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Mark Bittinger
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Quarterly Newsletter

January 2024

In 2024 Friends Aware is celebrating 70 years of supporting individuals in the community!!

Message from the Board President,

“This season we’re focused on staying warm, enjoying family/friends and creating our plans for the new year. Despite the challenge the past few years have been, we’ve become resilient and adaptive. That same premise has been true at Friends Aware. The past three years Friends Aware has moved forward with its services, culture, and goals. Every single staff member has contributed to that success. Without the dedicated staff, there wouldn’t be a Friends Aware. Thank you for all that you do to impact the lives of the individuals we support!”

The Board has welcomed six new directors; Kevin Smith, Jill Crawford, Tiffany Mock, Kim Fields, Mary Beth Dawson and Tracey Mayhew. We are delighted to have these new members and look forward to their involvement.

As we push ahead continuing the growth and resilience, the Board will follow suit. I am excited to continue with the Mission of Friends Aware along with the Board of Directors as we move forward, together!”

*Happy New Year,
Andrea Lowery
President, Board of Directors*



New Staff from Last Quarter (Oct - Dec)

Elizabeth Michael

CLA

James Crouse

CLA

Crystal Pendergast

CLA

Cheyenn Tippett

Substitute

Jennifer Ours

CLA

Logan Green

CLA

Kyla Rhoads

CDS

Jennifer Brown

Residential Manager

Stephanie Wilt

Behavior Support Manager

Angel Thomas

CLA

Toni Yowell

CLA

Eric Hoffman

CLA

Isaac Delaney

CLA

Connie Griffith

CLA

Carl Meagher

Substitute (MDS)

Trey Bennett

Accountant I



Employee Spotlight: Jennifer Brown

Position Title: Residential Manager

Jennifer has worked at Friends Aware for almost 10 years, starting in 2008 as a CLA and then moving to an AON position. In 2017 she left Friends Aware and gained additional leadership and management experience before returning this past October.

Outside of FAI, Jennifer is a drummer for the band Jaded as well as a recording artist for other projects. In college, she studied computer science and graphic design. Utilizing her education, she continues to enjoy advertising and logo design. Jen recently established Café 832, where she plans to use the skills she acquired from various restaurants she worked at prior to FAI. Jennifer now lives in Frostburg with her wife Elizabeth and their adorable puppy Lakai.

“I am excited to return to such a fantastic workplace with a meaningful vision of empowering others.”

Award Winners

Cody Sindy

Outstanding Leader

Joshua Spade

Direct Support Professional of the Year

Alyson Mellon

Substitute Employee of the Year

Wamba Caravan 89

Community Partner of the Year

Cassie Nair

Karen Howell Helping Hand Award

Years of Service

5 Years

Carla Lambert

Dena Davidson

Hannah Merlavage

John Kelly

Larissa Patton

Tiffany Shook

Valerie Trent

10 Years

Alexa Moses

Ginny Georg

Karen Pryor

Kathy Logsdon

Rebecca Adams

15 Years

Shane Leatherman

20 Years

Rita Crites

Retirees

Jeff Sneathen

Linda Anderson

2023 Recognition Dinner

On December 6th Friends Aware held our annual Recognition Dinner at the Cumberland Outdoor Club. Friends Aware celebrated our staff and community by recognizing their hard work and dedication. We enjoyed a fantastic dinner before holding an award ceremony. The ceremony recognized Retirees, Years of Service, Staff Awards, a Helping Hand Award and a Community Award.



Thank you to everyone who attended!

We appreciate everyone involved from our staff, individuals, and everyone else who supports us in the community!

This Season!

Autumn Art Show and Bake Sale

October 20th

A viewing of art made by individuals attending our Day Program and the sale of homemade baked goods.

Halloween Dance

October 23rd

Everyone dressed up and danced with their friends.

Halloween Costume Parade

October 31st

A parade took place where the individuals in the Day Program showed off their Halloween costumes.

Thankful Book Marks & Tree Project

November 8th & 10th

In preparation for Thanksgiving the individuals created "Thankful" book marks and trees.

Ugly Sweater Contest

December 14th

Friends Aware held an Ugly Sweater Contest where everyone wore ugly, flashy, and crazy sweaters!

Christmas Party!

December 22nd

The Grinch and Santa came to celebrate with us at the home of Wamba Caravan 89 in LaVale.

Smiling People

This last quarter has been jam-packed with events and fun activities here at Friends Aware. The individuals celebrated the holiday season in the community. They showed off their talent and creativity from their artwork in the art show, their baked goods, and all of those ugly sweaters.

We are so excited for the new year and all of the things that are in store for FAI and the Individuals!



Employee Anniversaries
October - December

1 Year

Maggie Smith

Karen Tobat

Tanya Rosenberger

Madilyn Rudd

Susan Atkinson

Molly Fox

Paul Broadwater

Sheriann McMillan

Dawn McTaggart

Kellie Abe

2 Years

Bailey Lehman

Taylor Pollock

Cody Sindy

April Budrecki

Kaila Smith

Carleanna Antunes

3 years

Henriette Soro

Melody Peterson

Jennifer Chisholm

6 years

Taylor Rounds

Ryan Cuba

Jessica Bender

7 years

Rachel McMillan

Karen Oster

Kimberly Walters

9 years

Joseph Darr

Kimberly Farrall

10 years

Ginny Georg

12 years

Tracie Suder

13 years

Joleen Martin

23 years

Elizabeth Powell

39 years

Alan McDonald

41 years

Sue Buehler

Staff Quarterly

Giveaway Winners:

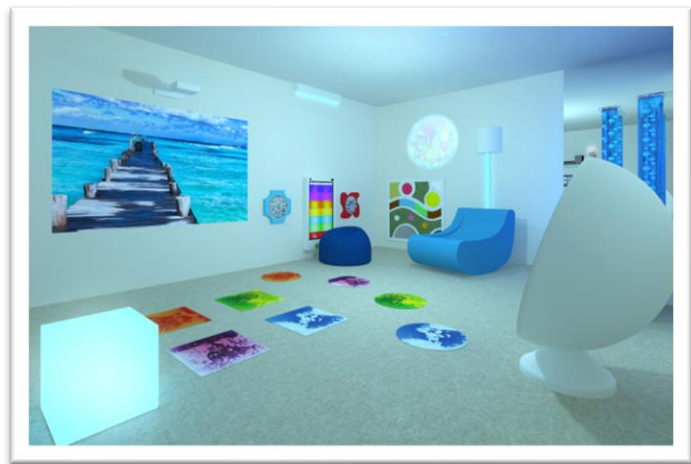
*Carolyn Epps, Shelbi Taylor,
and Molly Fox*

Congratulations!

Organization and Staff News

Going into the New Year Friends Aware is on a sky-high trajectory. This past October we expanded our Behavior Support Services with the hiring of Program Manager Stephanie Wilt. With the addition, Friends Aware will enhance our Behavioral Support Services offered to individuals in our service. That's only the start though!

This Spring we are adding a Snoezelen[®] sensory room to our Life Enrichment Center. This will provide individuals in service a place to enjoy a therapeutic environment throughout the day.



We are adding a new house to our Residential Program. This house will become the HOME of 3 individuals who receive our residential services.



2024 will be a whole new adventure for Friends Aware!



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A huge thanks to the Fort Hill Tailgating Gang for sponsoring us!



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Attn: Finance Director

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