

Ottawa Friendship House Serving Adults With Disabilities

Ottawa Naplate Marseilles Seneca Grand Ridge

SPRING 2009

Number 183

MAKING DREAMS FOR THE FUTURE A REALITY

By Emily Bickel



Amanda chose to participate in the Friendship House Workshop program to help her achieve her goal of a more independent life.

For more than 40 years, the staff at Ottawa Friendship House has helped adults with disabilities achieve their goals, hopes and dreams. Amanda came to Friendship House in the fall of 2008, just a few months after her high school graduation. It was at that time that Amanda also moved from her family home to a group home with her peers. It was a big change for her, and she has adapted to it very well. The transition from school to the adult workplace is tough for most people. Amanda has handled it better than many people might. She is truly an extraordinary young lady.

Amanda is just one of the amazing people that are currently achieving success at Friendship House. Born with Cerebral Palsy and intellectual challenges, Amanda is a focused young woman who really knows what she wants in life. Some of her goals include finding her own place to live and obtaining her driver's license. Amanda likes to shop and going out to eat. She loves country music, singing and karaoke. Her favorite country artist is Kenny Chesney and she hopes to meet him some day. She also wants to be able to

go shopping by herself, even if there isn't someone available to take her.

Realizing that in order to achieve many of her goals, she would need a job, Amanda enrolled in the training program at Friendship House sheltered workshop. She began training on our calendar line, assembling large desk calendars. Amanda came to every scheduled training day and even asked for more! Even when she got frustrated, she didn't give up, but worked diligently until her calendars were perfected. Making calendars is not as easy as one might think. There are many steps in the process. Calendar making is a craft, and not everyone can do it. Friendship House assembles desk calendars for Sigma Marketing Concepts and Sigma Graphics. Some of the calendars assembled include State Farm, XPEDX and Enterprise Rent-a-Car, just to name a few. Our finished calendars are shipped throughout the United States and Canada.

At Friendship House, there are other types of jobs that are done. Many of our customers work on the belt line, assembling automotive and industrial belts that come to us from MBL. Some of the contracts include Honda, Subaru, Toyota, and Ace Hardware. There are many different belts that get packaged, labeled, folded and secured into their packaging, to be sold in stores.

Training in the workshop prepares the consumers for employment outside of Friendship House. Skills are identified and matched up to a job that best suits the individual. Some work on the calendar line, some on the belt line. We even have some who have cross-trained and can work on either line. The Ottawa Friendship House workshop is a very real workplace environment. Each workday, thousands of belts and calendars are produced. This provides our consumers with the satisfaction of a paycheck, and the capability of taking care of their financial obligations, as well as the pride that comes with a job well done!

Making dreams for the future become a reality is what we are all about.....

.....and this is just the beginning of Amanda's future !

RESIDENTIAL OUTING

By Melissa Hulse



All the residents were invited to a fun filled night of bowling on Friday, March 27. We were treated to Super Bowl bowling and pizza at the Peru Pizza House. Everyone had a wonderful time. This event was provided by a generous donation to our Residential Fund. The next outing will be a Joliet Jack Hammers Game this summer.

INTERNET SAFETY

As with all of us, phone texting and e-mailing have become part of many of the consumers' daily lives. Although these can be a fantastic way to communicate and stay in touch in our rural community, the reality is that there are some serious safety issues to consider.

With this in mind, the clients attended training last April 14 on Internet Safety. Natalie Alexander, a prevention specialist from the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services provided training to over 40 Friendship House consumers. Natalie discussed these ten rules to keep in mind when using the internet.



1. I will not give out personal information such as my address, telephone number, or the name or location of my work.
2. I will tell someone right away if any information makes me feel uncomfortable
3. I will never agree to get together with someone I meet online.
4. I will never send a person my picture.
5. I will not respond to any messages that are mean or make me feel uncomfortable, and will tell someone right away.

6. I will talk to my family or case manager so we can set up rules for going on line.
7. I will not give our passwords to anyone (even my best friends) other than my family member.
8. I will check with my family member before downloading or installing software, or doing anything that could possibly hurt the computer, or endanger my privacy.
9. I will be a good online citizen, and not do anything that hurts other people, or is against the law.
10. I will help my family members understand how to have fun and learn things online, and teach them things about the internet, computers, and other technology.

