

SUMMER 2023

Faith-based support  
and services for  
individuals with autism  
and intellectual disabilities



# Looking Ahead to a Bright Future

"Your future is bright and filled with a living hope  
that will never fade away." - PROVERBS 23:18 TPT

25<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary

# “Looking Ahead to a Bright Future”

Imagine the faith and resolve it took for our Board of Directors to obey God’s call in 1998 and establish Jessica & Friends Community. Today we serve over 125 precious individuals in all of our programs and residential facilities. What an excellent example of what you plant in one season, you harvest in the next.

Since our founding twenty-five years ago, God has chosen to send a host of men and women to carry out our mission of providing faith-based support and services for individuals with autism and intellectual disabilities in this special place. From the earliest days we have faced challenges and trials that have caused many non-profits to close their doors and lose their way. But God has sustained us and provided above and beyond what we could ever think or imagine.

At our all day Board retreat recently we spent time thanking the Lord for his hand of blessing these past 25 years and to acknowledge His provision once again by bringing Mrs. Jane Merolla, our new CEO, as we enter our next 25 years. In the brief time that she has been here, she has made it evident her desire is to protect the strong foundation established, and lead us into a new season of vision and growth. Our ultimate vision is to be a model for Providers of MH-IDD services wherever God opens the opportunities to serve.

At this historic moment in the life of J&FC we have a profound responsibility to pray hard, think well, plan carefully and lead courageously.

Thank you for your continued financial support. “Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” Luke 6:38 NIV

Rejoicing in the faithfulness of the Lord,  
**Peter and Paulette Teague, Co-Founders**



## A Message from Jane Merolla, CEO

The past two years of the pandemic tested us in unimaginable ways, however the challenge of a much smaller than desired workforce hit us hardest. During this time, parents and other family members came to the rescue. They worked in concert with our staff to deliver consistent service with resilience, and a joyful sense of purpose knowing that together we were doing God’s work. Jessica & Friends Community is eternally grateful for this support.

Blessed by an abundance of recent hires, this organization is laser-focused upon increasing the level and quality of service we are able to offer those we serve, as well as those newly referred. Families who experienced service provision delays and underutilizations can expect a return to pre-pandemic schedules in short order.

To achieve this goal, Jessica & Friends Community’s Board of Directors has recently revealed a twenty-four-month strategic plan which states the following objectives designed to:

- Enhance staff requirement capacity.
- Increase our ability to serve more folks by extending our mission to surrounding counties.
- Augment clinical and administrative capacities within existing programs.
- Assist individuals who want more independence by way of having their own apartments or homes with adequate staff support.
- Provide three new community habilitation opportunities.
- Develop more opportunities for individualized day programming and supportive employment in the community.
- Begin to plan the development of more community homes and Pathway programs for realization in 2025-2026 fiscal year.

No doubt the above objectives sound quite lofty to our readers, especially coming from a CEO who has been with the organization just short of 90 days. However, my experience at this organization has revealed that I am joined by a team of overwhelmingly kind, committed, and mission driven professionals engaged in their service to others through God. Together, many hands make light work and we are ready for such achievements. Please keep Jessica & Friends Community in your prayers as we embark on this journey.



# Shining the Light of Christ

Recently forty of our precious friends from Jessica & Friends Community and the WINGS Disability Ministry from Church of the Open Door continued a decade long tradition of traveling to Lancaster Bible College Chapel to lead the students in a celebration of worship. Students' hearts were touched as those leading the service presented their pure worship to God. For our individuals, this is not a performance for the students, but for an audience of one, their God and precious Savior, the One they adore and love to give their praise.

A person in the audience shared, "What a breath of fresh air on our campus. As God would have it, I spent time in Matthew 5 this morning and ran across the passage in verse 16 "let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in Heaven."

"From start to finish I was encouraged by how the light of Christ was shining through our special guests. I couldn't help but praise our Father in Heaven for each one. From the singing to Caroline's testimony, I was moved to see the power of God."

