

## 2026 MINUTES for the Web

### FF Southwest Florida Meeting Minutes

January 16, 2026

Present: Kim Cullinan, Jo & Jack Cooley, Mary Montagne, Joanne & Richard Collins, Diane Gooding, Bev & Dennis Haggerty, Jane McDonald, Susan Hills, Kathleen Davey, Michelle Kemps, Carol & Chris Nasby, Terese Libby, Joanne MacPeek

Guest: Wendy Fowler

1. Terese welcomed new members Kathleen Davey, Susan Hills, Suzy Riddle, Jan Murphy, Lois Hillman

2. Recitation of the Friendship Force pledge.

3. Treasurer's report:

General account: \$2016.47

Incoming: 1526.70

Outbound: 2639.70

Total: \$6182.87

4. Dues: FFSWFL dues are \$15 and can be paid by check to FFSWFL and given to Jane McDonald. FFI dues are \$100 and can be paid online. Terese reviewed how to pay FFI dues.

5. Journeys:

a. FF Baku, Azerbaijan. Inbound. November 8-13, 2025. JCs Michelle Kemps and Marcia Ellis

b. FF National Capitol, Washington DC. Inbound. February 1-7, 2026. JCs Carol Nasby, Susan Hills, Kathleen Davey. A special thank you to Kathleen Davey for sponsoring the welcome brunch.

c. FF Cornwall, UK. Outbound. May 18-25, 2026. Pre-trip Wales, UK. Post-trip Scotland, UK. JC Joanne Collins

d. FF Eastern Club of Sri Lanka. August 2026. JC Maureen Butt. Send \$100 deposit to Maureen if interested.

e. North American Regional Conference. April 24-27, 2026. Hyatt Centric Hotel, Memphis, TN. Post-trip cruise the Mississippi to New Orleans.

6. Social Events

a. Jan 17: Memorial service in Bonita Springs for Luvvy Kovacic.

b. Jan 21: 15 members are going to Mote Aquarium. Diane Gooding.

c. Feb 15: The Play That Went Wrong. 2pm Ft. Myers. Carol Nasby.

d. Feb 22: Red Sox game. Kim Cullinan.

e. Nov 2026: Inbound. A club from Indonesia

7. Terese asked club members to vote for 2027 outbound destinations.

8. Meeting was adjourned.

Terese gave a presentation on the FF Napa Sonoma Valley journey with a pre-trip at

Crater Lake National Lodge in October 2025.  
Lunch: Athenian Restaurant in N. Fort Myers.  
Marcia Ellis  
Secretary FFSWFL

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## FFSWFL Board Meeting Minutes

Feb 9, 2026

Present: Therese Libby, Susan Hills, Jane McDonald, Diane Gooding, Marcia Ellis, Carol Nasby, Judy Carson

Zoom Meeting 40 minutes

1. Minutes of Jan 16, 2026 were approved by unanimous vote.
2. Treasurer's report from Jane McDonald:
  1. Current balance \$1834.61
  2. Inbound: \$3,005.60,
  3. Outbound: \$10,761.75.
- 3.
4. Carol gave a report on the finances of the recent inbound, FF National Capitol. She and Jane will meet to formulate a final report on the journey budget.
  1. Marcia made a motion to reimburse Kathleen for the breakfast if there are enough funds remaining. Motion carried.
- 5.
6. Calendar dates for meetings
  1. February: meeting Feb 20<sup>th</sup> at North Fort Myers Library. We will discuss travel insurance and packing tips.
    1. March: International Friendship day. Diane reported: Friday, March 13. 12-2pm. Lakes Park, Fort Myers. Potluck.
  - 2.

- 3. April: Margie Kang is presenting on Italian culture
  - 1. Soloman's Castle for April social.
- 4.
- 5. May: social lunch for those not on the outbound Cornwall journey
- 6.
- 7. September: report on Cornwall journey
- 8. December: Judy is checking with scheduler for second Sunday in Dec. to schedule our Christmas party at her clubhouse.
- 9.
- 10. Luvvy's donation: \$50 to our club, \$150 to FFI
- 11. Indonesia inbound journey committee: Carol reported date is around Nov 8 for 6 nights. Need 6 hosts.
- 12. Sri Lanka outbound journey: Terese will ask Maureen to attend next meeting for a report.
- 13. Jane reported that we currently have 33 social members (5 are associate members). An associate member belongs to more than one club.

