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Quarterly Newsletter

January 2023

Message from the Executive Director:

It is astonishing how quickly change can occur. In the early days of 2020 we could not have known the changes which were coming, or how those changes would affect us all. However, the lessons learned from the past three years have served to strengthen Friends Aware as we strived to adapt to meet the new challenges.

Looking ahead, the future of Friends Aware is filled with possibilities as we work toward new goals. We will concentrate on expanding both Residential and Meaningful Day Services. Additionally, we will evaluate the need for new services. We will develop staff trainings and work towards improved staff retention. We will also apply for more grants and engage with more community groups. Finally, we will improve our communications with all persons interested in Friends Aware.

Throughout the challenges we've overcome, we have seen the amazing power of kindness, positivity, and resilience. The individuals who receive our services remain truly remarkable, the Friends Aware staff have a strength of character like none other, and the support Friends Aware receives from our Board of Directors and our community have been motivational and inspiring.

To each of you I simply say "Thank you".



Mark (Executive Director) with
Dave Logsdon (Individual)

New Staff from Last Quarter (Sep – Dec)

Bayleigh Dinicola
 Accounting Assistant
 David Goad
 CRRD
 Devin Johnson
 CLA
 Tara Moessner
 RN
 Yuliana Palma
 Substitute
 Kellie Abe
 RN
 Dawn West-McTaggart
 CLA
 Paul Broadwater
 CLA
 Sheriann McMillan
 CLA
 Antoinetta “Patty” Hawkins
 CLA
 Molly Fox
 CLA
 Tammy Thomas
 CLA
 Susan Atkinson
 Activities Coordinator
 Heather Robison
 CLA
 Leona McTaggart
 MDS Resource Manager
 Madilynn Rudd
 Substitute
 Kimberly Flanagan
 Residential Manager
 Kirk Beck
 CLA
 Cody Shirey
 Residential Maintenance
 Jordan McMillan
 CLA
 Karen Tobat
 Accountant II
 Chastity Taylor
 Residential Manager
 Maggie Smith
 CLA

Big Things!

We had some big staff changes during 2022. This included the promotion of Stephanie Parks to our MDS Director and the transition of Jane Eaton to QA Manager. Our CRRD position has also been filled by retired Sheriff David Goad. The MDS has added staff as well with the hiring of Leona McTaggart (MDS Resource Manager) and Susan Atkinson (Activities Coordinator.) Residential gained two Residential Managers with the addition of Chastity Taylor and Kimberly Flanagan.



Employee Spotlight: Bayleigh Dinicola

Position Title: Accounting Assistant II

Hire Date: 9/7/22

My name is Bayleigh DiNicola and I was raised in Corriganville, Maryland. I am the youngest of three kids and have six nieces and nephews. I graduated from Allegany High School in 2016. After high school, I pursued an education in Accounting, completing my Associates Degree in Accounting from Allegany College and my Bachelors Degree in Accounting from Pennsylvania State University. I am very happy to be working here at Friends Aware.

This Past Year

What You Missed!

Meaningful Day Services started back up just this past July with 46 individuals returning. The individuals are thrilled to be back and we are even more excited to have them back.

On January 3rd of the new year, we brought back several individuals with heightened needs.

We are looking forward to continuing to expand our services in the future!

This Past Year

As the COVID pandemic dwindles, Friends Aware has strived to bounce back and in 2022 we did just that. We held several events over the last year which staff and individuals enjoyed.

We had our annual picnic at the fairgrounds multi-purpose building, where our individuals danced and had a good time. Lisa Heslop and Chris Davis received the “Yes I Can” award.

We also celebrated Direct Support Professionals week in September, where we had food from Oscar’s for all Direct Support Staff to come and grab. We greatly appreciate all of the hard work by our staff.

In October we held our Baskets & Brews event at 1812 Brewery. It was a rainy day, but despite the weather the event was a huge success. We had a lot of baskets and prizes to raffle off to attendees and Lost Mountain BBQ, Mise En Place, and D’Atri’s brought food for everyone to enjoy.

At the end of October individuals got to dress up at our Halloween Dance. They had a blast and danced the night away. This event is a favorite of the staff and individuals.



Holiday Activities for the Individuals

Festival of Lights

Individuals helped make a gingerbread house for the Rocky Gap Festival of Lights

Grinch Day

December 14

Partnering with the YMCA the individuals were brought gifts and took pictures with the "Grinch"

Walmart Scavenger Hunt

December 16

Individuals grouped up in 2 teams and were challenged to be the first team to find 5 specified items.

Christmas Jingle

December 21

Individuals went bowling and ate pizza. When they got back to the Life Enrichment Center they exchanged gifts and were visited by a Snowman and Reindeer.

A Friends Aware Christmas



This holiday season Friends Aware celebrated with our individuals and ended the year with a bang!

The individuals had a blast participating in the holiday activities. This included bowling, mall outings, volunteering at the Salvation Army, and our annual Christmas Jingle!



Award Winners

Haley Fitzpatrick

Outstanding Leader of the Year

Mark Bittinger

Visionary Award

Melody Peterson

Direct Support Professional of the Year

Haley Williams

Substitute Employee of the Year

1812 Brewery

Community Partner of the Year

White Oak Lanes

Business Partner of the Year

John “Bing” Long

Karen Howell Helping Hand Award

2022 Recognition Dinner

We ended the year with our Annual Recognition Dinner. This event was held at the Ali Ghan Shrine Club with meal and desserts provided by It's Divine Catering. Additionally, gifts were given to all that attended. We had a great time socializing, eating and celebrating our staff, community partners, and individuals.



Haley Fitzpatrick
Outstanding Leader



Melody Peterson
*Direct Support
Professional of the Year*



Haley Williams
Substitute of the Year



John “Bing” Long
Karen Howell Helping Hand Award



White Oak Lanes
Business Partner of the Year



1601 Holland Street
Cumberland, MD 21502
Phone: 301-722-7268 • Fax: 301-724-8965
www.friendsaware.org



News Year's Resolutions!

Stephanie Parks: Drink more water and
spend more time with family

Cassie Nair: Keep losing weight and save
some money

Lisa Heslop: Go shopping more!

Annette Needham: Save up money to go to
the beach again

Shae Livengood: Lose some weight

Christopher McDonald: Cut back on fast
food



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You can also Donate to our Mission through our website at:

Friendsaware.org/donate

Or

Mail Check to

Friends Aware, Inc.

Attn: Finance Director

1601 Holland Street

Cumberland, MD 21502