friends.

***Together, we can make a way.***

### YOUR DOLLARS AT WORK FY 23/24

- **24 days from homeless to housed**
- **90.2% of participants went from homeless to permanently housed**
- **463 households were moved into housing**
- **5,119 housing and crisis line calls answered**
- **5,224 nights of safe shelter provided**
- **\$2,174,900 spent on client assistance**

### YOUR SUPPORT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

*"I became homeless around 2021. I had 3 babies at the time and I was pregnant. I was told about Friends of the Family and after contacting them, they got right on it. I entered into a program and they helped me to relocate so my kids could more easily get to school. It was all what I needed and what I wanted to do. To this day, it's 2024, I am successful today. I am able to work and provide for my kids.*

*Friends of the Family fought for me and*

***they made a way.*** - Jasmin\*

Housing Client

\*Name changed for confidentiality





REGISTER AT [HTTPS://BIT.LY/FOGOLFOUTING24](https://bit.ly/FOGOLFOUTING24)



FRIDAY, AUGUST 9, 2024  
PRAIRIE LINKS GOLF COURSE  
19 EAGLE RIDGE DRIVE, WAVERLY



# 4TH ANNUAL PUTT AN END TO HOMELESSNESS

**FRIENDS**  
of the **FAMILY**  
Everyone Has A Home



**FRIENDS**<sup>™</sup>  
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