



From the Herrles



During this pandemic, connection with others has become even more important than before. We keenly feel the need for community, and for coming together to care for one another.

We're guessing that as someone who also supports House of Friendship, you also know the value of community. We share your belief in the importance of helping people, especially those who may not have the same safety nets to support them when the challenges of life become overwhelming.

As a family with three grown children, we have deep community roots through our family business, Herrle's Country Farm Market, located just outside of Kitchener-Waterloo. We have been blessed with an amazing support network, which provided an outpouring of love when our daughter, Lydia, suffered devastating injuries in an accident nine years ago.

During the toughest days of Lydia's recovery, we realized that it was important to look beyond ourselves and not just focus on our own situation.

Maybe you too were taught to see the needs of others. And perhaps, like us, your parents often asked you, "How are your actions going to make the world around you a better place?" That's why we support House of Friendship, because we value the mission and feel called to share what we have.

House of Friendship sees the need in our community and steps in to provide life changing supports, community and connection for people who are facing incredible struggles. We're delighted to be able to partner with House of Friendship. And now, with a gift in our Will, we take great joy in knowing that we'll be part of that story long into the future, for generations to come.

Have you ever thought about including a gift in your Will? We hope you'll give it

some serious consideration. For us, it comes down to some basic questions.

Do you support what House of Friendship has been doing for 80 years? Do you believe in what they're doing today – the impact they're having now for people who are struggling in these unprecedented times? And do we need them to continue this vital work in the future?

If we can get behind this work now, then why wouldn't we take the opportunity to support our neighbours of tomorrow, to make our community a better place, even after we're gone?

Our Christian faith is lived out in community – in sharing and caring for others. With a gift in our Wills, we can continue to act upon our faith and celebrate the values that we hold dear by helping people for generations to come.

The linking of one generation to the next is important to us. We farm the same land that has been in James' family for five generations. Our family business, Herrle's Country Farm Market, has been growing food and feeding our local community for 57 years, ever since James' parents, Elsie and Howard, began selling sweet corn out of their garage in 1964.

We said goodbye to Howard late in 2016. He died peacefully at home, on the farm where he happily spent his entire 86 years. (It's actually incredible to think that he was born into this world around the same time as House of Friendship was founded!) Our family matriarch, Elsie, continues to greet customers and lead the family with the same work ethic she learned from her parents.

Elsie's family immigrated to Canada from Holland in the 1950s. Life was hard for immigrants after the Second World War. They understood that nothing is taken for granted and everything has to be earned. Their focus on hard work was passed down to James (sometimes unwillingly, he admits with a smile), but growing up, he did his fair share of good hard work.

That work ethic is something we've tried to impart to our kids and to our young employees too. We believe in the value of hard work, and we love to teach young people about the diligence required to do a job well.

We take great care in everything we do. Our customers, many of who have been coming to our farm for generations, expect a better quality product and experience than they can find in a supermarket. As a result, Herrle's is a bit of a household name in our area, something that Michelle found out when she first joined the family.

Michelle grew up in Elmira, a short half hour from our farm. She fell in love with

the farmer, and knew he came from a farming family known for selling fresh-from-the-field sweet corn. But she didn't realize how famous her new family was locally, until she went to change her name on her bank account when they got married. After giving the Herrle name, she started to spell it, but the clerk just said, "Oh, like the sweet corn!"

Ours is mostly a summertime business that many associate with freshly picked strawberries, or sweet corn, as well as fun family memories. We have good relationships with a lot of our customers. We remember one very senior customer who told James that back in the late 1960s, she would hold him while his mom went out to the field to pick fresh sweet corn for her!

We can't imagine doing that today, of course, but those were different times. We still think that some of the most wonderful, caring and supportive people shop at our Market!

Our deep connection to our community plays out in many of our business decisions. When we receive a request for a charitable donation, we always filter it through the question, "Will it benefit our community?"

And in turn, our community has been there for us in so many ways.

In 2012, when our daughter Lydia was 13 years old, she was hit by a recycling truck as she stepped off the school bus at the end of our driveway. She suffered a catastrophic brain injury, as well as numerous broken bones. For the past nine years, she has been through a long and difficult recovery that continues to this day.

After the accident happened, our community showed their care and support for us by tying lime green ribbons, Lydie's favourite colour, to mailboxes, trees and porch posts – a wonderful way for our community to let us know they were standing with us! Everyone championed Lydie in her recovery and their support buoyed us through many heartbreaking days.

We were incredibly moved by the avalanche of prayers and love we received from our community. But at the same time, we were also aware that not everyone has the same support networks to buffer their suffering during hardship.

In a nutshell, that's why House of Friendship is so near and dear to our hearts. House of Friendship reaches out to help people through their most difficult hours – people who may suffer like we did, but who don't have the support we had.

We know you understand that House of Friendship is about knowing *someone has your back*. Their services are often the last resort for people who don't have anywhere

or anyone else to turn to.

That's why we had no hesitation in our decision to leave a gift in our Will to House of Friendship. We trust the leadership completely and we believe there is enough strength in the DNA of this wonderful organization to steer a steady course far into the future.

We believe you share our hope for the future of those who turn to the House of Friendship for help; hope that they will have enough to eat, a place to live, and a community to support them; hope that they will receive the help they need to heal from their trauma, their addiction, and their medical issues; hope that they will be able to reach their full and true potential, just like our Lydie will, one day.

Please give some thought to leaving a gift in your Will to House of Friendship. It's an incredibly thoughtful way to have a tremendous impact on the lives of people in our community for many years to come. And it's a lovely way to live out our shared values of caring, sharing and responsibility for others.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "James and Michelle Herrle". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "J" for James.

James and Michelle Herrle
Long-time Supporters and Legacy Donors

P.S. We believe, like you do, that we all share a responsibility to help those in need in our community. And we believe that making a gift to House of Friendship in our Will is the best way to continue helping people for generations to come. We hope you'll seriously consider joining those of us who have made this personal and profoundly rewarding decision. If you have any questions about making a bequest to House of Friendship, feel free to reach out to Margaret Lucas, Development Director at 226-972-4390 or MargaretL@houseoffriendship.org. We're sure you'll be so glad you did!