

## **“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*

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



#### 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.

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



**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.

## FAQ's



### **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.*

### **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!*

### **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.*

### **5. 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.*

**6. 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.*

### **7. 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.*

### **10. 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.*

### **11. 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.*

**12. 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.*

**13. 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.*

**14. 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.*

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**15. 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.*

**16. 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.*

**17. 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”.*

**18. 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.*

**19. 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.*

**20. 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.*

**21. 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 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 FFL 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. FFL 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.

**CHANGING THE WAY YOU  
SEE THE WORLD**

## **FRIENDSHIP FORCE PLEDGE**

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.

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[ ] **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.