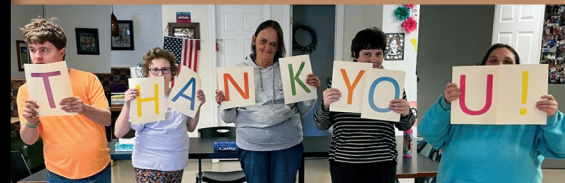
We thank God for how He gives us opportunities to glorify Himself through the gifts and abilities He has given us. Already we have our dear friends asking us when they can return to Lancaster Bible College!



## The Wait is Over!

*Jessica's Story* is out! "Flip the pages of this heartwarming book and discover the God who delights in making beautiful things out of brokenness," says Joni Eareckson Tada, Christian author and disability advocate.

When you send in a gift, requesting *Jessica's Story*, we will send an autographed copy to you. *Jessica's Story* is also available through Amazon/Kindle. Thank you for your continued support and prayers.



## Rockin'

### DURING GIVE LOCAL YORK

This year Jessica & Friends Community hosted our third annual J. Patrick Peters Rock On during Give Local York. What a rockin' event it was! Both Pathway programs set up their chairs and games on Friday morning. Our friends took turns throughout the day to rock, sing, laugh, play games and joke with one another. As our giving increased, the excitement increased as well. The day ended quite astoundingly, with Jessica & Friends Community taking third out of 331 non-profits participating in York County, and raising over \$90,000 from Give Local York. Our rockers can be quite proud of their accomplishment. Thank you for your support of our precious friends, our staff and our ministry. One young donor who shared her tooth fairy money exclaimed "My heart feels so warm right now. I am so happy."

# Live Your Dream

“A winner is a dreamer who never gives up”  
(Nelson Mandela)

We know God has a plan and a purpose for every life He has designed and brought into existence. As our direct support professionals (DSP) work with our individuals in residential, apartments, community, and Pathway Person-Centered Programs, they focus beyond what their life is now. Together they discuss their dreams for the future and plan how they can move towards making those dreams a reality. Perhaps it's through supported employment in getting their dream job or perhaps it's living semi-independently. Meet Erica, Abigail, and Blake, all who are winners with big dreams!

Erica has attended Hanover's Pathway Person-Centered Program for over nine years. She is a friendly person with a good memory who shows initiative when things need to get done. Taking pride in her cooking, cleaning, and artistic abilities, one of her many talents is drawing her favorite cartoon characters from SpongeBob and The Simpson's. Erica enjoys listening to music, including her favorites, Britney Spears, Dolly Parton, and the Beach

Boys. Her academic gifts are superb in reading, writing, and math.

Erica looks forward to coming to our Pathway Person-Centered Program each day, enjoying singing, dancing, and socializing with her friends. Her dreams for the future involve continued opportunities to do the things she loves with the people she loves. It is important for Erica to exercise her God-given talents in a setting promoting creativity and socialization. Erica is an invaluable contributor to Jessica & Friends Community!

Blake has been a part of the Jessica & Friends Community for many years. He is a very active participant in the Hosanna Ringers Bell Choir ringing the larger bells with gusto. He attends our York Pathway Person-Centered Day Program where he enjoys going for walks, working on arts and crafts, making treats, and celebrating all of the holidays. Blake loves music and enjoys choosing songs to play. He works part-time at McDonald's. His dream is to move to Colorado and start a game store with his brother. He would also love



Erica



Blake

to help animals. Blake enjoys life, and we are proud of him as he has gained new skills at work and plays in the bell choir ministering to many in our community.

Abigail has a wonderful personality, always so sweet and bubbly, full of energy and positivity. She loves helping others by volunteering at a personal care community. She enjoys cooking for military and first responders as a way to thank them for their service.

Traveling and sampling different cultures, food and dining in romantic restaurants is something Abigail really enjoys. She also loves to garden like she did with her grandma. Abigail's many talents include knitting, interior decorating, sign language through music, and creating DVD's. Her favorite activities are swimming, rock climbing, hiking and volunteering.

When out in the community, Abigail likes learning about her family history, going to Sephora to take photos of makeup for her scrapbooking, and enjoying her time with J&FC staff, Terry and Tara. She likes to dine with them at her favorite restaurant, Rocoto, and also enjoys cooking meals and baking with staff.