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## **Ten Reasons to Explore the World with the Friendship Force**

**TEN WAYS TO PARTICIPATE IN FRIENDSHIP FORCE  
WITHOUT LEAVING HOME**

# FFSWFL Board Meeting Minutes

## June 15, 2026

**Present:** Terese Libby, Marcia Ellis, Carol Nasby, Jane McDonald, Susan Hills, Judy Carson

**Absent:** Kathleen Davey

### 1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order and a quorum was confirmed.

### 2. Approval of Previous Minutes

The minutes from the April 28, 2026, Board Meeting were approved.

### Journeys

#### 3. 2027 Inbound and Outbound Journey Coordinators

The Board approved the following 2027 Journey Coordinators:

#### Inbound Journey

- Memphis: Carol Nasby, Kathleen Davey, and Susan Hills
  - February 1–7, 2027
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#### Outbound Journeys

- Seattle: Terese Libby, Mary Montagne, and Susan Hills
- New Caledonia: Joanne and Richard Collins

#### 4. November 2026 Inbound Journey

There will be no inbound journey in November 2026.

#### 5. Christmas Party

The Christmas Party will be held at Judy Carson's club. Judy is currently obtaining catering cost estimates.

#### 6. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's Report was presented and approved.

Current account balances:

- General Fund: \$1,499.34
- Inbound Fund: \$2,266.32
- Outbound Fund: \$3,243.26 (includes funds designated for the Sri Lanka journey)

Following discussion, the Board approved transferring the remaining \$250 from the Cornwall journey to the General Fund.

## **7. Membership Report**

### **Membership Report**

- 24 members have paid FFI dues.
- 4 new members have not yet paid FFI dues.
- Pat Hazen is not currently listed in the membership records.
- 14 members are aging out of travel eligibility.

## **8. Mentoring Program**

Mentors continue meeting individually with new members, delivering orientation folders, and encouraging participation in at least one committee. The mentoring program includes one-on-one meetings, welcomes, and ongoing support throughout the year to answer questions and assist members in becoming involved in club activities.

### **Mentor Assignments**

<b>New</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>Mentor</b>
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Marge & Jim DeWitt Judy  
Carson

Wende Fowler Diane  
Gooding

Linda Harrell Kim  
Cullinan

Barbara Jack & Jo Cooley

Hoenes

Joy Perez Terese Libby

Marty Lou Rizik

Schoonhei  
m

Linda Smidt Kathleen

Davey

Pat Hazen Joanne  
MacPeek

(Estero)

The club's nine new members are primarily from Punta Gorda, Fort Myers, and Estero, and they are interested in travel opportunities.

Additional mentoring updates:

- Diane's new member and friend is spending the summer in Michigan. They plan to meet soon to review the new-member information packet.
- Lou has met with Marty Schoonheim, who agreed to serve as a Day Host.
- Judy Carson plans to meet with the DeWitts soon.
- Lois has offered to provide mentoring assistance remotely.

## **9. Membership Chair Position Description**

Following discussion, the Board approved adding the Membership Committee Chair position job description to the Policies and Procedures Manual.

## **10. Welcome Document**

The Board approved adding Carol Nasby's Welcome Document to the club website. See below.

## **11. Emeritus Membership Status**

The Board discussed creating an "Emeritus" membership category for members who have aged out of travel but wish to remain active in local club activities.

Requirements and provisions:

- Emeritus members must pay local club dues.
- FFI membership dues will be optional.
- Members must have previously participated as ambassadors or home hosts and understand the culture and mission of FFI.

The motion passed and will be added to the club's policies.

The Board also confirmed that "Associate Members" will continue to be defined as members whose primary club affiliation is with another Friendship Force club.

## **12. Other Business**

No additional business was brought before the Board.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned.

### **Membership Committee Chair Responsibilities**

The Membership Committee Chair shall:

- Develop and implement ideas and strategies to increase membership.
- Match each new member with an experienced club member who will:
  - Meet with the new member to review the website, explain how it works, and answer questions.
  - Contact the new member by phone or email to encourage attendance at meetings and social activities.
  - Invite the new member to participate in inbound journey activities.
- Provide name tags and pins to new members. Members are responsible for the cost of replacement name tags and additional pins.
- Identify and welcome new members at membership meetings.
- Monitor active and inactive membership numbers and report findings to the Board and membership.

