

Friends of Fircrest

Summer ♡ Newsletter 2023

Website: <https://friendsoffircrest.org>

Email: friendsoffircrestrhc@gmail.com



President's Corner:

The year is flying by. Lots of work has been accomplished. Hopefully, we have brought delight to the lives of our residents and staff. We are now in the second half of our activities. The Fall brings a variety of challenges to bringing smiles to the faces of all.

Holidays, Recreational Projects, Entertainment – on and off Campus - are all possibilities. If you have any suggestions as to activities for our residents, please share. Sometimes we get stuck in a rut and continue to do the “same old-same old”. We need to access the brain power of our newer Parents & Guardians. What are some activities your residents enjoy? Could they be developed into group activities? Give us your suggestions and we will share them with staff. Change can be an exciting part of life.

Working with Friends of Fircrest is an ideal way to learn about the Campus, its activities and its changes. Did you know we will have a new Nursing Facility built to replace the aging Y Buildings? Are you interested in Gardening? If so, how about volunteering to get the Therapy Garden (Lower Campus) ready for winter. Do you know of any firm willing to maintain this Garden? We are willing to contract with them.

There are so many activities to improve campus life. All you have to do is talk to a member and share your ideas. We can take it from there. Take care,

Terri Anderson, President, Friends of Fircrest

Friends of Fircrest Art Project:

Friends of Fircrest has long had a desire to leave an imprint on the campus for many years. With the building of the new Nursing Facility, we asked to be given space on the grounds of the new facility for an outside art installation. We are very happy to report that a budget has been approved and we have been granted permission to work directly with Kiewit, the

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developer, for this project. Early preliminary meetings should be scheduled soon to begin looking at an area that we can utilize. In the near future, Friends of Fircrest will establish a committee to oversee this project. If you find yourself interested or have specific knowledge that may help us in this journey, please consider joining Friends of Fircrest.

Friends of Fircrest Resident Enrichment Committee:

Our committee has had fun during the summer finding ways to support the annual FunFest campus event. We furnished canvas bags for each resident filled with a sun visor, cool sunglasses and of course, a sweet snack. Additionally, we sponsored the music for the event hosting the Guy Johnson Trio which is always a hit with all residents and staff alike. As we begin to think of fall and winter, we have already kicked off our annual Christmas shopping for each resident residing at Fircrest. With the help of the staff, a personal and thoughtful gift is chosen for each individual. We handle ordering the items, receiving, wrapping and make sure it gets under the tree in their respective halls. We also look forward to adding to the Christmas parties in December.

As always, our committee strives to bring enrichment to all residents throughout the year with extra entertainment, outings, and opportunities for engagement in ways that bring them joy. Think about joining Friends of Fircrest and helping us create memories through enrichment.

Gwendine Norton, Enrichment Committee, Friends of Fircrest

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The Importance of Intermediate Care Facilities (ICF) and the Intellectual/Developmental Disability (I/DD) Community:

John Hirschauer is a journalist covering intellectual and developmental disability policy. John is working on a feature piece on the history and debate over the continued operation of Washington's RHCs. He has personal knowledge as to the inner workings of state facilities. He is the Vice President of a Family & Friends group in Connecticut.

In mid-August John toured Fircrest RHC in Shoreline. After an extensive campus visit, he had the opportunity to meet with several Parents & Guardians, who explained their journey to an RHC (ICF/NF).

Some have tried the services of Supported Living placements, SOLAs, and other RHCs. One Parent detailed her fight to have her daughter finally admitted to our Nursing Facility. Another spoke highly not only of RHC placements, but also the success of her son's living in the Shoreline Community. Unfortunately, we also heard of trials and failures in the community and the fight for admission to an RHC.

Being on a tight schedule, John left us to head to Rainier RHC for their Summer Fun Day, Tour and, again interviews with Parents & Guardians.

The Gray Fire at Medical Lake forced the cancellation of John's visit to Lakeland Village near Spokane. We are waiting to hear about the visit to Yakima Valley School.

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Presently, John is hoping for success getting our local papers to print his story.

DSHS Search for the New Assistant Secretary of the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA):

Some of you are probably aware that last spring Debbie Roberts, the Assistant Secretary of DDA had a sudden departure from the office. The position was filled on an interim basis. The search for her replacement is on-going. In July DSHS released an email to stakeholders around the state including parents and guardians from all four of our state's RHCs requesting input in support of their search for a new Assistant Secretary. The process involved 4 focus group sessions scheduled over a 3-day period in August. A professional consultant was hired by DSHS to facilitate the sessions. Several parents and guardians from the RHCs signed up to participate. Prior to the sessions we organized ourselves to develop a set of talking points we felt were important including core competencies and characteristics of the position. First of all, the person must be inclusive of the entire disability community without bias—those in community settings and those in congregate care. Must be able to listen to and speak with the entire disability community and not be divisive. These were our Top 3.

