Board President’s Thoughts

Just between us friends … The “Friends” Board of Children’s Square U.S.A doesn’t save your money. We spend it! The funds that we receive from your annual “Friends” memberships are used for a variety of needs that uphold our purpose, which is: To promote community interest and stimulate charitable activities that support Children’s Square U.S.A. Please take the opportunity to review our Treasurer’s annual financial report and the various funding opportunities approved by the Friends Board in 2017 for achieving our purpose.

This year, 2018, is the 15th year anniversary for the Friends Board of Children’s Square U.S.A. The first organizational meeting was held on March 6, 2003 at 11:30 a.m. in the Cottonwood Cottage. That year also marked 121 years of existence of the Christian Home Association-Children’s Square U.S.A. The Board’s first year membership goal was both visionary and committed. It was to match the 121 year history of Children’s Square U.S.A. with the same number of “Friends” memberships. Not only did they meet their goal but exceeded it by more than just a few.

I’m committed to continuing the vision of our founding “Friends” Board and its’ purpose of supporting and promoting the activities of Children’s Square U.S.A. However, I need your help too. We can do more with other “Friends” like you. We have experienced a decline in our Friends membership roster in recent years, and you can help us by not only continuing to be our “Friend”…but by inviting a friend of yours to join us. Thank you for being our “Friend.”

Dennis Keithley, Board President
Friends of Children’s Square U.S.A.
The Friends’ Appreciation Event was just an excuse to have a great big outdoor bonfire party. We borrowed a beautiful golf cart (Turf Cars, Ltd.) to ferry guests to and from their cars which were parked up the valley. It was a perfect evening and great way to kick off our 2018 membership. I know you had a fun evening. Wait, if you couldn’t make it, we are planning to do this again in the fall. Please become a “Friends” member so you will be sure to get the invitation.

The new and beautiful residential cottages opened in October of 2017. Tours are available. The Friends held fundraisers and donated $3000 toward the Capital Campaign which matched donations up to that amount.

Friends’ Garden spruce-up. If you haven’t seen our beautiful garden, you may anytime. Just follow the sidewalk to the left of the offices at the Lemen Visitors’ Center, around behind the building. There is a gorgeous metal sculpture by Littleton Alston; and in the summertime, a fountain bubbles along the walk among the native grasses and plantings. There is also a labyrinth which the children use and a stone table with benches you may use for meditation or lunch. It’s a really nice destination.
I am honored to share a few thoughts about “Friends” of Children’s Square U.S.A. and why I became a “Friend.” Our purpose seems simple, when you first consider it. “To promote community interest and stimulate charitable activities that support Children’s Square U.S.A.” On second read, perhaps it is a little more complex. H. Jackson Brown, Jr. once said “Live so that when your children think of fairness, caring, and integrity, they think of you.” I like to think about Brown’s thoughts in context of who we are and what we do and also who “our” children are. Many of us are parents and grandparents with our own biological children. But what about the children, “our” children, in our communities that need us as well? They are our future, many with specific needs, struggles and challenges that can only be met by a special place like Children’s Square U.S.A. How do we live our life? Do we promote in our community interest and charitable activities to support Children’s Square U.S.A.? These are our children, our future, both your children and mine.

I first gained interest in Children’s Square U.S.A. through a discussion with several friends who were involved and supported the mission. Some of them knew of my personal story and they had the courage to share with me the story of Children’s Square. The mission immediately resonated with me. I had been placed into foster care myself when I was eleven years old and had remained in foster or group home care until I was fifteen, when my siblings were returned to my mother. We were homeless, often without shelter and out of school most of my childhood. Without the care of dedicated, concerned and caring people, my life may have been very different than it is today. My own biological children have never known need, they have never gone hungry or hopeless and their future course has been bright almost from the very beginning, as all children’s futures should be. In many ways, I was a child of Children’s Square, only in a different place and time.

