The group of people who began meeting in 1965 to talk about a senior living community were visionaries. They met to plan for the future and how to provide a vibrant and active living community for people in their retirement years. People who could age in place and never have to move again. They were planning for the future with imagination as they talked about a relatively new concept – a “lifecare” community. They were visionaries because they planned for the future, and they were wise because each step of the way was done with prayer, seeking God’s direction.

Friendship Village was “born” from the vision of that original group. On May 1, 1968 Friendship Village served our first meal, breakfast. For the next 50 years, Friendship Village has continued to be blessed with visionary leadership, resulting in continued planned growth from the original health center and independent living units to our current 249 independent living apartments, 50 assisted living units and 72 dually Medicare/Medicaid certified health center beds. Landmark Commons, our “pretirement” community was added to our family in 2007. Additionally, Rosewood Estate is managed by Friendship Village. All this growth over the last 50 years occurred because of vision and a willingness to seek and then follow God’s lead.

A few years ago, the Board continued that visionary practice and began to meet to discuss what the next 50 years will look like for the original Friendship Village campus. So many questions needed to be asked and answered. Do we leave things as they are or do we rebuild? If so, where and how big, on the original campus or near the Landmark Commons Campus? Can we afford to do this? Can we afford not to? How many units and what size of units? Again, the definition of visionary is “thinking about or planning the future with imagination or wisdom.” June, 2017, we announced to our FV family and the neighbors around us of our intention to rebuild the main campus on the original site. The news was met with excitement, some trepidation by residents, but with understanding and agreement. This last year was spent with research and planning, and the first week of August pre sales of the new units will start. Again, vision in action!

This year is our 50th anniversary. We have so much to be thankful for, beginning with that first group of leaders who acted on their vision, and then others who followed by building upon that vision during the next 50 years. Our leadership today continues exhibiting the original visionary drive. On May 1, 2018, we kicked off our celebratory year with a pancake breakfast and invited all who could come! Community guests served, the Ambassadors came, and Mayor Hart spoke and celebrated with us. We followed with a gathering/dance for our employees, both current and past; everyone enjoyed seeing old friends and sharing stories. Our residents celebrated with a 50’s dance. Staff dressed in poodle skirts and uniforms.
from Mel's diner! We have quite a few “dancing fools” living and working at Friendship Village!

So this year, 2018, FV is honoring our heritage, celebrating the present and anticipating the future. I personally am extremely thankful for those who came before me. They exhibited integrity and a true love for the mission of FV and for our family of residents and staff.

Lisa Gates

P.S. FV has also been blessed by the day to day leadership we have had. Larry Laird began as the administrator at FV and then moved to the Executive Director position. Larry led FV as a consultant for many years; his leadership style, knowledge, and love for FV remains evident to this day. Betty O’Brian followed Larry as Administrator. Under Betty, we saw a large portion of Orange Township come to live at FV! Betty was also instrumental in the creation of the FV Foundation. Following Betty was Velda Phillips. Not enough can be said of Velda. She came to FV in 1971 in the Dinning department, moved to Assistant Administrator under Betty, and then in 1990, became the Administrator/CEO until 2014. Velda’s passion and her unfailing commitment to FV strengthened the quality lifestyle of our residents and the exemplary reputation of Friendship Village. Velda often said, “If it is the best thing for the resident then that is what needs to be done.” Velda retired June 30, 2018, having been retained as consultant, and in her usual humble style refused to allow a retirement party. Velda is my immediate predecessor, my mentor and my friend. She leaves a strong legacy, and her presence will be missed.

My, how things have changed in fifty years. Fifty years ago the cost of an average house was $14,250.00 while an average income was around $7,300.00. For those who rented, the average rent was about $125.00 a month. If you went to McDonald’s for a Big Mac the cost of it was $.45. The world’s population was less than 4 billion and the United States population was just under 200 million.

While some things have drastically changed, others have not! The commitment of Friendship Village to Lifecare remains the same. Lifecare has been Friendship Village’s promise for fifty years, and it will continue to be the case for years to come.

Another significant reality that has not changed is our commitment to maintain a faith-based community for all of our family who have made Friendship Village their home. As the present chaplain, I thank God for all the chaplains through the past half century who have strongly held to the commitment to preach and teach God’s Word and care for the spiritual needs of all of our Village family. With God’s help, I aim to pass along just as I have received, the reality of true spiritual care to those who will serve as our Village chaplains in the next half century.

