



FRIENDS of the FAMILY

Take Back Tomorrow. Today.

SUMMER NEWSLETTER

BEN'S LETTER

A Note from Ben Brustkern, Executive Director

Over the past 25 years, Friends of the Family, has had the privilege to provide over 100,000 nights of shelter to thousands of men, women, and children. In the early 2000's, we provided space for up to 8 people to flee and today we can provide 21 beds of safety. We have seen the communities we serve change with time, but the commitment to help people has not.

Shelter has changed from being a long-term intervention meant for healing to a short-term intervention that is focused on housing solutions and resource connection. What we have learned over the years is that shelter is a process, but housing is a solution. Let me be clear that shelter still plays an important role in services, but without connecting people to a solution it only creates stress for those accessing services.

We believe that being a housing focused shelter is what makes us unique from other shelters. It is the conversations that start day one surrounding a guest housing plan to the way we track our average length of time someone stays in shelter. When people leave shelter into a permanent housing solution, we all win. I promise that we will continue to focus on decreasing time in shelter and increasing the number of people who can say they have found a home.

Want to learn more about Friends of the Family and our vision? Reach out to me at ben@fofia.org or 319-576-2241.



GOOD THINGS

Mo, Outreach and Diversion Specialist in Waterloo, shared that FOF was able to assist a couple with 7 children transition into shelter and are now receiving wrap around services to help them move to more suitable and permanent housing. (Read the full story on page 4)

Madison, Community Engagement Manager, shared that FOF Volunteer, Candice Warby, gave 13 hours of her time to create a beautiful mural in our shelter. (Pictured above) Candice creates amazing art through her business, Whimsical Twist, and we are so thankful she shared her time and talents with us. There are always unique opportunities to share your gifts with FOF. Reach out to Madison for volunteer opportunities at madison@fofia.org.

Amela, Case Operations Manager, shared that we found our latest transitional housing unit. Why this is great? Survivors can move in right away the day they get pulled into services - no need to look for a unit.

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!

Waterloo Farmers Market and Waverly Farmers Market: We love a good Farmers Market! FOF had a blast attending both these markets. We passed out info, some swag and kiddos got some beautiful face paint provided by the talented Make It Up! Facepainting. (See below!) We can't wait to see you next summer at all the markets!

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 great and inclusive event and organization.

PIT Count: July 26th, FOF went into the community to do an annual Point-In-Time or PIT Count to find homeless or housing insecure individuals and connect them with resources. Read more about PIT Count on page 3!

National Night Out: What an AMAZING night in Mason City! Thanks to the over 1,000 community members who came to enjoy the food and fun. We can't wait for next year!

Putt An End To Homelessness: Make plans to join us for our 3rd annual golf outing! Sign up your foursome and join us at Irv Warren Memorial Golf Course on August 18. Noon shotgun start with lunch provided!

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



TOP NEEDS:

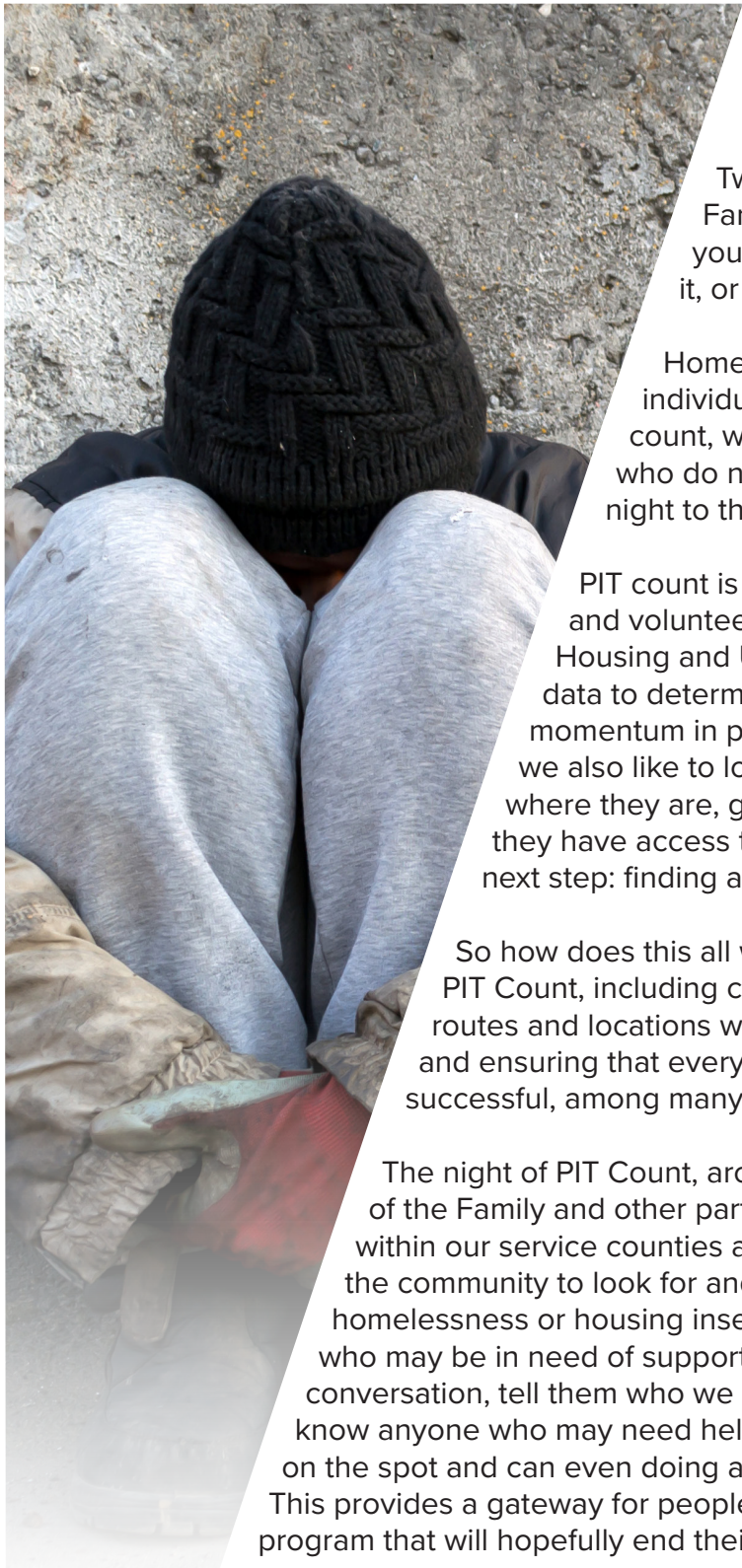
- FITTED SHEETS (TWIN XL)
- PILLOW CASES
- TOWELS & WASH CLOTHS
- BLANKETS

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

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!**

- Cedar Valley UW
- Waverly Shell-Rock UW
- Emergency Food and Shelter National Board Program
- Women United
- UW of Dubuque Area Tri-States
- Waterloo Housing Trust Fund
- Iowa Attorney General's Office Victim Assistance Section
- UW of North Central Iowa



PIT COUNT

POINT-IN-TIME

Twice a year, you may hear Friends of the Family talk about PIT or Point-in-Time Count. If you've ever wondered what this is, how we do it, or how you can get involved, read on.

Homelessness can look different to every individual experiencing it. When we conduct PIT count, we are finding and connecting with people who do not have a stable place to sleep from one night to the next.

PIT count is conducted by community organizations and volunteers and is required by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, or HUD. They use this data to determine, on a national level, if there is forward momentum in preventing and ending homelessness. But we also like to look at this as an opportunity to meet people where they are, get them connected to services, and ensure they have access to the support they need to move on to the next step: finding a safe and stable place to call home.

So how does this all work? A lot of preparation goes into PIT Count, including coordination of volunteers, mapping out routes and locations where staff and volunteers will be going and ensuring that everyone has the training they need to be successful, among many other things.

The night of PIT Count, around 45 staff and volunteers from Friends of the Family and other partnering organizations, are given an area within our service counties and from 6pm to midnight, go out into the community to look for and connect with individuals experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity. When approaching someone who may be in need of support, volunteers and staff simply start a conversation, tell them who we are, what we are doing, and see if they know anyone who may need help. We provide some snacks and supplies on the spot and can even do a housing assessment if they are interested. This provides a gateway for people to potentially find their way into a housing program that will hopefully end their homeless situation.