FRIENDSHIP HOUSE WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBER

It is with great pleasure that we introduce Kathy Geiger as a newly elected Board Member. Kathy brings a wealth of knowledge and compassion to her new position. She is an emergency room nurse at Ottawa Regional Hospital, and an active community member. Kathy and her husband Tim are from Ottawa, and have two children, Amanda and Garet. Amanda attends the Developmental Training program at Friendship House, having made a smooth transition from Ottawa High School.

Her experience as a medical professional and as a parent of a daughter with disabilities will help her provide valuable input into programs that can best support the needs of men and women with developmental disabilities. Kathy will be serving on the Residential Planning Committee.

Ottawa Friendship House is governed by a volunteer board of 11 persons with diverse professional and personal backgrounds. They meet at 5:30 on the second Wednesday of each month. The Board takes a proactive role in ensuring that the organization is managed effectively, efficiently, and ethically. Their dedication has resulted in the long-term success and stability of this organization.

AMERICAN IDOL

By Carolyn Mills

The many contestants from American Idol, or from its sister program, Britain has Talent, have nothing on the talent at Friendship House.

On March 24, the Friendship Spring Idol event was held, featuring singers, dancers, and even a group presentation by the Ottawa Friendship House Choir ! It was standing room only for the hour long performance.

Our award winning judges included Curt Williams, former Spanish teacher at OHS, and organist for the First Baptist Church in Ottawa, Bev Fisher,

organist and volunteer, and Chapin Zeal, musician and song writer. All are from Ottawa, and generously volunteer their time to Friendship House for this event.

All were winners, of course, but the top vote getter was Heather Evans. Special recognition was given to the "Lady Bugs, a group of staff and consumers from the Developmental Training Program.

Watch for announcements for the date and time for our fall foray, which is already in the planning stages.



The *Ladybugs* entertained the crowd at the Friendship House Idol event

ANNUAL BANQUET HONORS ALL AT FRIENDSHIP HOUSE



"I never thought I would make it so far" said Chad Hopper, a Friendship House alumnus. Chad delivered the evening address at the Annual Banquet, held on April 17th at Pitstick Pavilion.

Chad, who came to Friendship House after graduating from high school, indeed has come a long way! He gave recognition to the Workshop and

Residential programs at Friendship for helping him realize his goals of self-sufficiency and independence. Chad was able to improve his employment skills through his involvement with the Community Employment program. He was hired by the First National Bank of Ottawa, and hasn't looked back! Chad has been at First National for 10 years, and now lives in his own apartment.

Chad's moving and inspirational address set the tone for the evening, as the many accomplishments of everyone at Friendship House were commemorated. Pins were presented to all consumers; and all staff, board members, and volunteers were recognized.

Those present were also entertained by musical selections from the Ottawa Friendship Choir. They performed their rendition of *To Dream the Impossible Dream*, and *Take Me Out to The Ball Game*. The performance featured duets sung by Tonya Williams, Cory Newell, Desi Seyller, and Jennifer Jerse.

The Pleasant evening concluded with music and dancing presented by DJ Jane Schomas.

DONATIONS AND MEMORIALS

CHRISTMAS DONATIONS

Kent Terry
Laborers International Union of NA
Herbert and Beth Carlson
Joe and Janet Martin
VFW Post 2470

DONATIONS

Roy Pollack
Frances House
Carol Ann Maloney
Mark Conness Trust
Homestead Antiques /
John and Wendy Carlson
Sigma Marketing
D'Antonio Hair Design for Men
Donna O'Connor
Kathleen Stefenel
Jack Leininger

MEMORIALS

Henry Paulson
Rachael Gerding
Rosy Paulson

Catherine Sangston Abbey
Bernice Hilton

Sister Marcella Maggio
Rudy and Alice D'Souza

MEMORIALS (continued from page 3)

Frances Koenig
Rudy and Alice D'Souza
Jan and John Guyette
Beth and Rick Mangold
Frank and Kris Borkowsky
Violet Olsen
Jason Padilla
Janeen and William Goodin
Judy Meling
Donna Tased
Central School
Joseph Ferrero
Fred and Judy Pufahl
Dr. William Vesely
Francis Koenig Irrevocable Trust
Anonymous

