

MILESTONES

1st Edition
2026

Giving Hearts Day is
February 12th



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CHI Friendship[™]

A member of CommonSpirit

Greetings

FROM THE PRESIDENT

As I reflect on this past year, my heart overflows with gratitude. 2025 has been a wonderful year at Friendship. Together we are fulfilling our mission to empower people to make their own decisions, strengthen connections, and transform our communities.

Looking Back on Our Roots

Friendship's historical roots trace back to 1964, when Pastor Edward Tornow moved with his family to the Fargo community. Pastor Tornow immediately looked for an activity center that Eddie could attend but he found none, so Pastor Tornow made it his mission to see quality services offered to people with disabilities in Fargo.

After years of collaborating with the Cass County ARC, Pastor Tornow learned that the Presentation Sisters had some empty rooms at the Sacred Heart Convent. Pastor Tornow asked if a new program could temporarily operate out of the Sacred Heart Convent, and in the late summer of 1974, Friendship Village was born. Pastor Tornow chose the name Friendship Village because "it was meant to be a place of love and understanding, reaching out in the Savior's name to people whose needs were great and so often misunderstood."

Friendship remained at Sacred Heart Convent until July of 1981, when 15 residents and eight staff moved to the Villa Nazareth location. As a sign of the times in the late 70s and early 80s – the Sisters offered the site to Friendship Village. With this offer, the Sisters became formal sponsors of the ministry of Friendship Village, and its legal name became Villa Nazareth doing business as Friendship Village.

Friendship expanded to several homes in Fargo and later Friendship expanded to Grafton/Park River. Friendship has grown and developed both residential and vocational programs to assist people with developmental disabilities. In 1987, the name was changed to Friendship, Inc. to better reflect the mission of the company.

2025 Year in Review

As I look back on 2025, we had another wonderful year across the organization. We held our first Technology/Adaptive Equipment Fair. People achieved lifelong dreams, went on vacations, and participated in countless community events. Benisha achieved her dream of winning the ND Miss Amazing pageant, Aaron took a trip of a lifetime to Florida, and Greg achieved his dream of seeing a Beatles tribute band, to name just a few.

We traveled to see the Twins play (twice) and attended local RedHawks games. We hosted a formal dance, a movie in the park, bowling parties, and family and friends picnics in both Grafton and Fargo. We participated in 520+ community/volunteer activities across the organization and the Fireants team had an outstanding season. To support these initiatives, Friendship took part in Giving Hearts Day for the eighth consecutive year.

Throughout the year, Friendship celebrated an abundance of accolades and awards. Friendship received the Human Rights Award from the City of Fargo, I presented President's awards to Sierra, Heidi, Alicia, and Val, and Stacey Herman awards to Christine and Ryan. All Season Laundry celebrated 20 years in business and Friendship celebrated our first employee to reach 40 years of service thanks to Renae and her dedicated faithful service to the organization. Maribel received the NDACP DSP of the Year award and Sue was selected as the Lifetime Achievement Award winner from the Arc of Cass County for her 37 years as an exemplary DSP.

Looking Ahead

Living out our mission and values is a continuous journey for everyone involved with Friendship. As we celebrate our 53 years of faithful service, we boldly continue to raise the bar on quality for all people who are supported by Friendship. Together we will identify ways to positively impact our ability to provide services of the highest quality. The presence of outcomes for the people we support will remain our focus.

While we know that 2026 will bring challenges, Friendship will continue to seek modern ways of service delivery, advocate for the needs of everyone, and recognize that every person who Friendship supports deserves access to opportunity, dignity, and care. We will continue the good work that began so many years ago. Thank you for believing in Friendship's mission and for journeying with us - one person, one family, one dream at a time.

Dori Leslie

President



Giving Hearts Day 2026



Scan here
to donate
today!



Mark your calendars! Giving Hearts Day 2026 is happening on Thursday, February 12th! We are thrilled to launch our campaign and invite our incredible staff, dedicated parents and guardians, and supportive community members to join us for another heartfelt year of Giving Hearts Day.

We can't thank our donors enough because every year we are shown so much love and generosity. On Giving Hearts Day 2025, because of you, Friendship received an amazing 388 online and check donations, with gifts ranging from \$5 all the way up to \$14,000. We were especially honored to receive a record 23 Executive Sponsors, who are donors who give \$1,000 or more! Your generosity truly makes a direct, life-changing impact on the people we support at Friendship.

Where Does Your Donation Go?