While personal faith placed in Jesus alone is that which is necessary for securing a home in heaven (Romans 10:9,10), it is also very important to pass on a legacy of faith. A great Biblical example of just that is mentioned by the Apostle Paul in writing his second letter to Timothy (II Timothy 1:5 NIV):

“For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois, and your mother Eunice, and I am sure it is in you as well.”

I, too, am continually thankful for the men of faith who have served Friendship Village. I take very seriously Paul’s charge he gave to Timothy (II Timothy 4:1a, 2 NIV):

“I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus. . . preach the Word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.”

In conclusion, I am most excited for the future of Friendship Village. The God of the Bible, faithful in the past, will continue to be faithful as we build upon the legacy passed to us.
Ironically the theme of the 40th Anniversary Banquet was “The Mustard Seed that Grew.” That seed continues to grow exponentially! But first, let me reflect on the humble, insightful, and fortuitous beginnings of The Village.

In 1965, the Fellowship of the Faith, a group of local evangelical pastors, convened its regular prayer and fellowship meeting in the office of Pastor David Moore at Walnut Street Baptist Church. Pastor John Aeby, invited Dr. Kenneth P. Berg as a guest to the meeting who described an innovative concept he called “lifecare retirement living” communities. Lifecare communities could provide a secure retirement lifestyle in attractive apartment homes with nursing care available on the same site, and most importantly, without additional charge.

The pastors were certainly enamored with the idea of a Christian retirement community here in the Cedar Valley but somewhat dubious about the promise of unlimited nursing care at no additional charge. And, how would these pastors raise the funds necessary to build and operate such a panacea of retirement living? After all, these gentlemen met only for prayer and an occasional “Dutch treat” lunch. So, in an effort to encourage more diverse thinking, each pastor invited a lay person to attend the next meeting. Out of that grew the not-for-profit corporation, Friends of Faith Retirement Homes, Inc. Amazingly, the board was able to option land, receive zoning approval, and acquire a mortgage from Prudential Insurance Company to begin the first phase of Friendship Village, the building now known as Village Lane and located at 600 Park Lane. From these humble beginnings, The Village has grown to include eight more phases plus a second campus in Guernsey Park! The original lifecare promise remains in place (it really was possible!), and the current board of directors continues to adhere to its mission of faith.

Robert Smith, Sr., now serving as an Emeritus Board member, is the only member still living who served continuously since the first organizational meeting in 1965. Bob recalls, “Surety Subscriptions were as new to us as Lifecare. But we were convinced that in order to sell the innovative concept of Lifecare, we had to have some money, so in addition to ourselves we asked others to pledge $10,000, or some multiple thereof, to secure financing. This is definitely a faith-based organization. And, what a happy day when we could destroy the surety subscriptions!”

Over the years, private living accommodations have changed, typically becoming larger, amenities have been added, but the tradition of offering a dignified and respectful quality of service to seniors has prevailed.

Traditions were carried on by a Board of Directors with continuity and a belief in the concept, as well as a long-tenured leadership staff. In fact, Larry Laird, who was hired as Administrator by the board in 1968, served for almost the entire 50 year history. Betty O’Brien who was hired as a bookkeeper in 1967, succeeded Larry Laird as Administrator and since retirement has been a resident of The Village. Talk about believing!

So, even though the appearance has changed, the mission of Friendship Village lives on! As current CEO, Lisa Gates, would state the mission as such: Through faith we inspire, connect and honor those on their retirement journey.
Activities have always played a vital role in the health and well-being of our residents at Friendship Village. A few are Wheel of Fortune, Socials, Movie Nights and Birthday Nights. The recreational, fun, and sometimes festive nature of the activities has remained the core of our activities over our 50 year history. This was brought home in a heartwarming conversation with Lavon McEnany, Friendship Village’s first Activities Director. Lavon has such a love for Friendship Village. I smiled as she explained the importance of concluding every activity with Coffee and Cookies, a tradition just as important today.