Dina Whitney
Bonnie and Larry McGrogan
Rudy and Alice D'Souza
John and Kay Jevitz
Frank and Kris Borkowsky

Tom Underhill
William and Ella Weber

Jeane Houlihan
Rudy and Alice D'Souza
Beth and Rick Mangold
Bonnie and Larry McGrogan
Frank and Kris Borkowsky

Debbie Hertzner
Betty Brimhall
Beth and Rick Mangold

Rita Roe
Rudy and Alice D'Souza

Betty Morrall
Beth and Rick Mangold

Dean Pfalzgraf Sr.
Beth and Rick Mangold
Linda Kinsella
Rudy and Alice D.Souza

Ottawa Friendship House is a non-profit organization
(501-c-3) Donations are tax deductible

ANNUAL DINNER By William Herman consumer

April 18, 2009: I 'm happy that over 180 people showed up in the dinner at Pitstick's Pavilion. The theme was Spring Fest. The chicken, roast beef and beans were good. Ottawa Friendship House Choir sang well too. I thought it was a wonderful dinner. I thought it was quite a ceremonial night to cherish and I remembered it. I hope everyone enjoyed it.

AN EVENING AT JJ's



Andre and Jeremy Johnson share a Pepsi toast

On March 6, 2009, Jeremy Johnson and the staff at JJ's hosted an outstanding fund raising event for Friendship House. Over 230 attended the after hours event, which included beverages and appetizers, raffles, 50/50 and a live auction. The Illinois Licensed Beverage Association promoted and sold additional tickets for this event.

Over 80 businesses and individuals donated items for the raffle and auction. Items ranged from certificates to local businesses, tickets to major sport events, and signed sport items. The highlight of the evening was an auction packet for a weekend stay in Chicago at a condo on the Magnificent Mile.

The event surpassed our goal and over \$19,000 was raised. This additional funding has become critical to our agency this past year in lieu of the deep State budget cuts to the programs at our agency. With the generous support of the community we can continue this year to provide the quality programming needed to support the men and women at agency.

Don't forget !
The Uphill Racer can be read on line at
www.ottawafriendship.com

Freedom Quest '09

Things You Should Know

- FREEDOM and EQUALITY are among the most treasured values in our society.
- Equality is not about creating equal outcomes. It's about having equal opportunities. Everyone deserves a chance to become whatever they want, limited only by their own talents and abilities.
- Our success in achieving our dreams is up to us. But our right to pursue them cannot be denied.
- Certainly, people with developmental disabilities face some unique challenges. But they deserve the same rights, freedoms and opportunities afforded everyone else. Our government should protect those rights by providing services in ways that allow them to live free, independent lives.
- Most State governments have taken this principle to heart and have changed the way services are provided for people with disabilities so they can have a chance to pursue their full measure of happiness.
- Unfortunately Illinois, the land of Lincoln, has not, as demonstrated by these facts:
 - **Illinois ranks 51st in providing community integrated supports** for people with developmental disabilities.
 - In Illinois, **only 13% of people with developmental disabilities who want to get jobs in the community have them.**
 - **Illinois ranks 40th in overall funding** for people with developmental disabilities.

There are currently **over 16,000 people waiting for services** in Illinois.

Freedom Quest '09 is about change...change that will allow people with disabilities in Illinois to get the services they need and live free, independent and inclusive lifestyles.

Three specific changes that are needed include:

1. Creating flexible, individual, cost-effective supports for people with developmental disabilities so they can live free lives.
2. Reducing and eventually eliminating the number of people with developmental disabilities on the waiting list by investing in services.
3. Reducing the need for expensive state-operated institutions by offering people with significant disabilities the services they need to live in their own communities...the millions saved could be spent to help more people in better ways.

Illinois Valley

FREEDOM QUEST

May 19-21, people with disabilities and their supporters will ride throughout Illinois speaking out for their freedoms and equal opportunities to live independent lives.

Join the Movement!

**Illinois Valley Freedom Quest Rally
May 19, 2009 2:00 pm
Peru Eagles Lodge
830 Harrison St. Peru**

For more information, contact:
Dan Fitzgerald 815-223 4488
Carol Fesco 815-223-4488

**Uphill Racer
Spring – 2009**

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