

A neighbor's independence depends on you...



June 15, 2009

Faith in Action Volunteers is a charitable organization operated by and for the people of Fremont County

In 2003 with a Robt. Wood Johnson Foundation grant, direction from the sponsoring Presbyterian Outreach, and with a VISTA volunteer project manager we surveyed Fremont County communities and began two programs: transportation and health equipment loan. When our grant ended in November, 2005, our programs were sustainable with community support.

In June 2006, we incorporated independently as an Iowa **not for profit organization** and were awarded our IRS tax-exempt status and **501c3 public charity designation**. Faith in Action Volunteers is well into our seventh year of service to residents of southwest Iowa. These early years have presented many opportunities to refine and expand our programs, as well as many challenges to keep all running smoothly. We have a solid base and will continue to grow as needed.

Our mission is to assist our elderly, disabled, and disadvantaged neighbors lead independent lives with dignity. We provide volunteer opportunities for all ages to help with transportation needs, and to collect, inventory and deliver medical equipment for those recuperating at home. Our office and equipment storage closet are centrally located in Sidney, with **volunteers from every town in Fremont County.**



Photo by Sheri Ross

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Individually our Directors and Volunteers are active in their communities; all are supporting members of **their churches or civic organizations**. Our business memberships are current for the **Fremont County Chamber of Commerce** and the **Fremont County Economic Development** group. Sharon Yahnke, Program Director, and Rev. Tom Clark, Advisory Council President, serve on the **Waubonsie Mental Health Corporation** Board of Directors. Michael Ross, Advisory Council officer is President of the **Fremont County Chamber of Commerce**. Norma Schaaf, Advisory Council member and past officer of **Sidney American Legion Auxiliary Post 128**, worked with Faith in Action to combine their medical equipment inventory with ours and is active in the H.E.L.P. loan program. Mary Schaffner is a member of the Grape Hospital Board. We keep up our membership in the **National Faith in Action Network** for the benefits of belonging to a group of 300+ individual but similar programs around the country.

Faith in Action Contracts with SWITA for Vehicles



FORD TAURUS taxi
for 1 to 3 passengers

Last year, soaring gas prices along with increased requests for rides strained our transportation budget. **We drove 30,000 miles in 2008**, and see an increase in ride requests for **2009**. Though our drivers are volunteers, they're reimbursed for **mileage** if they use their own vehicles and for other expenses including meals. Essential costs to operate the transportation service include a supplemental insurance policy to cover all volunteers plus a separate Staff and Directors **liability insurance policy**. **Southwest Iowa Transit** provides insured, maintained vehicles; Faith in Action

New CHEVY VAN seats 5 or 6,
wheelchair accessible delivered in
April for Fremont County



recruits drivers and submits monthly mileage/trip logs. Drivers of these vehicles are background checked and fully insured by SWITA. Our professional, caring volunteers and staff drive over **100 rides monthly** for our neighbors. We ask a reasonable fee for services, but we do not refuse rides for inability to pay.

If you'd like to join us as a transportation project volunteer, you'd be welcome. We will match you with a job that suits your skills and available time. We need more **Volunteer Drivers**, especially from the Hamburg and Tabor areas, as well as one or two **office volunteers** to help dispatch rides and track data for important record

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keeping. Go to our website www.fiavol.org and click on the Volunteers page for an application, or stop in our Sidney office

...we HELP with our Health Equipment Loan Program

Medicare no longer covers the cost of bathing or toileting devices though bath benches and commodes can retail from \$50 to \$100 each. Those who require **short term use of assistive devices** while they recuperate at home or in a care center after surgery are glad to be able to borrow these items from **the Faith in Action/Sidney Legion Auxiliary H.E.L.P. closet**. Together we maintain a supply of refurbished wheelchairs and walkers, clean bathing and toileting devices, power chairs and electric hospital beds.

Though we loan items for temporary use we encourage a donation upon return. Click on the www.fiavol.org H.E.L.P. page to see our check out form and suggested donation list.



Volunteers are needed now to inventory our growing collection of medical equipment and tag each item. We have a separate computer dedicated to the HELP project and want to get the inventory on spreadsheets and post it on our website. Cleaning and maintenance of items before they're loaned out is an ongoing job as is pickup and delivery of items with our vehicle or yours.

The H.E.L.P. project is our most collaborative effort. Managed by representatives from Faith in Action and the Sidney Legion Auxiliary, individuals and care centers are our biggest **donors** of medical equipment. Last summer a **Bible School class** volunteered to clean equipment and design a flyer. **Court ordered community service** young people installed shelving and painted our storage building. Sometimes we must **purchase repair parts** or need to buy **another wheelchair or bath bench**. **Kohll's Medical Equipment** in Omaha sells us lightly used wheelchairs and other items at affordable prices. Penn Drug, Grape Hospital, Home Health and others give referrals. A suggested donation list by item is provided to borrowers who give what they can upon return of the equipment.

Call to learn more about our volunteer intake policies or examine the ***VOLUNTEERS*** page at www.fiavol.org

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Bequests or contributions to our local 501(c)3 organization **are tax-deductible.** It's safe and easy to donate from the ***DONATIONS*** page on our website www.fiavol.org

Or donate by mail. We will return a receipt for your records.

Studies show that volunteering improves health and quality of life and it feels good, too! We plan to continue what we've started and grow to include more volunteers and neighbors. Our expenses are as low as they can be with fuel and insurance the highest. Everyone involved is a volunteer and we pay no employee salaries or payroll expenses. Expense receipts are reimbursed so anyone with some free time can afford to volunteer. Any income, by fee or donation, is used locally for direct services.

We all thank you for your consideration. If we can assist you or if we can be of service to someone you know, please email, call or speak to one of us in your community.

*Very truly yours,
Sharon Yahnke Program Director
With the Faith in Action Advisory Council*

**Rev. Tom Clark, Tabor & Randolph
Mary Schaffner, South Hamburg
Jeff Beckner, SWITA, Atlantic
Michael Ross, Sidney**

**Gordon Green, WHMC, Clarinda
Norma Schaaf, Sidney
Lonnie Koch, Farragut**

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