Abigail's dreams for her future are to travel to Paris, New Orleans and South America, hike more trails, and finally ride in a Lamborghini. In addition, she would like to coordinate events, decorate luxurious hotels and vineyards, and become a wedding planner. As determined and talented that Abigail is, it will be exciting to see all that she will accomplish in life.



Jessica & Friends Community  
1998 - 2023



enlarge  
the place of your tent  
stretch  
your tent curtains wide  
do not hold back;  
lengthen  
your cords,  
strengthen  
your stakes  
Isaiah 54:2



Abigail



# Congratulations Susanne Reynold, Director of Human Resources



Susanne Reynold

We are pleased to announce the promotion of Susanne Reynold to Director of Human Resources. Susanne, a native York County resident, has worked at J&FC for nine years, serving in many roles including our Human Resources Assistant. Susanne is married to Scott, Facilities and Maintenance Manager at J&FC. They have two adult children, Megan and Jesse.

Susanne shared, "From the beginning, it was clear to me that God had orchestrated every event in my life leading up to the initial interview with J&FC, and I knew God had greater plans for me. Working at Jessica & Friends Community is so rewarding and fulfilling, knowing I am helping to equip employees to make a difference in the lives of those in need."

"And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Matthew 25:40

## Assessing Your Calling to Jessica & Friends Community's Mission

Susanne Reynold, Director of Human Resources recently rolled out a direct support professional hiring practice of weekly hiring events held at the support center and at our Pathway programs. During these gatherings, participants have an opportunity to hear about the mission and history of Jessica & Friends Community and learn about employment opportunities available. The meetings afford supervisors and sometimes our individuals, an opportunity to assess the applicant's talents and skills to determine if we are a good match for an employment relationship. The events have proven to be fun and include lunch, snacks, prizes and good conversations between new friends.

Within the past eight weeks, J&FC has been able to add twenty-one additional employees to our staff roster. This represents a 100% increase over the number of hires for the same period last year. The larger and constantly growing workforce will enable J&FC to provide quality services to those underserved since the start of the pandemic as well as meet the staffing needs of new friends who are interested in our support.

## We Need You and Just Maybe You Need Us

- 1) Are you ready for a new challenge? As a Direct Support Professional (DSP), you will make a positive impact on another person's life, providing caring support to someone while helping them to become more independent and self-assured in their abilities.
- 2) Do you want to help people? Perhaps the work you do is no longer rewarding and you want to make a more meaningful impact.
- 3) Have you had a change in your life? Maybe your priorities have changed and your job no longer offers value and motivation. Do you need a career with flexibility in hours and days you work?
- 4) Would you like to do more? As a DSP, you could facilitate group outings, help develop skills and abilities of those you serve or be the shoulder to lean on and the person to laugh with. You will become a better person and make life a little sweeter for someone else.

Could this be Your Calling? Jessica & Friends Community is hiring. Online at [www.jandfcommunity.org/employment](http://www.jandfcommunity.org/employment) or call 717.747.9000.



## Our Philosophy of Employee Satisfaction

Jessica & Friends Community makes constant efforts to improve the quality of life for those we serve and employees alike. It is our philosophy that happier employees lead to better service. That is the reason we now offer the ability to get our employees paid faster.

Effective April 1, 2023 Jessica & Friends Community transitioned from bi-weekly to weekly pay days. It cost the organization a bit more to implement, but our employee satisfaction is priceless. According to Danielle Ness who heads our payroll department, "Employees are thrilled not to have to wait two weeks for their money. I haven't received a single complaint, just an overwhelming amount of thanks."



Danielle Ness

## Meet New Board Member, Alexandra (Alex) Ahlbrandt

Alexandra Ahlbrandt



Alex is an attorney, practicing full-time at McNees, Wallace & Nurick LLC, where her focus is in the areas of corporate, tax and healthcare law. She attended Temple University for journalism and received her law degree from Drexel's Thomas R. Kline School of Law. She married her preschool sweetheart, Steve, a real estate attorney.

Alex was introduced to Jessica & Friends Community through her grandmother, Sally Janora, J&FC's Ministry Support Coordinator. Her Aunt Jayme currently lives in Kadine's House. J&FC is a huge part of her family's story.