Every dollar raised helps nurture abilities and achieve dreams. Your contributions cover the cost of essential and life-enriching items. This includes necessities like emergency food, clothing, hygiene items, rent, and medical bills. Donations also cover home and health needs such as mattresses, home appliances, health equipment, and fitness center passes. Your support also funds community life, including transportation costs, zoo and State Park passes, sporting events, and supporting our amazing annual Friendship Formal event! Last year's donations even helped sponsor multiple trips for dozens of people supported to go to Target Field to cheer on the Minnesota Twins! These are not just items or events. They are opportunities for joy, stability, and community participation.

Will You Join Us for 2026?

We are excited by the possibilities for Giving Hearts Day 2026 and invite you to be a part of this exciting day! Whether you are a first-time donor or a long-time supporter, your contribution, no matter the size, makes all the difference.

You are also invited to join us at our events on February 12, 2026! We'll have a Chili Feed in Fargo at 801 Page Drive from 11:00am-1:00pm and a Burrito Meal at Grafton Lutheran Church in Grafton from 11:00am-1:00pm.

Businesses and individuals interested in becoming an Executive Sponsor level donor of \$1,000 or more are encouraged to contact Dori Leslie to discuss this impactful opportunity.

Thank you for your dedication to Friendship and for sharing your heart this Giving Hearts Day!

How To Donate

ONLINE

Visit the website givingheartsday.org starting on January 12, 2026 or donate on Giving Hearts Day. Click the "Donate" button, search for CHI Friendship, and follow the online instructions to make a contribution.

IN PERSON OR BY MAIL

All written checks that are received prior to Giving Hearts Day and dated February 12, 2026 will be accepted toward our Giving Hearts Day goal. You can drop off a check at our administrative office in Fargo or Grafton. You can also mail a check that arrives before February 12, 2026, and is dated February 12, 2026.

Fargo office – 801 Page Drive Fargo, ND 58103

Grafton office – 554 West 12 St. Grafton, ND 58237

PHONE

You can call our administrative office at (701) 235-8217 for assistance with your donation.

DSP WEEK 2025

A Week of Celebration and Success: Recapping DSP Week 2025!



What a wonderful week it was to celebrate Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) across the organization. From September 7-13, 2025, Friendship dedicated the week to recognizing DSPs, who are the heart and soul of the organization and the foundation of Friendship's daily mission.

Many special activities were organized throughout the week to show appreciation. These included officially designating the week as a "No Meetings Week" and holding a series of door prize drawings every day. Senior Management Team also made special deliveries of freshly baked treats to deliver to departments throughout the week, while all leaders visited various locations to personally thank staff. This display of gratitude was also present on social media channels, with special recognition posts highlighting the hard work of Friendship's DSPs.

A very meaningful part of the week was hearing the impact DSPs have from the people they support and their families. The words of thanks truly highlight the commitment, compassion, and joy the DSPs bring every day. For example, one person supported said, "I can tell her anything! She brings joy to my day and makes me smile." Another shared, "She has the best jokes and is always there for me." Families also offered heartfelt appreciation, with one noting, "We are so blessed to have such caring and wonderful staff looking after our daughter," and another adding, "They make our daughter's life better in so many ways." One guardian beautifully summarized the DSP spirit by writing, "The DSPs are engaging, relational, calm, and gentle. They look at the people they serve with possibility."

The DSPs' work, often involving administering medications, assisting with personal hygiene, and helping people find meaningful employment, is the backbone of the industry. They are the vital link that bridges a person with a disability to community integration, increased independence, building relationships, and so much more.

Friendship thanks the DSPs again for their compassionate commitment to our mission. When you see a DSP, please join us by saying "Thank you for all you do!"



On the Minds of People We Support



We asked the people we support their thoughts and they answered!

What makes you feel loved?

“Hugs.” – Alex B.

“Family and friends.” – Evan G.

“My sister.” – Barb D.

**“Going fishing.”
– Jeff K.**

**“When someone does something
for me.” – Jay S.**

**“When I know people care
about me and show it.”
– Amanda H.**

**“Family and
friends.” – Darrell J.**

Hugs. – Sue L.

**“Parents, friends,
trustworthy
people.” – Kurt H.**

Julie's Journal



By Julie Gustafson



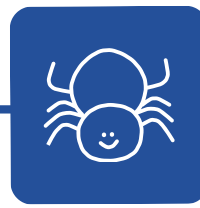
Anna found an NFL wreath with my favorite team colors which are Seahawks green with blue and my other favorite team colors in football are purple and gold for the Vikings. Maybe the Seattle Seahawks will make the playoffs in football this year.

I have a nice new friend who has a cool cat named Sugar who has been hiding under my bed.

My favorite staff likes UNO, but I will play UNO with my brother when he comes here to visit.

I still love Daphne, my sister's doodle, and on Sundays I have fun with her.

