



FRIENDS[™]
of the FAMILY
Everyone Has A Home

BEN'S LETTER

A Note from Ben Brustkern, Executive Director

Happy New Year! I hope your 2025 is off to an awesome start.

For me the new year helps create excitement towards a fresh start and new perspectives on work and life. New Years resolutions are made and we kickoff the year ready to move forward. Eventually, January 17th rolls around and this day is called “Quitters Day”. This is the day that most people give up on their resolutions. Sound familiar? We have all probably experienced this at some point.

At Friends of the Family our goal of ending homelessness extends well past January 17th. As a ten year goal we have stayed true to this vision over the last 3+ years. As an agency we monitor the real time number of people experiencing homelessness in our community to understand the data. The data helps us make real time decisions on program design and structure so that we can best meet the needs of vulnerable families in our community. A recent study released by the state of Iowa shows that we are 90 million dollars short to reach an ideal system. In the area covered by Friends of the Family we would need approximately 7 million dollars to right size the homeless response system.

Regardless of the challenges ahead we will stay laser focused on making sure “Everyone Has A Home” and I appreciate each and every one of you that walk by our side.



GOOD THINGS

New Director of Development, Danielle, shared with us some wonderful news. Thanks to our generous donors and supporters, we not only reached but exceeded our fundraising goal for the quarter, raising \$77,667 to continue our mission and vision of Everyone Has A Home. Read more about the work being done in Development on page five!

Volunteer Manager, Madison, shared that in 2024, 322 volunteers collectively contributed an extraordinary 5,930 hours of their time in support of Friends of the Family. Through their involvement in event coordination, administrative assistance, internships, and various other capacities, these individuals have played an integral role in furthering our vision. If you would like to learn more about volunteering, reach out to madison@fofia.org to learn more!

If you didn't hear, Friends of the Family received recognition as a Top Work Place in Iowa. This is a recognition based solely off of employee feedback and we are looking forward to celebrating with our amazing staff later this year! Read more about it on our website, www.fofia.org.

THANKFUL FOR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

If you follow us on social media, you've likely seen our weekly #ThankfulThursday posts, where we spotlight community partners, donors, sponsors, and supporters who help Friends of the Family pursue our mission and vision of ensuring that Everyone Has a Home.

Today, we want to take a moment to thank everyone who contributes to ensuring those we serve have the support and resources they need to find a safe place to call home. Partners like Trinkets & Togs/ The Larabee Foundation, Comprehensive Systems, the River City Sunrise Rotary Club, and Hillcrest Living (pictured below) represent just a few of the hundreds of businesses and organizations that stand alongside us. Whether through monetary donations, in-kind contributions, volunteer efforts, or other forms of support, these incredible partners make our work possible.

To all of our community partners, thank you for making a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve!



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!**

- TruStage Foundation
- Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa
- Farm Bureau Federation
- Rock Valley Physical Therapy
- Thiesen's
- Guernsey Charitable Foundation
- Waterloo Community Foundation
- Veridian Credit Union
- Lil' Drug Store Products, Inc.

TOP NEEDS:

- PAPER TOWELS
- TOILET PAPER
- BATH TOWELS/WASH CLOTHS (NEW)
- CLEANING SUPPLIES (NEW)
- AIR MATTRESS (NEW)
- BLANKETS

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

A Night in Aspen

We spent a night on the slopes with this years location, Aspen!

With the support of sponsors, donors, auction items, volunteers and staff, A Night In Aspen brought in close to \$46,000! Those dollars ensure that Friends of the Family can continue to end homelessness by leading with the Housing First approach, driving systemic change through strong community partnerships, and providing individualized support that prioritizes client choice.

We are already thinking about next years location... where should we go?? Some place warm sounds good right about now... share your suggestions with us on social media or reach out anytime. We will see you again this fall!



WHERE WE'VE BEEN WHERE WE'LL BE



Chefs Take a Stand

Chefs is back and we're making it the best one yet! Thursday, April 3, 2025 from 6pm to 9pm, make plans to join us at the Hilton Garden Inn Cedar Falls for this amazing and tasty fundraiser that will get us even closer to our vision of everyone has a home.