We couldn't do this without your support. Friends of the Family is always looking for volunteers to help with PIT Count in January and July. If you are interested in being a part of this, please contact our Community Engagement Manager, Madison, madison@fofia.org or visit fofia.org/volunteer-opportunities to learn more.

WORKING TOGETHER TO CHANGE LIVES

Mo, one of two Friends of the Family Outreach and Diversion Specialists, shared this story of success showing it takes us all, working together, to ensure safety and success for those we support.

A Housing Support Specialist at Friends of the Family (FOF) received a call from the Waterloo Human Rights office.

The caller was a social worker, Sasha*, seeking assistance regarding a case involving a couple with seven beautiful kids. They were living in an unsanitary home in desperate need of repairs. The landlord of their home was refusing to take any actions because he knew the family was unaware of their tenant rights.

Luckily they reached out to Sasha, who went right to work and diligently sought out resources for the family. This led to their case being brought to FOF.

Sasha was directed to an FOF Outreach Specialist. They were able to go down to the Human Rights office to meet with the family and assess their specific needs. After these needs were identified, FOF's shelter team was contacted.

From there, FOF Shelter staff was able to provide the family with a hotel stay. Once there was a space available, staff was able to transition this family to shelter.

Now, the family is receiving wrap around services to move them onto the next phase, more suitable housing and a place to call home. Also, with the help of the FOF shelter team, the father of the household, who worked an hour away from the shelter, was able to transfer his job closer. Since he does not have to make that commute every day, the family can save money on gas and build towards their future. His commute is now less than 10 minutes!

We are thankful to all the organizations who came together to ensure this family has a safe and stable place to sleep at night. That's some top notch advocacy!

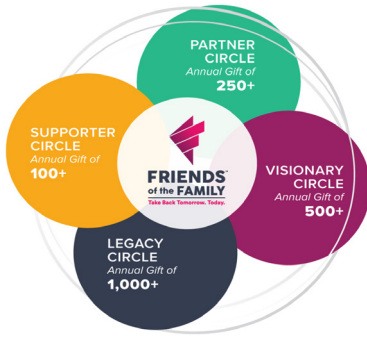
* Name has been changed for confidentiality



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.**



When you think of a big win, it is the small details and little wins that add up to create success. Success for people we serve is all about those little wins. But let's be honest, these wins are not happening if you don't have a home or safe place to sleep. Every day, your support helps move a family fleeing domestic violence closer to the goal of safe housing. It helps an individual who is living on the street finally get the home they have been dreaming of. It is reaching those little wins and goals with hard work and case management that leads them to self-sufficiency and that big win.

This work cannot be done alone. It takes the client working with the case manager, the community coming together, and you, the supporter of Friends of the Family, to make all this move forward. This results in people reaching goals that have felt so far away, reaching that big win; a safe place to call home. Last year, 81% of program participants went from homeless to permanently housed.

Be a part of someone's big win by providing valuable resources for people struggling with domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, or homelessness. We thank you for supporting Friends of the Family and becoming a member of our "Circle of Friends." It takes all of us to reach the 10-year vision of "Everyone Has a Home."

YOUR DOLLARS AT WORK

FY 22/23

- **20 days from homeless to housed**
- **81% of participants went from homeless to permanently housed.**
- **424 households were moved into housing**
- **6,082 crisis line calls answered**
- **5,111 nights of safe shelter provided**
- **\$1,973,150 spent on client assistance**

YOUR SUPPORT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

"This is an amazing team of people! When I reached out to them I was a homeless drug addict, who had DHS involvement and was in the process of losing my children. They took me in, they helped me find a place to live, and then continued to pay my rent until I could do so on my own. During the year that I worked with them, they helped me find myself, regain housing, recover my sobriety, and played a major role in getting my kids back. Without them, I would never have stood a chance on my own. Thank you to everyone that helped make this possible for me!"

- Ashley*

Housing Client

*Name changed for confidentiality





REGISTER AT [HTTPS://BIT.LY/FOFGOLFINFO](https://bit.ly/fofgolfinfo)
1000 FLETCHER AVE, WATERLOO
IRV WARREN MEMORIAL GOLF COURSE
FRIDAY, AUGUST 18, 2023



3RD ANNUAL PUTT AN END TO HOMELESSNESS

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Take Back Tomorrow. Today.



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