Reasons to Join “Friends”

I visited Children’s Square U.S.A. and Carol Wood introduced me to some of the wonderful children there. In so many of their eyes, I saw myself from those many years ago. I saw hope, I saw promise, I saw innocence and longing, and I also saw pain. I was reminded of how important it was to me back then to have a place, a place of safety and care. A place that many times I didn’t even truly appreciate or want to be, but one of true caring and love. These are the things that shape children and save children. In these children, I saw all of these things and I saw myself. How could I say “no” to becoming involved?

The “Friends” of Children’s Square U.S.A. is a perfect way to support the mission of Children’s Square, but also to begin to recognize and share with others that these children are our future. They can be our best and our brightest hope, but they must have an opportunity presented from someone who cares just enough and who recognizes their worth. I ask you to consider not only your support through “Friends” of Children’s Square U.S.A., but also how we live our lives and represent the mission and values of Children’s Square in our community. After all, don’t we all want to be remembered by “our” children as being full of caring, fairness and integrity.

Chris Hochstetler
Executive Director
KANEKO
Friends of Children’s Square, USA

Friday, February 2, 2018

2018 “Friends” Membership
(as of this newsletter)

Promoter $450 & above
Dennis & Cynthia Keithley (10/10/17)
Barbara Schlott (12/21/17)

Partner $250.00 & above
James & Rebecca Burgart (10/10/17)
Carol Wood

Advocate $100.00 & above
Lois Danielson (10/10/17)
Margarette Goodenow (10/10/17)
Jack Heidel & Sharon Conlon (10/10/17)
Chris Hochstetler (paypal)
John & Lilly Kennedy
Jean Marshall (10/10/17)
Westy Nelson
Jane T-Peters
Tom & Jeanette Schierbrock (11/18/17)
Elizabeth Shracer (10/10/17)
Billie Shelton (10/10/17)
William Wege (10/10/17)

Benefactor $50.00 & above
Dan Dawson (10/10/17)
Dr. Alan & Cordula Fisher (10/10/17)
Richard Graeme (10/10/17)
Sharon Martin (10/10/17)
Margit Paulsen (10/10/17)
Donna Pritchard (10/10/17)
John & Margaret Rinde (10/10/17)
Dave & Becky Snedeker (10/10/17)
Greg & Linda Steensland (10/10/17)
Mike & Suzanne Winter (10/10/17)

Sustaining $25.00 & above
Mike & Pat Barker (10/10/17)
Lisa Bartholow (10/10/17)
Dick & Ardeth Christie (10/10/17)
Kathy Fiscus (10/10/17)
Stanley Grote (10/10/17)
Don & Michele Hotz (10/10/17)
Todd McCollister (10/10/17)
Joan Von Tersch (10/10/17)

Member $10.00 & above
Colleen Bartel (10/10/17)
Shari Boucher (10/10/17)
Eddith Buis (10/10/17)
Carl Heinrich (10/10/17)
Sandy Johnson (paypal)
Teri Moroney (10/10/17)

Membership-(Spiritual Life donation)
Susan Enewold (12/2017)

Friends of Children’s Square
Treasurer’s Report

In 2017 the 53 members of Friends of Children’s Square plus memorials generated a total of $6,861.90. These funds were used to help Children’s Square with the following projects:

• $1,550 for Bronze Sponsorship to Children’s Square U.S.A
• $255 for the volunteers, who help at Children’s Square, to be recognized at the Governor’s Volunteer Awards ceremony held in Council Bluffs
• $2,500 to help refurbish Cottonwood Cottage, older cottage on campus
• $1,500 to Spiritual Life program
• $150 to provide a holiday party for the youth that participate in the AMP (Achieving Maximum Potential) program
• $150 to help a foster family, whose home burned down, replace miscellaneous supplies

Suzanne Winter
Friends of Children’s Square Treasurer
Therman Statom was happy to respond to my request to make some sort of decorations for the tables at the Jason Awards. When it comes to working with the kids at Children’s Square he does not hesitate. It was really touching to see how the kids responded to his guidance. He was very patient and kind. These are photos of some of the beautiful art works that he and the children from campus created together in his Omaha studio. We had fun!

Barbara Schlott