Today, activities are the life-blood of our healthy and happy community. It seems there is nothing finer than sitting together as friends to socialize, volunteering in the community, or engaging in a little competition during Wheel of Fortune. I consider myself fortunate to be a part of this wonderful community.
Sam Christensen & Jane Walker were born during the Great Depression. Sam in his parent’s bedroom above the family business, a café, on Main Street in Ringsted, Iowa, on September 7, 1931, and a little more than a year later, Jane at St. Francis Hospital on Independence Avenue in Waterloo on December 31, 1932. They each developed a strong work ethic in their youth. Sam worked in the family café, delivered milk for the creamery, and painted several farm and business buildings. During his spare time, he played high school sports (basketball, baseball, golf), and wrote a weekly column in the Ringsted paper, “Sam’s Sports Spot.” Jane grew up working in the family business in Waterloo, the Walker Shoe Store.

Sam & Jane were both encouraged and supported by their parents to pursue higher education. Sam also credits Mrs. Dorothy Underwood, his high school principal and teacher, with his academic drive. Upon graduation at Ringsted in 1949, Sam entered the University of Iowa with a desire to play Hawkeye football and prepare for dental school. It became apparent very early on that a dental career had a much better chance of success than the gridiron. Jane graduated from West High Waterloo in 1951, and enrolled that fall at University of Iowa. Sam was a member of the Delta Sigma Delta fraternity. Looking for a way to supplement his income, Sam served as a waiter at the Delta Gamma Sorority, where, as fate would have it, Jane was a member. “Are you busy Saturday night?” The rest is history: they were married on December 28, 1954. While Sam finished dental school, Jane added piping and dancing in the U of I Scottish Highlanders to her academic load. She performed with the Highlanders in France, England, and Scotland. During WW II, the all-male Highlanders opened membership to women, which later became one of the...
largest all-female bagpipe bands in the world.

Sam was drafted after graduation, and served honorably in the U.S. Army as a dental officer. When his military service was finished, he was accepted into pediatric dental residency at U of I. Upon completion in 1958, he and Jane returned to Waterloo where he joined the dental practice of Miller and Felcher as a pediatric dentist. Jane managed the home and the raising of their four children. Both served their community. Sam volunteered his time to several organizations, including honorary membership in the Boys & Girls Club. He also served as President of the Waterloo District Dental Society, Black Hawk Dental Society, and the Iowa Pediatric Dental Society, and continues yet his lengthy service as a member of the Iowa Athletic Scholarship Board. Dr. Christensen was recognized many times for his service, most recently given one of the 2017 “Eight Over Eighty” awards. Jane served on many community boards, President of the Junior Service League of Waterloo/ Cedar Falls, Vice President of the Waterloo Recreation and Arts Center board, and member of the Iowa Alumni Association board. Both are active members of First Presbyterian Church in Waterloo.

The Christensen legacy of higher education is strong. All twelve grandchildren are college grads, nine from U of I, the others from Vanderbilt, Colorado College, and University of Northern Iowa. One son and four grandsons followed their father and grandfather in dentistry, the others in law, health care, accounting, education, and technology. All continue the tradition of community service.

Waterloo and the Cedar Valley have meant a great deal to Sam and Jane. Family, friends, and church are their focus. They have chosen Friendship Village as their retirement home because of the excellent Lifecare* it provides. They have found Friendship Village surrounds them with friendly neighbors, community, and staff. “Our children are very happy we chose to live at Friendship Village.”

* Lifecare offers members a full continuum of care including assisted living and skilled care for both spouses or for one while the other remains in their own apartment at no additional cost other than additional meals.
It was late April 1959, when the Olesens boarded “The S.S. Gripsholm” for the USA, accompanied by friends, Arne and Inger Jensen; a dream long in the hearts of Esra and Varla had now become a reality. Eleven days aboard ship to the USA, then two days by bus to Cedar Falls, Iowa, to their friends’ home and the beginning of a new life. Three days after arriving in Iowa, Esra found a job, and then an apartment for the family the following week.

In 1977, the Olesens were among the first residents at Village Place and were allowed to move in before construction was completed. Esra did many projects for the Village: he painted signs for special occasions, painted names on FV vehicles, and made the PEACE ON EARTH sign which was displayed for many years on top of the High Rise at Christmas. Esra and Varla soon became friends with Harold and Leah Hartman (see the Hartman – Shubert section), neighbors in the Village Place High Rise. The couples developed a close friendship, and the Hartmans occasionally welcomed Esra and Varla to stay in their second bedroom when guests came, and space was needed. The Olesens loved their apartment and lived there together for 22 years, until Esra died very unexpectedly in 1996.