Tickets are \$45 but get yours before February 14th and lock in an early bird price of \$35!! You'll get yummy samples of creations from 8 to 10 local chefs as well as delightful drinks from 4 - 6 Iowa beverage vendors! Then you'll vote on who wins Best Dish and Best Drink awards. This event also features a chance to bid on some amazing silent and live auction items, all to support ensuring everyone has a safe place to call home. Grab tickets at our website, www.fofia.org.



Sponsorship opportunities are also available. Reach out to our Director of Development at danielle@fofia.org for more info.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT: PSH

As we wrap up another successful grant cycle, we are thrilled to share some incredible achievements from our Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Program. Over the course of this cycle, we served 15 individuals.

The outcomes speak volumes about the program's impact:

67% of participants increased their income, providing a stronger foundation for their future.

100% of participants achieved successful exits, demonstrating the effectiveness of our support and their commitment to achieving self-sufficiency.

Our Supportive Housing Programs provide vital rental assistance and case management services to residents in nine counties in Iowa.

The program is designed to support individuals and families as they transition to stable, permanent housing. Participants benefit from comprehensive case management tailored to their unique needs and circumstances.

Through our focused approach, the PSH Program not only addresses immediate

housing needs but also fosters long-term stability and growth for participants. By combining rental assistance with targeted case management, we empower individuals to overcome challenges and achieve lasting self-reliance.

This was the case for Steph*, who has been working with Friends of the Family through the PSH program. For several years, she faced unemployment, struggled with her mental health, and encountered significant challenges—one of the most impactful being her dental health. Living without teeth left her feeling isolated, reluctant to leave her home, and further exacerbated her mental health struggles.

Over the past year, the PSH program helped Steph* access resources to obtain dentures, which transformed her confidence and outlook. With her renewed self-assurance, she secured and maintained employment. She also reconnected with her son after years of estrangement and has moved into a new, safe living space where she feels very happy.

We are grateful for the opportunity to serve our community and look forward to continuing this important work in the years to come. Thank you to all our supporters, partners, and staff who make this program a success.

*Name Changed for Confidentiality



NOTE FROM DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

The last quarter was one for the books! Thanks to your incredible generosity, we exceeded our donations goal, raising a remarkable \$77,667. A heartfelt thank-you goes out to the 143 returning donors who supported us again this year and the 72 brand-new donors who joined in our vision to ensure that Everyone Has a Home.

We've got even more in store! Be sure to follow us on social media for fun, engaging content, event updates, and inspiring stories about the impact of your support. You can find us at the social media handles pictured on the right!

We're always looking to strengthen our connection with the community. If you're aware of any speaking engagements, events, or other opportunities for us to share our mission, I'd love to hear from you! Please feel free to reach out to me at danielle@fofia.org.

Together, we can continue to make a lasting impact. Let's keep the momentum going! Every contribution makes a difference. Whether you're a long-time supporter or considering your first donation, we invite you to join us as we work toward ending homelessness and supporting those in need.

facebook

@FOTFamily

Instagram

@friendsofthefamilyia

LinkedIn

cedar-valley-friends-of-the-family

YouTube

@friendsofthefamily4244

TikTok

@friendsofthefamilyia



WE NEED YOU

SEEKING BOARD MEMBERS

We are seeking board members with lived experience with homelessness.

Reach out to Executive Director, Ben Brustkern, for more information.

ben@fofia.org

Seeking Board Members with Lived Experience of Homelessness

Friends of the Family is looking for passionate individuals with lived experience with homelessness to join our board of directors. Your unique perspective is vital in shaping programs that truly address the challenges faced by our community. By sharing your experiences, you can help guide our mission, advocate for meaningful change, and make a lasting impact. Join us in creating a path to stability and self-sufficiency for those in need.

If you're interested in making a difference, we'd love to hear from you! Please reach out to our Executive Director, Ben Brustkern, with questions and to learn more. You can also fill out the board member application form directly on our website by visiting <https://www.fofia.org/about-us>



Get your tickets now, scan the code.

Join us and taste delicious creations from top chefs
in the community and sip on samples from local
beverage providers - all to support our vision of
Everyone Has A Home

Thursday, April 3, from 6 to 9
Hilton Garden Inn - Cedar Falls.

Chefs Take A Stand

Join us for our annual



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

PO Box 784
Waverly, IA 50677

Presorted
Non-Profit
U.S. Postage Paid
Waverly, IA
Permit No. 78