- Analyze membership non-renewals and conduct appropriate follow-up.
- Develop an annual recruitment plan, including budget requirements, and present it to the Board for approval.
- Work with the Communications Chair to maintain current and accurate membership-related content on the club website.

### **Journey to FF Cornwall, England Report**

Our club journey to the Cornwall Club is complete and most costs were close to what was budgeted.

The only category that I should have budgeted a greater amount was for the overseas wiring fees of transferring club funds to Cornwall. Also, the exchange rate did fluctuate. However, we had no further unexpected costs. Therefore, I am refunding \$250 to the club (from the 'pad' amount to be deposited into the Outbound Journey Account. It is too small an amount to refund to the ambassadors. (Please note that the board could transfer the \$250 to our General Account if it is needed to cover future expenses.)

There were 14 of us who went on this journey and below is the per person budget each member received and paid according to whether they were going solely to the Cornwall club or whether they were going on a pre and/or post trip.

FFI journey fee (\$25 per night for 6 nights paid to our parent organization, FFI)	\$150
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<p>Cornwall program fee (estimated amount of 320 British pounds requested by Cornwall converted to US Dollar)</p>	<p>\$430</p>
<p>Host Club gift (\$100 for Cornwall's charity = \$100 / 14 = <b>\$7</b> each ambassador)</p>	<p>\$7</p>
<p>Ambassador portion of Earned seat amount for Journey Coordinator (1/13th the total amount of our the Cornwall program fee per our Bylaws) Note: There are 14 going</p>	<p>\$33</p>
<p>Pad amount for "just in case" unplanned expense or Exchange Rate fluctuations while on the trip = <b>\$40</b> (Will be refunded after the trip if not used.)</p>	<p>\$40</p>
<p>Ambassador portion of Add-on Journey effort for Journey Coordinator (per club Bylaws) <b>\$10 (only if you are going on pre or post trip)</b></p>	<p>\$10</p>
<p>Wire Transfer Fee (\$15)*</p>	<p>\$1</p>

Plus Deposit previously given with journey application	\$100
Total Due	\$671

\*Note: Our treasurer stated that it cost much more than \$15 to wire the funds.

The Cornwall Club was very responsive from planning to executing a wonderful journey. I made many posts to our club FaceBook account all about this fantastic journey from the Wales pre-trip to the Cornwall Journey and then the Scotland post-trip. We had two "first time" ambassadors, Kathleen Davey and Lois Hillman. Everyone seemed to have a great time and I received no negative feedback about the Cornwall Journey. I hope that all the ambassadors will complete the on-line evaluation sent to them by FFI.

It was a pleasure being the Journey Coordinator for this trip because everyone cooperated with the on-line zoom, the payment deadlines, giving me their medical forms (which I returned to them) and took responsibility for their travel airline and train bookings and kept track of their passports!

Marci Ellis and one of her friends attended the pre-trip and then another yet one of her friends attended the post trip. Mindy Warren (802-535-1311) and Kathi Melcher (941-626-2688) both indicated that they are interested in joining our club. **Membership should follow up with a phone call or email and invite them to join our club.** Both live in Punta Gorda Isles and were a delight to have along.

I did invite the Cornwall Club to visit Southwest Florida but I was told by the leaders and members of the club that they will not travel to the United States until the current president is out of office. Many are very "put off" by American politics and the current war with Iran. However, the club was truly warm to all of us and did not let their negativity about our country's current leadership color their interactions with our club members.

In Friendship,

Joanne Collins

# New Members Processing

**President:** Identify new members to welcome them at membership meetings.

**Treasurer:** Collect contact information for new member and forward to Membership Committee Chair. Monitor number of members, active and inactive, and report to Board. Order name tags and pin for new members.

**Newsletter Editor:** Email new member asking for photo and short description of introduction to publish in newsletter.

## Membership Committee:

Send all new members FFSWFL Welcome letter via email. Copy newsletter editor on this email.

Match new members with an experienced club member (mentor) to do the following:

- (a.) meet with new member to review website, discuss how it works, and answer questions. Provide the New Member Orientation document for review.
- (b.) call or email new member to invite them to attend meetings and social activities
- (c.) call or email new member to participate in activities of an inbound journey

## Administrator Duties on FF Portal Web Site

1. Keep Friendship Force FFI Website (AKA FFI Portal) up-to-date by signing into [https://my.friendshipforce.org/en/users/sign\\_in](https://my.friendshipforce.org/en/users/sign_in) Click on CLUBS AND GROUPS on left hand side of page and then the top of the next page. Click on Membership List to edit by add/or delete members. **This list is important because it assigns the club members their individual number needed to travel on journeys.**
2. Keep Club Information up-to-date so that FFI and those viewing club information will know current club officers. Send a Welcome Letter to the new member and in it, give them their Membership Number. A draft of the letter is below.\*
3. Add the new member's email address to the Constant Contact (newsletter

program) and identify them as a full member so that the newsletter will be sent to them.