- *Honor CHOICE – Least restrictive/person-centered/full Continuum of Care options*
- *Create a culture of Transparency/Communication/Accessibility – parents, family members and guardians must be respected as true advocates*

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- *Caregiver Crisis – develop a comprehensive, innovative plan to address caregiver turnover across all residential settings*

Overall, we felt the sessions were a pleasant experience. The facilitator and staff were very professional and had complete control over the process. No one person or group of people were allowed to talk over others, speak out of turn or inject ideological philosophy. All of us who represented the RHCs felt like our voice was heard. Hopefully everyone else who didn't sign up for the focus group sessions participated in the survey that followed.

A special thanks goes to our former superintendent of Fircrest, Upkar Mangat, who was instrumental in getting DSHS to ask for input from all stakeholders across the state in support of the search for the new Assistant Secretary of DDA. The goal of DSHS is to have the position filled by Dec. 1st.

November Elections:

It's that time of year again where Friends of Fircrest is seeking volunteers to help manage and actively support the activities we are so blessed to be a part of. Elections for executive committee positions this year include President and Secretary. Those positions will serve 2-year terms beginning Jan. 1st, 2024. The position of Vice President has gone unfilled for the last 3 years and is also included. Should the V.P. position be filled this November the term would be an initial one-time only 1-year term to get back to a normal even-year election cycle per our Bylaws for the position of V.P. Nominations for positions on our Board of Directors are also open. According to our Bylaws we need a minimum of 7 with a maximum up to 17 allowed. We currently have 10. In our

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June membership meeting the decision was made to create a nomination committee consisting of all 10 Board members. The list of nominees for each executive position will be presented in the Annual member meeting in November at which time voting will be conducted.

Membership Drive and Volunteerism:

As you know, Friends of Fircrest is an all-volunteer membership based non-profit organization. It was certified by the Office of the Secretary of State of the State of Washington on February 9, 1978. We have faithfully adhered to our mission and responsibilities as described to the Articles of Incorporation for almost 46 years. Our storied past is full of numerous positive and challenging accomplishments, too many to account for here. Probably the single most important battle we faced was the fatal attempt by DSHS to close Fircrest during the years 2003-2006. Friends of Fircrest prepared a legal challenge we fought to repel the closure. We were successful. Without the dedicated efforts by those members who fought the good fight Fircrest would not exist today. Many other dedicated members have come and gone through the years. There are so many memories to share and friendships we've made with each other as parents and guardians.

Today we have another challenge before us. Dwindling membership. While our numbers fluctuate, the number of active members able and willing to do the work of our organization is in decline. Those who are active are carrying more and more of the load. We're aging and the situation is quickly becoming unsustainable. Financially we're viable so more donations of money aren't what's needed. While we appreciate the additional funds,

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donation of time is far more important. Please consider offering some of your time. As the 50th anniversary of Friends of Fircrest fast approaches, what a shame it would be if our organization had to close its door before we reached that milestone. There's so much at stake. We need each other. Our loved ones need us. Send an email to friendsoffircrestrhc@gmail.com to let us know you are willing to help and how to best contact you. Thank you.

Lloyd Baker, Secretary, Friends of Fircrest

2023 Membership Renewal and New Applications:

Please join Friends of Fircrest if you haven't already so you can attend our monthly member meetings. Annual membership is only \$15 for a single person and \$25 for a family. PDF form below and on the last page.



Join-Friends-of-Fircrest.pdf

Take action and Stay in Touch!

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A decorative graphic at the bottom right of the page consisting of several overlapping teal-colored geometric shapes, including triangles and rectangles, creating a modern, abstract design.

Membership Form: If you haven't submitted your dues yet, please join or renew your membership. Print out and complete form, and mail it with your payment to:

Friends of Fircrest

Attn: Treasurer
15230 15th Ave NE
Shoreline, WA 98155-7196

Attached is my check made out to Friends of Fircrest to cover my membership dues for the year _____. (Membership year begins in January.)

Individual (\$15.00) _____ Family (\$25.00) _____

Additional donation _____

Amount enclosed _____ Is this a renewal? Y / N

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____ e-mail _____

Legislative District _____

Please note: Your privacy is important to us. We do NOT sell or share your information.

Friends of Fircrest is an all-volunteer, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization advocating for the rights to quality living choices for all people with developmental disabilities.

Please make your tax-deductible contribution today!

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