



December 12, 2022

Susan W. Hoskins LCSW
Executive Director
Friends Foundation for the Aging
P.O. Box 1081
Langhorne, PA 19047

Dear Susan,

In 2019, when we first contacted Friends Foundation for the Aging, we found ourselves with six vacant full-time positions in our caregiver ranks. Today we could use 12 full-time caregivers. The staffing shortage in our region, and in the nation, I am told, is deepening. We are finding ourselves in a true staffing crisis. We have been working on a host of programs and concepts to add workers to our team, only to see agency companies steal our workers and sell their labor back to us at three to four times the rate we pay. In the past, we have tried to be competitive with other organizations like ours. We never had to consider matching agency rates to hire certified nursing assistants, certified med techs, LPNs, or RNs. Now we are competing directly with agencies to recruit, hire and retain these workers. We have raised our salaries for certified medication aids 45%, certified nursing assistants, 28% and licensed nurses 42%. We are working with high schools and community colleges to offer CNA courses. We hired a full-time recruitment specialist that hosts regular hiring events at George Fox University, and local high schools. Our latest program shares savings, that we might receive if the health services department reduces agency labor, with current employees.

The English Language Learner program hit hard times, right out of the gate. Covid made it difficult to hold the classes. Even with this, the community college prepared the learning materials and a year later classes were held. The gift from Friends Foundation for the aging were used to pay for these materials. These funds were also used for teacher and champion salaries, and classes were held with good participation. Our grandest accomplishment was when Lydia moved from full-time housekeeping to a full-time caregiver position this last year. She is still in this position, providing excellent care in our memory care neighborhood. We were sad to see our ELL Champion leave to work in construction with her family members. Today we are still looking for the right person to fill this open ELL Champion position.

The goals and desired outcomes for the program were as follows:

1. Reduce and/or eliminate outside-contracted agency caregiver use.
2. Hire and retain more workers through the program.
3. Increase total Latino employees from 12% to at least 15% of total workforce (reflecting community population of 15% Latino residents).
4. Open the Friendsview Career Track Pathway to more ESL employees.
5. Identify number of ESL employees, promoting at least 20% of that subgroup to a higher paying job within 1 year.
6. Develop a Spanish/English healthcare language curriculum package and make that package available to LeadingAge members in Oregon and nationally.
7. Celebrate an 80% pass rate on ESL healthcare curriculum.

The outcomes for our goals were mixed. Although we did have some success with attendance at classes and movement of one worker from housekeeping to caregiving, the objective of reducing the number of outside

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agency workers was not met. We do not believe the higher agency use had anything to do with the success of the program though. We do feel that our culture shifted. We appear to be more friendly to Latino workers. As a percentage, Latino workers at Friendsview moved from 12% three years ago, to now 21%. We have opened more careers to Latino workers and have more English Language Learners in other positions in our community.

We have shared this program as a presentation at two LeadingAge conferences; both in Oregon and Washington. Although we have offered to share the materials, we have not had any takers. We would still be glad to share and collaborate if we find the interest. We do plan to continue the program once we fill the position. We are currently looking at splitting the duties between two people; one to train the workers and one to advertise to Latino populations at churches and other organizations where Latino populations congregate.

We are grateful for the support from Friends Services for the Aging. Your gift helped us succeed with several of our goals and also helped us change our culture for the better. Thank you for your good work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'TE' with a horizontal line above it.

Todd Engle
Executive Director

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