4.

Add the new member's email address to your FF Members Group on your email provider's list. This enables you to send an email to the entire group of members (if you don't want to use Constant Contact).

## Example of Welcome Letter Email

Dear ,

I want to personally welcome you to our wonderful club and let you know that you will be receiving emails and newsletters about the current and upcoming activities of the club. You will receive the club newsletter in an email program called *Constant Contact*. *Look for it at the beginning of the month*. Occasionally, your security settings may send your emails to SPAM. You may have to look in that folder and let your system know that this is an email you want to receive in your regular email.

We also have a local club website located at [Friendship Force of Southwest Florida](#) where you can review the club bylaws, read about the history of our club, locate newsletters, obtain reimbursement forms, and find numerous other interesting facts and details about our club. There is also a MEMBER PORTAL for the International Friendship Force (FFI) that you should sign into to access information on important international current news, apply to go on journeys, find out about global and future journeys, and even a unique on-line book discussion group with members throughout the world, and more! It's address is [Friendship Force - Member Portal](#) . You have a unique portal Friendship Force Club Member number and it is . You will need this number when you apply to travel with us. Sign on to the portal above, create a password and try it. It is pretty self explanatory. Please pay the \$100 annually to be a member of Friendship Force International which gives you the ability to travel with us.

Our club tries to meet monthly "in season" from September through May. During the Summer months, we schedule our LEO's (Let's Eat Out) for lunch and try to stay in touch with those who are here in southwest Florida. We also have a really nice complementary Ice Cream Social at one of our member's homes in August. Our "in season" meetings are generally at the library located in North Fort Myers but occasionally we meet in other facilities in the region. We have a meeting with a program of interest, usually about our Friendship Force travels or other interesting topics. The more you attend, the more you will feel part of the group. Also, if you can plan ahead, apply to go on an "outbound" journey with our club. Watch the monthly newsletter, attend meetings and check the myFFI portal to hear about all the travel opportunities.

I've attached a membership list that will help you get to know our members. Please use this for *only club business*.

You will be receiving an email from our newsletter editor requesting a picture of yourself and a short introductory note about you. This information will be published in the next newsletter to introduce you to our membership. This newsletter only goes to our club members. We also have a GROUP FaceBook page found under Friendship Force of Southwest Florida Group. Sometimes we publish group pictures of our members. Let us know if you have any reservation about your image in publicity there.

Our treasurer, Jane McDonald, is ordering your badge.

Questions? Don't hesitate to contact me at or by email.

In Friendship,

## **Processing of New Members Document**

# **Friendship Force of Southwest Florida**

## **New Member Orientation**

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## **“WELCOME TO THE FRIENDSHIP FORCE!”**

Friendship Force is an international cultural journey and home hospitality program. Its goal is to promote international understanding, friendship, and world peace.

The aim of this booklet is to provide you with information on Friendship Force and, in particular, our local club, The Friendship Force of Southwest Florida; how our club operates and the many membership benefits available to you.

As a new member, you obviously share our interest in exploring new cultures, countries and regions. Friendship Force provides the opportunity to meet new friends through travel and home hospitality, and those experiences lead to understanding and a greater desire to serve our global village. Whenever we host visitors from another international or domestic club, all our members are encouraged to participate, so we have included quite a bit of information about traveling with Friendship Force and how you can be involved when we host a journey group.

We are very glad you joined us, and we want your membership to be a rewarding experience!

## **About Friendship Force**

Friendship Force International provides opportunities to explore new countries and cultures from the inside by bringing people together at the personal level. Through the signature program of home hospitality, local hosts welcome international visitors into their culture, sharing with them meals, conversation, and the best sights and experiences of their region.

In a typical Friendship Force program, our local club, The Friendship Force of Southwest Florida, prepares an itinerary of cultural activities, inviting members from clubs in other countries to come and stay with them in their homes for up to a week.