Varla stayed in the apartment 3 ½ more years until it became necessary to move to Lakeview Lodge. The resulting care and love from the Lodge staff and friends until she passed peacefully in 2008 was a great comfort to the family who lived out of town.

Esra and Varla’s daughter, Lene, was 17 when they arrived in America. She soon secured employment in the Business Office at ISTC (Iowa State Teachers College, now UNI), where she worked for a year before enrolling as a student, earning a teaching degree four years later. Lene married Ken Schaefer two days after graduating from UNI in 1964. They moved to Huxley, where both taught for one year, then to Mason City where Ken taught science for 36 years. They have 3 children: Rechelle, Eric, and Lori. Esra and Varla’s son, Bjorn, started 5th grade at Lincoln School, and was fluent in English by Christmas. He graduated from Cedar Falls High School, UNI, and ISU, and married Sue Osterberg. They have one son Peter. Dr. Olesen taught chemistry at Southeast Missouri State University for 37 years.

Arne and Inger Jensen, the friends who came with the Olesen’s from Denmark, moved to Friendship Village in 2000. Lene and Ken retired and moved to Landmark Commons in 2007, followed by Bjorn and Sue in 2013. “It has been such a blessing to be back together after having lived in different states for 37 years. After almost 60 years in this country, the original six people who immigrated in 1959 are now, or were, part of the Friendship Village family. Thank you, Friendship Village, for what we have experienced and what is to come!” (Sue, Bjorn, Lene, and Ken)
premature loss of their spouses. In 1977, when the Village Place High Rise was new, they moved in – right across from the Olesen’s (section above). Harold and Leah had both experienced lengthy illnesses with their own parents and chose Friendship Village and Lifecare to spare Harold’s daughter, Luanne, from a similar hardship. The Hartman’s found Lifecare to be a blessing: Harold lived in the skilled care center for the last year and a half before passing in 1983. Leah remained in her apartment until she developed Alzheimer’s; her remaining 12 years were spent in the skilled care center. Luanne married Bob Shubert; she and Bob both taught in the Waterloo schools for thirty years. Following retirement, Bob and Luanne moved to a lake home in Minnesota and spent winters in Arkansas. They were on the list at Friendship Village, planning to one day return to Waterloo. The right time coincided with opening of Landmark Commons. “We have never regretted the move. My husband, Bob, died last year and I feel so blessed to be living here with so many old and new friends.” (Luanne Shubert)

Dykeman – Morris
Josephine (Jo) Dykeman served as a social worker for the Cedar Valley Hospice, and later as a volunteer, receiving the Iowa Hospice Organization Volunteer of the Year Award in 1981. Jo moved to the young Friendship Village in the early Seventies and lived there for thirty years until her death in 2004. Three years later, 2007, Jo’s granddaughter Cathy Dykeman moved with her mother Judy Morris to Landmark Commons – the environment so familiar to Grandmother was now her and her mother’s home. Cathy and Judy enjoy the fitness center, the pool, and especially the monthly German Night and the Seafood Special Night in the Bay Restaurant. “We enjoy calling Landmark Commons our home for the last 10 ½ years and look forward to the years to come.” (Cathy and Judy)

Johnson – Johnson
Mary Ann Johnson moved to Friendship Village in 2001, and it has been a wonderful experience. Recently her daughter, Monica Johnson moved to Landmark Commons. “I moved into Landmark Commons in March, 2017. Since then I have shared meals in the dining room with some wonderful people. I can say my experience here has included Bible study, trips to KWWL, the Matchstick Museum in Gladbrook, the Fireside Winery, and Hansen’s Dairy. This is excellent retirement living.” (Monica Johnson)

