



Grassroots  
Alchemy Letters  
May 2026

*When a Community  
Decides Something Matters  
Friendship Cottage*

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Stories that support adult day services at Friendship Cottage.



# MOMENTS THAT REVEAL WHO WE ARE

*What rises when people come together*

Life can hand us the gravity of a moment that asks something larger of us.

It lands unexpectedly with a weight that takes our breath away.

And once we gather ourselves together, it asks us to decide what matters.

What we want to protect, and what we choose to carry forward with us.

Moments like this have a way of revealing who we are.

What we value.

How deeply we are willing to show up for one another.

Over these past few months, our community answered a profound question like this in a remarkable way.

People throughout our community, and beyond it, stepped forward with generosity, encouragement, leadership, and steadfast belief.

And through many hands, something very meaningful was protected.

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# THE COLLECTIVE EXHALE

*When relief becomes visible*

On June 5th, Friendship Cottage officially closed on the property, allowing it to continue serving our community for years to come.

In less than five months, more than \$700,000 was raised through the support of individuals, families, local organizations, businesses, volunteers, and community members.

On Saturday, June 6th, more than 100 people gathered at Friendship Cottage for a community barbecue.

There were moments of laughter and conversation.

People reconnecting after time apart.

Friends recognizing familiar faces and the thread that brought us here together.

Sharing in the relief of a job well done.

And Joy.

You could feel it.

An entire community exhaling together.

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# **A COMMUNITY STEPPING FORWARD**

## *Leadership in service of continuity*

One of the meaningful parts of this effort was watching people and organizations help carry additional responsibility for the future of Friendship Cottage.

ACAP, Aroostook County Action Program, a 501c3 non-profit, stepped forward to acquire the license for Friendship Cottage and help ensure its continuation for the community it serves.

Teams across leadership, finance, marketing, operations, administration, and care services expanded their breadth to offer time and expertise throughout the process.

Their willingness to take on additional responsibility helped lay the foundation for Friendship Cottage to move forward into its next chapter.

There was also a deep intention to protect the property's future through a covenant designed to preserve its long-term purpose and continuity.

A level of stewardship like that holds great meaning.

It reflects the protection beyond a building to the care and belonging it makes possible.

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# THE PEOPLE AT THE CENTER OF IT ALL

## *The trust carried through uncertainty*

Throughout these past months, many of us — including participants and families — experienced understandable uncertainty while the future of Friendship Cottage was being secured.

Changes in care environments can feel deeply emotional, especially when routines and familiarity matter so much in daily life.

Friendship Cottage is more than a program. It is a part of daily life. A place filled with familiar faces and a sense of daily belonging.

And through it all, participants continued arriving each day with trust and resilience.

That courage deserves recognition, too.

Because at the center of every conversation and fundraising effort were the people Friendship Cottage exists to support.

People whose lives are deeply connected to the care and sense of community found here.

Our community never lost sight of that.

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# **MORE THAN A FUNDRAISING EFFORT**

*What people were really protecting*

Over time, it became clear this effort was never really just about saving a building.

It was about protecting a place where people continue to matter to one another.

A place where families find support and caregivers can find relief.

Where companionship remains part of daily life.

New friendships are formed, and a sense of belonging is felt.

Everyone is welcomed as they are and continues to be fully seen.

It is a place where dignity remains present through every chapter of life.

Where small moments of connection restore something essential in people.

People understand this is what Friendship Cottage makes possible.

And together, our community chose to protect it.

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# WHAT CARE TEACHES US

*When understanding becomes personal*

We generally do not spend much time thinking about care until it becomes personal.

Someone we know or love begins to need support. Or we start needing additional support ourselves.

A family enters unfamiliar territory together, and life requires more emotional and practical support.

It is through these experiences that we understand care.

We begin understanding how much presence matters.  
How meaningful relief can feel.

The importance of knowing someone else is helping carry the weight beside us.

We start recognizing the people who step forward every day to help others navigate difficult chapters.

We understand care has the power to soften fear and remind people they are still valued and loved.

Care goes beyond theory and becomes deeply human.

It is something we feel.

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# THE LEGACY MY MOTHER LEFT ME

*An understanding of care*

Recently, someone asked me what my mother's legacy is.

That was something I really had to think about.

There were so many lessons that landed over the months spent together at Friendship Cottage and in hospice care at my home.

It was time that taught me something deeply human and deeply felt.

Eventually, I decided that was the most meaningful learning of all.

My mother's legacy is an understanding of what care means when it is deeply felt.

Care changes the way we see people.

The way we show up for one another and understand community itself.

It teaches us that care is something we find in community and actively create together.

That understanding shapes the way I experience Friendship Cottage and the people who care for it.



# A DATE THAT CARRIED MEANING

*The hidden language of connection*

I have become more aware of the synchronicities that appear to guide us and teach us meaningful lessons.

This chapter carried a few significant personal moments.

For more than 30 years, June 5th was a date shared by my parents and me.

6.5 was a small family anchor that appeared throughout life in meaningful ways. A number sequence that kept returning. A date connected to a loved one and my parents.

So, when Friendship Cottage officially closed on June 5th, out of all the days in the year, that landed with some gravity for me.

A reminder that we remain connected to the people we love in meaningful ways.

And as if that date was not quite enough, I later realized our first ACAP board retreat would take place on June 25th, which is my mother's birthday.

I laughed out loud and said, "Yes, Mom, I got it."

Synchronicities arrive to remind us we are never alone.

It felt like my parents were celebrating alongside us as Friendship Cottage stepped into a new season.

This was one of those moments.

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# WHERE THIS STORY BEGAN FOR ME

*Love becoming understanding*

My introduction to Friendship Cottage came through caring for my mother during the final chapter of her life.