## **Who We Are**

Friendship Force International (FFI) is a worldwide network of clubs (local chapters) and individuals that advance our mission of promoting global understanding across the barriers that separate people. We do this by connecting people from different countries at the personal level. When local hosts open their homes to visitors from other countries and cultures, true understanding can develop through the sharing of meals, conversation and the routines of daily life. Since its founding in 1977 FFI has brought together millions of people. In 2012 alone, 5,443 friendship ambassadors traveled between 54 countries, with thousands more serving as hosts.

***Great Places ✧ Great Faces ✧ Great Friends***

## **1. Go where you've never been**

Take a journey into the heart of a country and its people. Friendship Force International conducts over 300 programs every year, in 360 communities in 56 countries. Friendship Force hosts are eager to welcome you into their culture, sharing sights and experiences that are not available to tourists.

## **2. Get off the beaten track**

There's no better way to see a new place than with a friend who knows its "best kept secrets." You might dine in a palace in Indonesia, visit a remote village in Africa, or see a polo match in Argentina.

## **3. Cultural immersion**

Through the unique Friendship Force program of home hospitality, international travelers are hosted in the homes of local families. In this way, you can get to know a new culture from the inside. For example, you might learn local pastimes, such as calligraphy in Japan or snowshoeing in Canada,

## **4. Personal friendships**

When you travel or host with Friendship Force, you get to know real people, and often the friendships are formed that last a lifetime.

## **5. Bring the world to your doorstep**

As a Friendship Force host you can explore the world without leaving home by extending the hand of friendship to international guests. It's a rewarding experience to give your guests an up-close, insider's view of life in your country, either through overnight home hospitality or daytime cultural activities.

## **6. Represent your country**

When you travel or host with the Friendship Force you have the opportunity to share knowledge of your country and culture with new friends from around the world. Through friendly conversation and everyday experiences, you become part of changing the way others see your culture and the world.

## **7. Make a Difference**

There are many opportunities to make a difference in communities around the world. For example, you can help your new friends practice your language, bring supplies to a needy school, or host foreign teachers attending a professional development program in your city.

## **8. Pursue your passions around the world**

Themed programs allow participants to come together to explore a common interest in a unique region of the world. You could spend a week exploring the gardens of England, studying

biodiversity in Costa Rica, touring vineyards in New Zealand, or cycling the Niagara Falls region, all with the company of international friends who share your enthusiasm.

## 9. Lifelong learning

The Friendship Force promotes lifelong learning through a variety of travel and hosting programs. For example, programs especially for teachers and students promote education across borders. Language learning programs provide the opportunity to spend a week in a foreign country with a host family, in full language immersion.

## 10. Promote Global Goodwill

Friendship Force participants greet the world with an open mind and respect for other cultures. In this way, each person makes an individual contribution toward global goodwill.

1.

**Practice your welcoming skills.**

Host one or more persons in your home for up to a week when they visit our club and city from other states or countries.

2.

**Don't have a guest room?**

Host a small group dinner, be a day host for a working host, or just attend the club welcome and farewell dinners for incoming ambassadors.

3.

**Open up your world.**

Serve on a committee to plan the week's activities for the incoming ambassadors; or help with an Open World visit of Russian delegates who want to learn about democracy and how it works.

4.

**Travel by proxy.**

Attend the All-Member Meeting featuring a recent Outbound International or Domestic Journey. See their slides, taste the food from that country, and hear about our ambassador's experiences.

5.

**Get out of the house.**

Attend diversity events held in the area to meet people and learn about other cultures.

6.

**Build local friendships.**

Serve on a committee working to build friendships among people of other ethnicities, cultures and religions in our community.

7.

**Be a FF leader or a coordinator.**

Work on a Journey Committee that could result in you as a Host Coordinator for an incoming group; or help coordinate local activities with other organizations.

**8. Let's party!**

Participate in social events for members of Friendship Force. We have book clubs, ice cream socials, Let's Eat Out, holiday parties, game nights, and meetings October through May.

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## AQ's

1.

1.

**What is a home stay? Or home hospitality?**

*Home hospitality is the signature program of Friendship Force. This means that, on most journeys, you will have the opportunity to be a guest for a few days in someone's home, where the real power of citizen diplomacy can be experienced. You will learn first-hand the difference between travel as a tourist and the experience of being a temporary citizen.*

1.

2.

**Who are the host families?**

*Host families are members of Friendship Force. They are not paid to provide hosting but do so because of their interest in getting to know "citizen ambassadors" from other countries. Your host and their family become your inside guides to the country and its people. There is no better way to explore the world!*

1.