FRIENDSHIP HAPPENINGS



Trunk or Treat

Friendship's second annual Trunk-or-Treat event, held on October 10th in Grafton, was a big hit. The parking lot was filled with local community members, people supported, and staff, all eager to participate. Approximately 250 people attended the event with over 25 decorated trunks. Attendees came dressed as ghosts, goblins, monsters, and more as they made their way through the lot. It was a beautiful afternoon for everyone to enjoy trick-or-treating and a variety of games. We look forward to hosting the event again next year. If you are interested in being added to the list to host a trunk for the 2026 event, please call us at 701-352-0060.



Oktoberfest

Friendship's Oktoberfest raffle continues to be a huge success year after year. Employees set out with a goal to sell 16,000 tickets to enrich the holidays for the people that matter the most. With overwhelming support from friends, family, and surrounding communities, we quickly sold each and every ticket. The raffle was held on October 10th and participants had the opportunity to win up to 20 VISA gift cards valued from \$50 to \$500.

Thank you to all employees, parents/guardians, and friends of Friendship for buying or selling tickets and helping us make this holiday season special for so many.



Awards

Sue Lehman, a DSP at Friendship, was selected as the recipient of The Arc of Cass County's 2025 Lifetime Achievement Award.



We are incredibly proud of Sue and grateful for her 37 years of dedicated service to the people we support at Friendship!

Maribel Gonzalez was selected as NDACP's 2025 DSP of the Year! We are so proud of Maribel's hard work and dedication to the people she supports.



40 Years of Service

Two Friendship employees recently celebrated a major milestone. Renae Howe and Dave Odegaard have officially reached 40 years of employment at Friendship. Congratulations to Renae and Dave for 40 years (and counting!) of dedicated service!



2nd annual

Baked Potato

FUNRAISER

Friendship hosted its second annual Baked Potato Fundraiser on November 18, 2025.

On November 18, 2025, Friendship hosted its second annual Baked Potato Fundraiser, successfully supporting the recycling program in Grafton. This program plays a vital role in serving Grafton and its neighboring communities by reducing landfill waste and promoting the recycling of reusable materials.

Viola Reckard, spokesperson for the fundraiser, was busy welcoming hungry guests and guiding them to their favorite style of potato. The options included the Plain Jane (bacon, cheese, sour cream, butter, and green onions), the Tex Mex (chicken taco meat, cheese, sour cream butter, and salsa), and the Chili (Chili, cheese, sour cream, butter, and green onions), all served on a giant baked potato of course!

The event was held at Heritage Village in Grafton. Potatoes were offered inside, but most were delivered throughout the community. The Baked Potato Fundraiser successfully served hundreds of guests, one spud at a time.

Thank you to the Associated Potato Growers, Inc. (Grafton, Drayton, and Grand Forks) for donating the delicious potatoes. And a special thank you to the community members and local businesses throughout the area. The Friendship recycling center is a staple in the community and appreciates all of the support!





February 12, 2026
Giving Hearts Day

June 19, 2026
Friendship Formal

July 16, 2026
Grafton Family Picnic

July 30, 2026
 Fargo Family Picnic

Friendship Newsletter Committee:

Amy Hieb, Dori Leslie, Garret Miller, Gina Hogue, Grant Fogel,
Julie Gustafson, Katelyn Miller, and Tricia Larson



Our Vision

A healthier future for all – inspired by faith, driven by innovation, and powered by our humanity.

Our Mission

As CommonSpirit Health, we make the healing presence of God known in our world by improving the health of the people we serve, especially those who are vulnerable, while we advance social justice for all.

Our Values

Compassion
Excellence
Inclusion
Collaboration
Integrity

Friendship Board of Directors

Kathy Hogan, Brian Arett, Jim Dusek, AnnaLisa Nash, Jim Nyhof, Denise Kolpack, Adele Page, Jeff Pederson, Mary Schneider, Jay Sorum, David Jones, Sr. Mary Margaret Mooney, Ron Guggisberg, and Brenton Nesemeier

Make a Difference

Friendship is looking for applicants committed to delivering quality direct supports. Openings for Direct Support Professionals include full-time, part-time, and PRN positions. These positions provide direct supports to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to enhance their lives. No experience is necessary and training is provided.

Get Involved

Do you have an idea of how Friendship could help out our communities? Would you like to volunteer with Friendship? To share your ideas and for more information on volunteering, please contact us by visiting chifriendship.com.

Donate

Friendship accepts in-kind donations to meet a wide range of needs, especially active support needs. Donations of new items such as puzzles, exercise equipment, garden seeds/supplies, gift cards, cooking/food items, and arts and craft items are always appreciated.

Friendship also accepts donations online by visiting <https://app.givingheartsday.org/#/charity/759>



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