



SUPPORTER SCOOP

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FOR FRIENDS OF FRIENDSHIP

Winter 2023

friendship.us/foundation

CONTENT

A Generous Turn of Events

Supporter Spotlight:
Linda Cronise

Parading Our Holiday Spirit

Celebrating Team Members

Blessing Boxes Fill
Resident Stockings

A Medal of Honor Returns

Glimpses of Friendship



Making Valentines never tasted so sweet!

If you've ever donated, volunteered, or served Friendship in any way, you've played a part in making this community the warm, welcoming place it is. You ensure Friendship residents have access to reliable, accessible, state-of-the-art facilities and services. You also play a role providing peace of mind to all those we serve and their loved ones.

Supporters of Friendship play a critical role in helping those who live here – whether for a long time or a short stay – live fuller, healthier lives! As you'll see in this quarter's newsletter, Friendship supporters (including our own team members!), and their generosity and creativity make an important impact. This Valentine's month, we're especially grateful for all of your love!



Enjoying a visit from Little Lions Christian Preschool

friendship.us/foundation



Joan Kowalski with her lucky Bingo cards

A Generous Turn of Events

When Joan Kowalski, Kathleen Nordstrom's mother, passed away this past October, Kathleen and her family wanted to honor their mother's loving spirit and at the same time benefit Friendship, her home since 2017. You may have read about Joan in a Friendship letter in which she was featured last May. Originally from Pennsylvania and Michigan, she was a loving and caring person, always thinking of others. Joan was also an avid Bingo player, often giving the prizes she won to her grandchildren.

In Joan's memory, her family asked for donations to be made to Friendship, but soon after the obituary was posted online, Kathleen realized the website of a different Friendship Foundation had been listed—one located in Redondo Beach, California! After some cross-country communication, staff of the California Friendship Foundation, which supports parents and families who have children and young adults with special needs, informed us that six donations had been given to them in Joan's memory and offered to refund them.

The next day, Kathleen sent both organizations an inspiring email, sharing a little about who her mother was and writing, "When I woke up this morning, the first thought that came to my mind was, 'what would Mom do?' I think Mom would say that the two Friendship Foundations' paths have crossed for a reason." Kathleen then asked the California Friendship Foundation to keep the donations they received in remembrance of her mother. She also let our Friendship Foundation know she would be donating the equivalent amount to us.

"I think Mom would say that the two Friendship Foundations' paths have crossed for a reason."

-- Kathleen Nordstrom

When the California Friendship Foundation learned of Joan's love of Bingo, they were excited to share that the two organizations have more in common than just a name. The individuals they serve also love Bingo, and they host Bingo each week via Zoom for their participants with developmental disabilities. In memory of Joan, they had decided to use the donations for gift cards for the Bingo winners! Kathleen was even invited to tune in to the virtual Bingo so she could be introduced to the participants.

So shortly before Christmas, using her mother's lucky Bingo cards, Kathleen and her son, Brett, joined a lively group in California for Bingo via Zoom. Kathleen and Brett introduced themselves and shared about Joan, and then the fun began. Brett even won the last game, and everyone cheered for him. "It was the first time that I talked about my mom without crying," says Kathleen. "I think I may make it a yearly tradition!" Did the two Friendship Foundations' paths cross for a reason? We think Kathleen may be onto something.



Kathleen Nordstrom playing Bingo via Zoom

Supporter Spotlight: Linda Cronise

Inez Richardson, the late mother of Friendship resident Linda Cronise, loved bells. How much? Over her lifetime, Mrs. Richardson collected at least one thousand bells of various materials (china, crystal, and wood) from around the world, including Aruba, the Netherlands, and South Korea.

Before she passed away in the fall of 2021 at age 93, Mrs. Richardson let her daughter know she wanted her bell collection to make other people happy, and Linda is making sure that happens. Many of the bells were given to the Park Oak Grove, where Mrs. Richardson most recently lived, for residents there to enjoy. While Linda and her two adult children kept some of the most meaningful bells to remember their mother and grandmother, the remaining bells were generously donated to Friendship this past fall.

"I love Friendship. They're family."

-- Linda Cronise

We asked Linda, who has lived at Friendship for ten years, about why it was important to her to donate many of her mother's bells to our organization. "I love Friendship. They're family." Her hope is that others can receive some of the happiness these bells brought to her mother, and this past holiday season, that certainly happened.



**Greene Memorial UMC tree
featuring Mrs. Richardson's bells**



**Some of the bells donated to Friendship
by Resident Linda Cronise**

From Thanksgiving morning to New Year's Day, United Way of Roanoke Valley and The Hotel Roanoke hosted Fashions for Evergreens, a competitive tree-decorating contest in which various local organizations participate. "Christmas music" was the theme of Greene Memorial United Methodist Church's tree, but something was missing from their decorations.

When the church heard about Mrs. Richardson's many beautiful bells at Friendship, the solution was obvious. With a bit of wire and careful placement, a variety of the bells—some of which were Christmas-themed and even featured singing angels—were featured on the Greene Memorial tree at The Hotel Roanoke and seen by countless visitors throughout the holiday.

While Mrs. Richardson may not have guessed her bells would end up on a tree at the Hotel Roanoke, her wish for them to bring happiness to others has certainly already taken place. It just goes to show how one family's generosity can have ripple effects on countless others, especially when we get creative!