3.

**What are the responsibilities of a “home host?”**

*A home host invites his/her guest to be a part of the family for the time the journey is in Southwest Florida. Involve your guests in the activities of your family. Participate in all official functions that are planned and attend all scheduled workshops. If you have an obligation during the journey that is of such a nature that you are unable to take your guest, inform the Host Coordinator and a “day host” will be arranged to accompany/entertain your guest on your busy day.*

4.

**What can I expect when I am “home hosted” by an individual or family?**

*You become a part of the family during your stay. The host club will have planned a number of activities for the entire group with a few “free days”. On these “free days” you and your host might visit areas in which you have a mutual interest as well as time spent with your host’s family and friends. Often this involves dessert or meals with neighbors, family celebrations & special outings.*

4.

**Since I am a single woman, would I be matched with another woman?**

*Yes, that is usually the situation while couples normally host another couple. There are exceptions, but it is your decision. Frequently, the number of bedrooms and type of bed(s) available play a part in matching hosts and ambassadors (guests) as do interests & occupations.*

4.

**Will I have the opportunity to communicate with my host or guest prior to his/her arrival?** *Usually that is the case. It is amazing how many foreign guests and hosts have email.*

**Important:** *As soon as possible, contact your host/ambassador by email, letter, or phone. For many, friendships, communications, & private visits continue for years and even a lifetime.*

4.

**What is a Day Host?**

*A club member who is not home hosting, but one who takes a home host’s ambassadors for a day’s activities. The Day Host provides vital assistance to home hosts who work or have a previous commitment during one or more days, and are unable to participate in the journey events.*

## 8. What Is a Small Group Dinner

*A small, informal at-home dinner party for one or two ambassadors plus their home hosts. The dinner is hosted at his/her own expense by a club member who is not home-hosting during the current journey. The ambassador and home hosts will be assigned to a specific home. The dinner hosts tells the committee the number of people she can accommodate, decides the menu, and method of serving. Some dinner hosts like to involve another non-hosting member to help with dinner preparations. You decide how many guests, in addition to the number in your family, you feel comfortable having for dinner on an evening specified by the Journey Committee. The menu is your choice and you may ask any non-hosting invited guests to bring a salad, dessert, appetizer, or wine. It is entirely up to you. The evening is for you to plan whether you play a game or just visit. The whole idea is to share the guest and give them the opportunity to visit another home in Lincoln. When space allows, new and potential members are included as guests. Of course, the guest's host family accompanies them to your dinner. Sharing, fun, laughter and conversation are the goals for the evening.*

### 9. **Is there a typical itinerary?**

*Each journey itinerary is unique, but most will combine a Friendship Force home stay with an active program of taking in the local sites while learning first-hand about the culture by establishing a personal relationship with your hosts.*

### 9. **What are Friendship Force clubs?**

*Friendship Force journeys are organized through a volunteer network of 360 chapters (clubs) in 61 countries (as of 8/20/2024). The clubs are connected globally through Friendship Force International (FFI), a non-profit organization with offices in Atlanta, Georgia, USA.*

### 9. **What do you mean by “apply” to go on a trip?**

*An experienced Friendship Force Ambassador Coordinator leads each journey. They will ask you to fill out an application prior to accepting you as an journey participant. This application process ensures that travelers are physically healthy enough to make the journey and also that they are committed to the Friendship Force mission.*

### 9. **What does it mean to be committed to the FF mission?**

*FFI has a thirty-five-year history of bringing people together in friendship across the barriers that separate people. We think of ourselves as ‘citizen ambassadors’, each of us having the power to promote good relations at a personal level.*

9. **What is involved in becoming a member of The Friendship Force of Southwest Florida?**

*Join The Friendship Force SWF if: you believe in the goals and mission of the organization; you like the challenge and excitement of new people, places and experiences; you believe that friendship among*

*people of different countries and cultures can make for a better world; and you have a curiosity about the world and enjoy learning about cultures and ways of life.*

9. **I don't see myself traveling in the next year or so, should I still join?**

*Certainly, Friendship Force is not a travel club; there are many other aspects of involvement. The mission of Friendship Force is building global goodwill through personal friendships. This can be accomplished in other ways. Consider being a day or home host, a small group dinner host, or attend social activities to build friendships with others who have an interest in the goals of Friendship Force.*