Alex lives her life with a heart for Jesus and the desire to spread the good news of the Gospel with those around her. She is honored to join the J&FC Board of Directors and continue the inspiring work of J&FC. Alex remarked, "As an organization that embraces the strength of character, courage, and a spirit mindset, I'm beyond excited to get started!"

## The Mary Hildebrand Education Fund

Born in 1963 Mary Louise Hildebrand passed away March 26, 2023. She was the manager of Home and Community at Jessica & Friends Community at the time of her passing.

She was loved and respected by her co-workers and all those she served. Her deep faith guided her life and the light of the Lord radiated through her infectious smile.

The Mary Hildebrand Education Fund will offer a way to honor Mary's memory and impact and provide support to J&FC employees to pursue educational opportunities. Requests are considered for educational expenses related to course work such as academic degree programs, certificate programs and training courses and seminars.

Contributions are gratefully received and so far, \$5,000 has been donated to help fulfill employee educational goals.

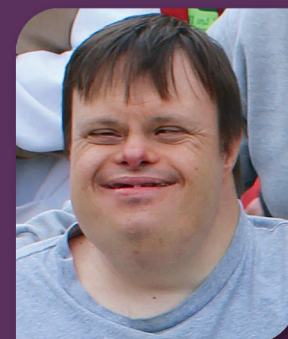


Mary Hildebrand

## Remembering Matty

For over fifteen years Matthew Morris, affectionately known as Matty, was a part of Jessica & Friends Community. Matty lived at our Tri Hill/David's House since the house opened and was loved by all the staff. He enjoyed drinking soda, going for car rides, listening to music and spending time with his family. Matty went to be with Jesus on March 21, 2023. It was a complete shock to everyone who loved him, but not a surprise to his Heavenly Father who welcomed Matty with open arms. Matty left his mark on all those who knew him and he will never be forgotten.

Aaron Spangler, who served with Matty when he came to the day program, fondly remembers, "He would always pat me on the head and give me this huge smile. I always knew that he loved me. Being with Matty was always a special gift."



Matthew Morris

## 25th Anniversary Gala

Our friends are getting excited as they anticipate the return of Jessica & Friends Community's Gala on **Saturday, October 7, 2023** as we celebrate 25 years of ministry to adults with autism and intellectual disabilities. This gala will be the first since 2019, and we look forward to seeing our friends walk the red carpet and hit the dance floor following a delicious meal with family and friends. A very festive evening is planned with a silent auction and the introduction of a new Jessica & Friends Community video. We hope you can join us on Saturday, October 7th!

## Prayer Closet

- 1) We are thankful for God's faithfulness in pouring out his blessing to Jessica & Friends Community these past twenty-five years.
- 2) We are thankful for a committed and visionary Board of Directors who have prayerfully set forth a strategic plan for the next two years.
- 3) We are thankful for a visionary CEO, along with mission fit professionals, who embrace the vision to meet the ever-growing needs surrounding us.
- 4) We are thankful for new staff who have joined us, and pray that God will continue to send those who will embrace the mission of J&FC.
- 5) Pray for comfort and peace for those in our J&FC family who are grieving the loss of a loved one.
- 6) Pray for Jessica's Story to be an encouragement to families, and that many will find hope through Christ and assurance that God has a plan and a purpose for every life.



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 Fax 888.509.2320  
 jandfcommunity.org

Equal Opportunity Employer

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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 Mr. Dale Bubb  
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 Mr. Doug Royer  
 Dr. James Srour  
 Mr. Douglas Swartz  
 Mrs. Paulette Teague  
 Dr. Peter Teague  
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Kimberly Gockley  
 Director of Programs

Linda Bercik  
 Director of Residential Services

Tammy Gelsinger  
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 Accounting Manager

Sally Janora  
 Ministry Support Coordinator

Amber Franklin  
 Quality Assurance/  
 Compliance Coordinator

Devin Sevret  
 Assistant Director of Residential Services

Treteria Jones, Gretchen Rhodes,  
 Devin Sevret, Mitch Spangler  
 & Pam Tucker  
 Managers, Residential Services

Glenn & Millie Martin  
 Innkeepers, Indian Rock Acres

Scott Reynold  
 Facility Manager

**Jessica & Friends Community News**  
 is published quarterly to provide relevant  
 updates and current issues of importance  
 consistent with our mission to the families  
 we serve, churches, friends and supporters.