Knapp – Dodge
Ellis & Wanda Knapp moved into the Village Place High Rise in its early years. They enjoyed their retirement years – the activities, people, and Wanda’s singing in the Village Voices choir. After Ellis passed at age 82 in 1990, Wanda lived another eight years and died in 1998 at age 86. Ten years after Wanda passed, her daughter, Barbara, and husband, Larry Dodge moved to Landmark Commons. They enjoy the library, the woodshop, gardening, and the menu variety in the Bay Restaurant at LC. Both Larry & Barb sing in the Landmark Chorale, which Barb started and directed for nine years. The Dodges often travel with their RV and find the carefree living to be excellent. “Larry and I moved to Landmark Commons in March, 2008, and have loved every minute of the last ten years…we have done a lot of traveling in all 50 states and a number of foreign countries; it is convenient to be able to just lock our apartment door and take off with no worries.” (Barb Dodge)
Friendship Village residents own the contractual benefit of excellent retirement living memberships. A lifestyle that is par excellence with comfortable, secure, and attractive campus and apartments. Amenities are many: delicious and nutritious meals, transportation, on-site libraries, lounges, snack shops, beauty salons, and the list goes on. One monthly fee includes property taxes, all utilities, a daily meal, cable TV, internet, telephone, maintenance, housekeeping, and upkeep. The inclusion of Lifecare provides at no additional cost (other than additional daily meals) full lifetime care in either assisted living or skilled care nursing. Friendship Village members do not risk the loss of estate passage to their beloved family members and favorite charities through the rapid financial loss due to the high cost of assisted living and skilled care – typically costing from $5,000 to 9,000 per month in the Cedar Valley area. Not only are Friendship Village members free of this potential financial drain, but they are also free of the threat of having to move from their own “home” because a spouse may need a higher level of care. The healthy spouse remains in his/her comfortable “home” apartment – the familiarity of home and close friends and neighbors are still there – all part of the Lifecare provision.

So where’s the need? If the provision for health care is in place without the risk of rapid depletion of assets, why is Friendship Village Foundation needed? What then is the charitable cause? Good questions; I’m glad you asked. While many retirement community foundations appeal to benefactors to come alongside those whose assets are expended, would it not be prudent to endow a community that protects its members’ savings from the high costs of long term care? The Friendship Village Foundation can benefit the entire Cedar Valley by building its endowment, thus sustaining the stability, longevity, and affordability of Friendship Village. The Foundation has three objectives: 1) Benefactor Fund (people), Achiever Fund (projects), and Builder Fund (buildings). For example, the Foundation contributed more than $600,000 during the construction of the Lakeview Lodge and Landing pictured below. Will you consider an annual gift? Will you consider remembering us in your estate planning?

Congratulations Thieleane Raecker
2018 Eight Over Eighty Award

Thieleane taught in the Waterloo schools from 1968 to 2015! Her many community achievements include being a part of the area’s early childhood learning centers, support and volunteering with the childhood arts at the Waterloo Center For the Arts, and the early reading program at the library. She was founder of Womanade, and organization offering help to those in need for which she received the Governor’s Volunteer Award.
Piano Project Gifts

In honor of Village Voices Choir
Anonymous

In honor of Phil Porter’s weekly singing at the Landing
Anonymous

In honor of Paul Farmer’s & Don Benson’s music & 8 productions
Anonymous

In honor of Ruth Beck on Mother’s Day
Pat & Louis Beck
Stephanie & Lowell Beck
Wayne Beck
Mary Ann & Robert Wagner
Grandchildren:
Lydia Alexander
Matt Alexander

Cindy Hershberger
Luann & Mark Andera
Sandra & David Barnes
Mary & Jeff Gann
Investment Center, Independence, IA
Rachelle & David Kirschman
Cecile Powers
Barbara & Gary Scoggin
Eleanor Tjepkes

Betty Hultman
Lois Marsch

Betty Hummel
Dorothy Guetzlaff

Arlene Lockard
Karen Feutch
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Mitzie Rekward
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Shirley Hileman
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Marilyn Rasmussen
Darlene Shipp
Darlene Shirk
Lee Stonewall
Melinda Vander Velden
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Carolyn Smith
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Ethel Valentine
Vivian & Ron Weimer

Gerry & James Weimer
Vivian & Ron Weimer

Betty Willason
Dorothy Guetzlaff
Mrs. Robert Morrison
Mitzie Rekward

Lakeview Lodge
Frank Van Kerckhove

Legacy Leaders
Candy & Jay Nardini
Carolyn Smith
Vivian & Ron Weimer

Given in memory of

John R. Cole
Beverly Bisone
Nancy & William Blake
Carol Christensen
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Katrina Klever
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Dolorita Durnan
E. Lee Stonewall

Cynthia Hershberger
E. Lee Stonewall

Betty Hummel
Laurie Allbaugh
Judy Anton
Marian & David Greene
PD & GS Greene
Gayle Hodgson
Sue & Don Hummel
Alice M. Lichty

Rita M. Mayer
Donna & Bernard Nanke
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Robert Sieglaff
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