**6**

9. **Do you plan visits to clubs in the United States?**

*Yes, there are 97 clubs in the States and clubs can arrange what are called "Domestic Journeys" with a club where there is a mutual interest in such a visit. FFI Staff can also arrange these visits.*

**16. Do you travel as a group?**

*Yes and no; the group usually consists of 15 to 20 individuals, known as "Ambassadors." Travel arrangements vary from departing Southwest Florida as a group to some, or all, of the individuals making their own travel arrangements & meeting a specific location in the host city at a definite time. The latter, provides more flexibility but group travel can contribute to a more rewarding experience. The method of travel is a decision made by the Ambassador Coordinator.*

9. **What is an "Ambassador or Host Coordinator?"**

*An Ambassador or Host Coordinator" is an individual who has applied and been approved by the Board of Directors to plan, organize, and lead either the outbound or inbound Journey. This is open to anyone who has the desired leadership qualities and can make the commitment of time needed for adequate planning and recruiting of Ambassadors with a 9 to 12 month lead-time. Our club has some great experienced Ambassador Coordinators who are more than willing to mentor a first time Ambassador Coordinator.*

9. **How do I find out what is happening in the club?**

You will receive periodic newsletters titled "Passport," and frequent e-mails about activities, new members, and journeys. Check out the local club's website: <https://friendshipforceswfl.org/> and for news on the international level, go to: [www.thefriendshipforce.org](http://www.thefriendshipforce.org) & watch the "video" presented on the home page as well as the "World of Friends Catalog" of travels and home stays under "travel for good".

9.

**What types of Social Activities does the club have?**

*Each year a Social Chair proposes a variety of programs that might include a Game Night, picnic, potluck gatherings, an outing to a nearby community, or attendance at a sporting event, to name a few, plus welcome & farewell parties for incoming journeys.*

9.

**What should I expect financially when I go on an Outbound Journey**

*On an outbound journey, we who are visitors have all or most of our expenses paid by the host club and their members; we pay for our own transportation to the host country and a fee to Friendship Force International for the journey; some of that fee is paid to the hosting club to entertain us. If there is a tour before or after the journey, you would pay the cost of the tour if you choose to go. You should expect to take your host family to dinner once during the journey. You should purchase or make gifts for each member of your host family that represent your/their interests and/or your home community.*

9.

**Am I required to host or go on Outbound Journeys if I am a member?**

*There is no requirement by our club for members to host visitors or go on outbound journeys. We hope though, that those joining would want to actively participate in these events, as they are how we can best learn about people in other cultures. If you cannot host or travel, you may still be a day or dinner host or participate in other ways.*

9.

**What if I am not able to go or don't care to go on the Outbound Journey you have scheduled? Are there other ways for me to travel with the organization?**

*There are a number of other ways to travel. You may travel with another club from this country if they have room for you. There are Discover trips that include people from several countries where the Ambassadors travel somewhere and stay mostly in hotels but meet people from that country to interest them in forming Friendship Force Clubs. Regional and International Conferences are held each year. See the list of journeys and events on the [Friendship Force International](http://www.thefriendshipforce.org) website. Go to [www.thefriendshipforce.org](http://www.thefriendshipforce.org) and then click on "travel for good" on the top banner. If you see a journey you like, click on it to find out the details.*

## Membership & Dues

Membership is open to anyone who accepts Friendship Force principles and pays annual membership dues. Our current dues are \$15 for individuals to join the local chapter and \$100 to join Friendship Force international. Membership In FFI must be done online, and can be done and anytime, and will be good for twelve months. It is \$15 for associate members to join our chapter. New members are only required to purchase a name tag for the first year. As a member of The Friendship Force International, you are eligible to apply for all the travel journeys organized by both our club and the Friendship Force International (FFI) office in Atlanta. In addition, other clubs often advertise for applications through the monthly FFI catalog of journeys. To stay connected with FFI, once you are a FFI member, be sure to contact FFI and ask to have your email added to their database to receive important news and journey updates. **(See the form on the FFI website “Sign up for email alerts.”)**

## Meetings and Social Events

- **The FFSWF Annual Meeting** is held in December where election of officers for the following year takes place. FFI Journeys are announced in the spring and sign up if you want to be made aware of updates for a particular journey.
- **Let's Eat Out or “LEO”** are held four or 5 times a year depending on the number of other social and journey activities. These meals are usually held at an ethnic restaurant. They are held at lunch time from November through March. Each person orders off of the menu and receives an individual check.
- **All-Member Meetings** are conducted in the fall and winter months and usually center around a recent outbound journey. Most often the meetings are the second Friday of the month, in the morning.
- All meetings and social activities are listed in our newsletter and/or announced via group emails to our members and prospective members.

