

Big dreams are the challenge

Friendship Haven is a community without boundaries

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"Make no little dreams. They have no power to stir the souls of men. Make great dreams, so great that they will tax your strength to fulfill them and, incomplete, you will bequeath them to your children who will rise up to call you blessed" - Daniel Hudson Burnham.

One of Friendship Haven's founders, Clarence Tompkins, often used this quote to motivate and challenge the community, volunteers and staff to create inspired plans for the future. "People living full lives with faith, passion and purpose," has been the guiding vision of Friendship Haven for more than 50 years.

As we plan for the future, it is an exciting time to be a member of the Friendship Haven team. Our strategic planning team, comprised of two boards of directors, administration and staff embraces the great heritage and positive effect of dreaming big, even when navigating new and often uncharted waters. This group believes it is time to address today's challenges and uncertainties and position the Friendship Haven community for the next 50 years.

From replacing aging buildings to forming collaborative partnerships with health organizations, Friendship Haven faces the challenge of building upon our solid foundation of trust, security and fiscal conservatism, our programming diversity of town homes, apartments, assisted living choices, adult day services, and skilled nursing facility with a sterling reputation and effective results. Over the last two years, the board and staff have researched Friendship Haven's current strengths and compared our campus choices with what is available in the surrounding nine-plus county service area. Together we have tried to determine the upcoming expectations, needs and desires of the aging baby boomer population and unmet needs of northwest Iowa. We determined that in a large part, we were designing the next set of buildings and programs for ourselves. As you can imagine, it got personal very quickly. In the end, we found people are just as diverse today as they were when Friendship Haven was originally founded.

A successful strategy would occur as we compared all of our possible choices to the mission statement of Friendship Haven: "Offering innovative and responsive services for older adults." The core strategic directions include Market Leadership, Regional Presence, Diverse Living Options and Strong Resource Base.

Market Leadership

Friendship Haven will continue its commitment to excellence, innovation and the fulfillment of its philosophy of "person-centered care." We look to maintain and expand market leadership by becoming a market trend setter and destination location for residents. Friendship Haven is actively investigating plans to pursue innovative philosophies, technologies and building choices. Exploring new models of nursing care, expanding unique options for dementia care, new paradigms of independent living and increasing campus home health care to keep residents at the highest level of independent living as long as possible are all possibilities.

In the near term, Friendship Haven will be expanding its state-of-the-art rehabilitation therapy program. As most hospitals no longer have an extended-stay wing, Friendship Haven is positioning itself to meet this important community need. Friendship Haven already serves many individuals that need short-term care and rehabilitative therapy following a hospital stay due to surgery, an accident or illness.

The expanded rehabilitation area will also include additional outpatient services to accommodate those residents discharged home after completing a short-term experience in our Medicare rehab center. This program extension recognizes the importance of follow-up strengthening and encouragement in creating better outcomes and accomplishments to decrease repeat injuries or illnesses for these individuals.

Regional Presence

Friendship Haven will further develop ongoing efforts to serve both the greater Fort Dodge community, as well as northwest Iowa, through a variety of programming - both on and off campus. We are currently evaluating and exploring new ways to reach out and make Friendship Haven a community without boundaries. Since living on campus isn't the right fit for everyone, we are looking at new ways that Friendship Haven can provide continuing care services for more men and women in Northwest Iowa.

As Friendship Haven explores programming that leads to a more expansive role in the region, we will continue to attract individuals and their families to the area, creating opportunities and increasing our economic impact on Fort Dodge.

Partnership and collaboration is another a major theme in Friendship Haven's strategic plan. Strengthening existing partnerships with the city, the chamber, local, state, and regional economic and government leaders, Iowa Central Community College, Trinity Regional Medical Center, Iowa State University Extension, Elderbridge, RSVP, other aging services and businesses and vendors is key to the continued success of Friendship Haven and the greater Fort Dodge community.

Diverse Living Options

Friendship Haven will research expanding the already diverse set of living and lifestyle options offered. More than 400 people call Friendship Haven home. Whether they are nestled in a town home, Kenyon Place or Heritage Apartments, The Gardens Assisted Living, Tompkins Health Center or visit Generations Adult Day Services, they have full access to many amenities and lifestyle choices. Friendship Haven has a philosophy of wellness including: intellectual, social, emotional, physical, spiritual and vocational wellness. We have created an atmosphere where individuals pursue their passions and nurture their hobbies and interests.

Our challenge in planning for the future is to have diverse living options, amenities and lifestyles that meet the needs of our community today and also anticipates and meets the needs and lifestyle of a unique set of future residents.

Strong Resource Base

Friendship Haven will strengthen all sources of assets. People, finances and technology are the critical resources necessary to insure the future success of Friendship Haven. Friendship Haven is blessed with a very engaged, dedicated and loyal group of employees. Reinvesting in and developing employees by providing outlets for learning and advancement is an essential initiative in our strategic plan. As a not-for-profit organization and good corporate citizen we have always been and will continue to be good stewards of our resources. Our strategic plan also commits to developing technological partnerships to meet the needs of our residents and staff.

Beyond these core strategic directions are a myriad of details and business plans that will unfold in the months ahead. Friendship Haven has continued its tradition of dreaming big with its current strategic plan initiatives. We applaud the city of Fort Dodge, Webster County Development Corporation and all of the many supporting individuals and businesses for creating big dreams with the Envision 2030 plan. We encourage others to dream big as well. As we grow together, Friendship Haven will do its part to fulfill the "dreams" that lie ahead.

Wes Sperr, is president and chief executive officer of Friendship Haven.