Getting ready for the City of Roanoke Christmas Parade

Parading Our Holiday Spirit

Friendship had a great time participating again this holiday in the popular Salem and City of Roanoke Christmas Parades that take place in December! We repurposed a red sleigh previously constructed by Friendship Salem Terrace Administrator Brent Poff and his father and used Dr. Seuss's *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* as our inspiration.

Friendship team members, volunteers, and family members came together to make the float come alive, and the Grinch was certainly the star of the show. Both parades include carolers, marching bands, animals, dancing, and lots of music and drew large crowds. While Friendship's float didn't win the float competitions (this year!), everyone had a wonderful time spreading holiday cheer.

Friendship's mission of "supporting friends by providing peace of mind" includes the greater community, and we love having a chance to take part in local events. And don't worry if you missed this year's parades-- we'll be back in December for more holiday parade fun!

Celebrating Team Members

Friendship recently chose the winners of its annual Employee Recognition Awards for 2022, and the four awards were presented to team members in December.

"We are truly honored and grateful to have so many amazing team members at Friendship," said President and CEO Joe Hoff. "Their hard work is what makes our community the best in the industry and allows us to consistently deliver compassionate care and innovative services to help people thrive. We are proud of all they have accomplished and want them to know their work does not go unnoticed."

The recognition awards and winners were:

- Friendship Leadership Award: Tashina Adams, Director of Nursing, Friendship Health and Rehab Center North
- Friendship Achievement Award: William Radford, Payroll & Benefits Manager
- Friendship Community Award: Tanya Scott, Director of Social Services, Friendship Health and Rehab Center North
- Friendship Clinical Award: Pamela Blake, LPN, Friendship Salem Terrace

These awards highlight just some of our Friendship team members whose contributions are exemplary within their departments and across the organization. We are grateful that they are part of the Friendship family!



William Radford, Tanya Scott, Pamela Blake, & Tashina Adams

Blessing Boxes Fill Resident Stockings

Friendship recently invited team members, residents, and community members to be a part of making the holidays brighter for residents at Friendship Health & Rehab Center.

"Blessing Boxes" were placed throughout Friendship's North Campus during the month of November, inviting people to donate items such as socks, art supplies, toiletries, and other small gifts that would be used to fill the stockings of residents at Friendship Health & Rehab Center. Friendship team members also put up a Secret Santa tree that was decorated with gift ideas for residents without families. Employees and visitors took the gift suggestions and returned with presents for those residents.

"To be able to bring cheer to our residents and involve our local community is very important to us."

-- Tiffany Brown



Wrapping gift donations for residents of Friendship Health and Rehab Center



Friendship Independent Living residents filling up a Blessing Box

"We asked residents what they wanted for Christmas and also spoke with nurses and social workers to determine what items individuals wanted and needed most, which included stuffed animals, toiletries, blankets, hats, and many other items," said Activities Director at Friendship Health & Rehab Center Tiffany Brown. "To be able to bring cheer to our residents and involve our local community is very important to us."

Stockings were distributed to about 225 residents, and 42 residents who are without families have also received Secret Santa gifts. Members of Virginia's Blue Ridge Hospitality Association were among those who donated gifts for the resident stockings.

"Unfortunately, not all of our residents have families to bring them gifts this season," said Friendship President and CEO Joe Hoff. We hope that through these efforts, each person who lives at Friendship felt joy this holiday season because they know they are cared for and supported.



Resident Bob Wilkin with his family

A Medal of Honor Returns

On February 3 in the Residents' Center Chapel, U.S. Representative Ben Cline (Virginia's 6th Congressional District) presented Friendship resident Robert (Bob) J. Wilkin with the Medal of Honor that recognizes his late father, Corporal Edward George Wilkin.

On March 18, 1945, during a firefight on the Siegfried Line in Germany during World War II, Wilkin repeatedly went ahead of his unit and engaged the German forces alone and later evacuated wounded soldiers from the battlefield despite heavy enemy fire. Through his superb fighting skill, dauntless courage, and gallant, inspiring actions, Cpl. Wilkin contributed in large measure to his company's success in cracking the Siegfried line. One month later, he was killed in action while fighting deep in Germany.

"Corporal Edward George Wilkin not only served and sacrificed; he also set an example of courage for his fellow Americans," said Friendship President and CEO Joe Hoff. "I am proud that Friendship can host this presentation to recognize, recount, and remember the actions of Corporal Wilkin and his effect on his military brethren as well as our nation."

The medal was originally presented to Bob Wilkin at age seven by Five Star General Omar Bradley. The medal was donated for display, and Bob lost touch with it over the years. Bob contacted Rep. Cline's office to see if they could help locate the medal. After some digging, Rep. Cline's staff located the medal at a museum in Bob's hometown, and per his request, had it mailed to Rep. Cline's Roanoke office until the presentation.

"I am proud that Friendship can host this presentation to recognize, recount, and remember the actions of Corporal Wilkin."

-- Joe Hoff

The Medal of Honor is the nation's most prestigious military decoration. Other medals with similar names are awarded by the United States, but the Medal of Honor is the highest award presented to individuals who have gone above and beyond on the battlefield. The Medal of Honor is the oldest continuously issued combat decoration of the United States Armed Forces, first issued in 1861.

We are pleased that Bob was able to once again receive the Medal of Honor in his father's memory and share this special event with all of us at Friendship.



Rep. Cline and Resident Bob Wilkin

Glimpses of Friendship

From art classes, animal therapy, and dancing to making bird feeders, dog treats, and valentines, the last few months have been a great time to be at Friendship!