## Newsletter

A club newsletter is produced monthly; it is posted on our website also.

A group email is sent to all members and prospective members with the direct link to each newsletter.

## Name Badges

New members are asked to purchase a name badge. The name badge will be given to you personally or mailed to you. All members are asked to wear their name badge to meetings and social events so we can get to know you. Additional name badges are available for purchase. Name badges are worn for each Journey Activity, both outbound and inbound.

## Officers

Club officers and committee chairs serve from January thru December. We elect officers at the annual meeting in December. Our elected positions that serve two-year terms are: President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The newly elected President appoints committee Chairs..

## Participation

Every member of the club is strongly encouraged to participate in both incoming and outgoing journeys. This can be done in a number of different ways: home host ambassadors, day host, small group dinner host, and/or attend journey activities. “Invitation to New Members to Actively Participate in FFL” is

emailed to new members in the fourth quarter. This will assist committee chairs seeking new members for specific committees.

As a member of the Friendship Force, I recognize that I can make a difference. I recognize that I have a mission. That mission is to be a friend to the people of the world. As I embark upon this adventure, I know that others will be watching me. I know that through my example to my fellow citizens and the people of other countries, the cause of friendship and peace can be furthered.

## **I CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

### **Invitation to Members to Actively Participate in FFI**

We realize the success of a club largely depends on early involvement of new members. The Friendship Force of Southwest Florida Board of Directors would like to know ALL of the following committees/projects you would be interested in working with.

## Please send the information below via email to

Name: \_Phone: \_Date: \_

**[ ] Home Host** - Your home: this is where the ambassador/s will stay during the journey. If you have a bed available for a couple, a single person or two singles, then we need you. You'll have a chance to "open your home and heart" to share the American culture. You will provide some meals, transportation, and companionship to your guests; share your family, favorite places and things to do in the area. Most likely you will gain new life-long friends.

**[ ] Day Host** - Another way to "take part" in the journey and get to know our guests. A home host may ask for help during the day by asking for a "day host". This gives the home host a chance to plan for the evening when the ambassadors return. A day host is a great way to get to know our guests by taking part in the planned itinerary for the day. You become their buddy for the day and accompany one or two guests throughout the day until you return them to their home hosts. You could be the driver, a walking companion, and perhaps host their lunch. The day may be a planned itinerary or you may have "free time" to do or go to your favorite place in town. Activities might include shopping, a visit to a museum, or a visit with your family members.

**[ ] Small Group Dinner Host** - During the week we are hosting ambassadors, we plan small dinner gatherings (6 - 8 persons) in several members' homes. YOU decide the number you can accommodate as well as the menu & method of service. This gives others an opportunity to meet and talk with more of the ambassadors. These also give a break to the home hosts from preparing an evening meal. After a day of activity it's very welcoming to sit and relax in a member's home. Be sure to include at least one new member as a guest at each small group dinner. You can ask a non-hosting member to help you with dinner preparations or furnish a menu item.

**[ ] Hosting Committee** - Committee meetings are important for planning all of our journeys. The committee is the group that makes the plans for the week's activities. One individual may be the "leader/ planner" for one of the activities.

**[ ] Social Committee** - We are looking for new and interesting ideas and a group of individuals to carry them out. This committee is responsible for 4-5 social events during the year for members and prospective members. Some events may include a purely social event to get to know each other and have a fun evening or something in conjunction with an Inbound Journey. The Social Committee plans the events including the food and entertainment. Many hands make light work in setting up/clean up, organizing food details, theme and decorations, and entertainment. This committee is a good way to become involved and get to know other members. You don't need to commit to helping with every event, but a few extra hands at each event is helpful to the committee.

## 11

**[ ] Special Events** - Assist Committee chair in planning and carrying out all-member events that are held quarterly. This might involve a recent journey or other topic of interest. It could deal with preparation of typical foods encountered during a journey, displaying souvenirs brought back from a specific journey or assisting a speaker familiar with another culture.

**[ ] LEO (Let's Eat Out)** This is a fun get-together lunch held in the months when there is no big Friendship Force get together. The chairperson of LEO picks a restaurant and a date. It is a fun way to bond with club members while sharing a meal.