Please send all correspondence  
 including address corrections to:

Jessica & Friends Community  
 Attention: Anne Fritts  
 1625 East Market Street, York, PA 17403

## Memorial and Honor Gifts

January 1, 2023 to April 30, 2023

### IN HONOR OF/GIVEN BY:

**Betsy Bailet's birthday**  
 Mrs. RuthAnn Bailleis

**Mariecele Barton**  
 Women's Friendship Club

**Bethany Godfrey**  
 Mrs. Miriam Leaman

**Jonathan Stephen Hartman**  
 Rev. & Mrs. Herb Hartman

**David Kline's birthday**  
 Mrs. RuthAnn Bailleis

**Jerry Newcomer's birthday**  
 Mr. & Mrs. Dale Newcomer

**Diane Sargeant**  
 Mr. Jeffrey Forster

**Scott Snyder**  
 Mr. & Mrs. Dale Newcomer

**Aaron Spangler**  
 Mr. & Mrs. Richard Clapsaddle  
 Mr. & Mrs. Dale Newcomer

**Avery Sponseller's 25th birthday**  
 Mr. Dru Almony  
 Mr. Seth Almony  
 Miss Madison Anthony  
 Mr. Robert Evans  
 Ms. Lisa Kranzler  
 Ms. Sierra Miller  
 Miss Erica Uhler

**Jessica Teague's birthday**  
 Mrs. RuthAnn Bailleis  
 Mr. & Mrs. David Gaskell  
 Mr. & Mrs. Robert Kampman  
 Mr. Wesley Martin

**Peter Teague's Birthday**  
 Mr. & Mrs. Jeremy Geib  
 Mr. & Mrs. Michael Gradwell  
 Mr. & Mrs. Travis Martin  
 Dr. & Mrs. Ken Nafziger

### IN MEMORY OF/GIVEN BY:

**Dr. Dan Allen**  
 Dr. & Mrs. Peter W. Teague

**Virginia Judith Badley**  
 Dr. & Mrs. Peter W. Teague

**William Blymire, Sr.**  
 Mr. & Mrs. Philip Firth  
 Mrs. Sally Janora  
 Dr. & Mrs. Peter W. Teague

**Clarence Brown**  
 Mr. & Mrs. Rodney Wolford

**Ashley Ferguson**  
 Sally and Jayme Janora  
 Dr. & Mrs. Peter W. Teague

**Matthew Grove**  
 Mr. Ted Grove

**June and Kim Handwerker**  
 Mr. Robert Handwerker

**Mary Hildebrand**  
 Mr. & Mrs. John Allen  
 Mrs. RuthAnn Bailleis  
 Mrs. Tracy Clutter  
 Ms. Beth Dellinger  
 Ms. Patricia Hildebrand  
 Ms. Tami Sue Hildebrand  
 Mr. Bradley King  
 Mr. & Mrs. Thomas King  
 Mr. & Mrs. Ron Long  
 Mr. & Mrs. Brian McCleaf  
 Mr. & Mrs. Dale Newcomer  
 Mrs. Carol Schintz  
 Ms. Fayne Stermer  
 Dr. & Mrs. Peter W. Teague  
 Mr. & Mrs. William Thoman  
 Mr. & Mrs. Dale Tyson  
 Mr. & Mrs. Rodney Wolford

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**Celine Kilolo**  
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**Erna Gay Lingle**  
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**Rev. Gerald Mapstone**  
 Sally and Jayme Janora  
 Dr. & Mrs. Peter W. Teague  
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 Mrs. Sally Janora  
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**Matthew Morris**  
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 Ms. Jean Fix  
 Mrs. Sally Janora  
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 Mr. & Mrs. Dale Newcomer  
 Mrs. Carol Schintz  
 Dr. & Mrs. Peter W. Teague

**Charles L. "Chuck" Musser**  
 Dr. & Mrs. Peter W. Teague

**Sarah Myers**  
 Ms. Kacie Lovelace

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 Dr. & Mrs. Peter W. Teague

**Kay Slautterback**  
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**Jacob Young**  
 Ms. Denise Beauchamp  
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