Through that experience, I understood that care lives inside community, and it was a lesson I was meant to learn.

As a highly capable person who strongly believed I was the one meant to provide the best care for my mother, this lesson unfolded slowly and brilliantly.

Thread by thread, I unraveled.

And care began arriving through the people who stepped forward into my circle.

People who noticed both my mom and I needed help. Those who helped me carry difficult moments together.

Eventually, I understood that care has a way of gathering around us when we allow ourselves to receive it.

And in many ways, that is exactly what Friendship Cottage makes possible for so many families.

Friendship Cottage is the essential anchor inside that understanding for me.

And my mother became an essential part of this story, too.

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# WHAT BELONGING LOOKS LIKE

*A visible expression of care*

At the community gathering this weekend, several families spoke about what Friendship Cottage means to them.

One spouse shared the experience of continuing to work while her husband needed daily support and care.

Friendship Cottage became a place where relief could finally be felt.

A place where her husband is understood.  
Where she knew he was welcomed warmly and cared for throughout the day, and she didn't have to worry.

Then she said something that made many of us smile.

Some days, the warmth at Friendship Cottage feels so comforting that she wishes she could stay here too!

The emotion behind those words was openly shared.

Because what people experience here extends far beyond services alone.

People feel welcome.

They feel the atmosphere of care surrounding them.

And they feel the relief of knowing they are not carrying everything on their own.



# PEOPLE CONTINUE TO MATTER

*Being recognized beyond change*

Another family member spoke about his mother-in-law, who grew up in another country and once helped administer an organization with admirable capability and presence.

And then, over time, life changed.

The woman who had once managed complex responsibilities and supported others so steadily, now needed support herself.

And at Friendship Cottage, she continues to be recognized for who she is.

Her life and her story matter.  
Here, her presence is felt and appreciated.

She continues to be welcomed as a whole person carrying a lifetime of experiences, wisdom, and memories.

There was deep gratitude in hearing someone speak about the importance of being fully seen throughout every chapter of life.

Because care holds greater meaning when people continue to feel valued.

Because we all carry a lifetime within us.

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# THE ORIGINAL VISION

## *How care became community*

Another speaker reflected on the original intention behind Friendship Cottage itself.

Years ago, a man caring for his wife recognized how deeply families need support as they navigate caregiving. That understanding became the soulful beginning of Friendship Cottage.

Several people who gathered this weekend had been connected to its story across many decades.

Some were there in the beginning and helped form it with great intention.

Others helped carry it through uncertainty.

And some stepped forward now to help secure its future.

You could feel the continuity of care moving across generations of people and hands.

The thread connecting all of us is care.

A shared understanding that every family should have support within our community.

And that places like Friendship Cottage help people continue feeling connected to one another.

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# THE POWER OF SMALL COMMUNITIES

*What becomes possible together*

In small communities, people often know one another's personal stories. Even the chapters people may carry quietly within.

We understand those who have experienced loss or are now caring for a loved one.

Who needs support but feels more comfortable not asking for it.

Or who may need support soon, and resources begin gathering around them.

That closeness creates an ability to respond with humanity.

People start noticing one another more thoughtfully.

Checking in and offering help.

Making space for others to feel supported and held.

We all need community. Sometimes we don't know it's missing until we find it again.

That is what happened here over these past months.

It reflects the extraordinary power of people choosing to care together in community.

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# THE HEART OF FRIENDSHIP COTTAGE

*The original intention still living here*

During the gathering, a sizable stone heart was passed carefully from hand to hand around the circle.

Years ago, the man whose vision inspired Friendship Cottage gave his wife the stone heart on Valentine's Day while caring for her.

Over time, the heart began to appear throughout their home in unexpected places, moving instinctively with the rhythms of their life together.

Then one difficult day, she held the stone heart tightly in her hands while feeling deeply agitated.

He sat beside her and gently held the heart with her.  
And she calmed.

In that moment, he understood what she needed most was presence.

Anne, Friendship Cottage's administrator, thoughtfully introduced the stone to everyone who gathered. She has been the steady keeper of the heart behind Friendship Cottage since its founding.

As each person held the stone heart before passing it to the next person in the circle, you could feel the original intention behind Friendship Cottage still living here.

And that intention continues to live on through the people who help carry its spirit forward.

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# CARE IS SOMETHING WE CREATE

*The humanity that holds a community together*

Care is created daily through generosity and presence.

It lives inside delivering meals to people who need them.

Conversations held when people need to be heard.

Rides that are offered without hesitation.

Moments where one person chooses to help another.

It lives inside the people who care.

The volunteers who show up every day with a smile.

Caregivers who bring patience and warmth into difficult moments.

And the families and neighbors who help one another feel less alone.

Care has a way of moving outward. And over time, these small acts shape the spirit of our community.

One act of kindness creates space for the next.

A community slowly strengthening itself through the decisions to keep supporting one another.

This is what our community chose to do.

Friendship Cottage now moves forward surrounded by the community that helped protect it.

And in doing so, it reminds us how deeply we matter to one another.

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# THANK YOU

*With heartfelt appreciation from all of us*

Over these past months, our community rallied in extraordinary ways to help protect Friendship Cottage and the people it serves.

You gave generously and encouraged one another to do the same.

Resources were shared alongside an unwavering belief in what Friendship Cottage makes possible for families throughout our region.

Friendship Cottage now continues surrounded by this strength.

There are not enough words to fully express our gratitude.

Your generosity is deeply felt.

Thank you for demonstrating what becomes possible when we join hands around something meaningful.

And thank you for helping ensure that Friendship Cottage continues to become what it was always meant to be.

With eternal gratitude,

From all of us