



New Member Orientation

The Friendship Force of Cedar Rapids-Iowa City



Experience Different Views. Discover Common Ground

“WELCOME TO 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 International (FFI) and, in particular, our local club, The Friendship Force of Cedar Rapids-Iowa City; 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 Cedar Rapids-Iowa City, prepares an itinerary of cultural activities, inviting members from clubs in other countries or US regions to come and stay with local hosts in their homes for up to a week.

Who We Are

Friendship Force International 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. FFI has 16,000 members worldwide and volunteers in 63 countries.

Mutual Respect ★ Cultural Diversity ★ Cultural Exploration ★ Service

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 377 communities in 60 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 country western music in Australia; a children's soccer game in Japan, or snowshoeing in Canada, or you could learn family recipes in your host's kitchen. You might even be invited to religious ceremonies or a wedding.

4. Personal friendships

When you travel or host with the Friendship Force, you get to know real people by sharing real life. Often, 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, quilters, or gardeners. 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 delegates from former Soviet Union countries who want to learn about our education, government and healthcare programs work.

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. Build local friendships.

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

6. Be a FF leader or a coordinator.

Work on a Journey Committee to develop skills that enable you to be a Host or Ambassador Coordinator for an incoming or outgoing group or serve on the board of directors.

7. Learn more about our area.

Represent Friendship Force visibly at city events that have similar goals. Volunteer to be part of team that works at the Freedom Festival or Justice for our Neighbors events.

8. Let's party!

Participate in social events for members of Friendship Force. We have Let's Eat Out (LEO) gatherings several times a year. Each incoming journey has activities that are open to all club members and may include a welcome or farewell party.

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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Journeys:

1. What is a Journey?

Journeys were originally known as "exchanges," which came from our organization's early history when communities would actually exchange large delegations of citizen ambassadors. In some cases there were several hundred people traveling in each direction. Recently, we have transitioned to using the more transformational term "journey," since it is better suited to the amazing programs our members plan and experience as they journey to become a temporary citizen for a few days through our home hospitality program. We think this gets you straight to the heart of a country and its people.

2. 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.

3. What do you mean by "apply" to go on a trip?

Each journey is led by an experienced Friendship Force journey ambassador or host coordinator. They will ask you to fill out an application prior to accepting you as a 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.

4. 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.

5. Who are the host families?

Host families are members of Friendship Force or friends of members. 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!

6. What are the responsibilities of a "home host?"

A home host invites his/her guest to be a part of the family while the journey is in our area. Involve your guest 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.

7. 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 and special outings.

8. Since I am a single woman, would I be hosted by another woman?

Yes, you will usually be hosted by another woman or a couple. Each individual/couple will have their own bed. There may be 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 and occupations.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs (continued))

9. 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 and private visits continue for years and even a lifetime.

10. Do you travel as a group?

Yes and no; the group usually consists of 15 to 20 individuals, known as "Ambassadors." Travel arrangements vary. Some journeys depart Cedar Rapids-Iowa City as a group; others enable individuals to make their own travel arrangements and meet at 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.

11. What is a Journey Coordinator Ambassador or Host Coordinator?

A journey ambassador coordinator is an individual who has applied and been approved by the Board of Directors to plan, organize, and lead the 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 journey coordinators (formerly known as exchange directors) who are very willing to mentor a first time leader.

12. What should I expect financially when I go on an Outbound Journey?

On an outbound journey, we who are visitors pay fees to the hosting club to entertain us and to Friendship Force International. These fees cover most of our expenses paid by the host club and their members. In addition; we pay for our own transportation to the host country. If there is an optional 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.

13. 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 Journey with a club where there is a mutual interest in such a visit. FFI Staff can also arrange these visits.

14. 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. Spending time with a day host increases the number of people that an ambassador gets to know.

15. What Is a Small Group Dinner?

It is 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, ambassadors, hosts and friends and family, that can be accommodated, decides the menu and method of serving. It is usually on a day specified by the journey committee. Some dinner hosts like to involve another non-hosting member to help with dinner preparations. The menu is the host's choice and non-hosting invited guests may bring a salad, dessert, appetizer, or wine. It is entirely up to the host. The whole idea is to share the guest and give them the opportunity to visit another home in our area. When space allows, new and potential members are included as guests. Of course, the guest's host family accompanies them to the dinner. Sharing, fun, laughter and conversation are the goals for the evening.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) (continued)

Clubs

16. What are Friendship Force clubs?

Friendship Force journeys are organized through a volunteer network of over 350 chapters (clubs) in 60 countries. The clubs are connected globally through Friendship Force International (FFI), www.thefriendshipforce.org, a non-profit organization with offices in Atlanta, Georgia, USA.

17. What does it mean to be committed to the FF mission?

FFI has a 35-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.

14. What is involved in becoming a member of Cedar Rapids-Iowa City Friendship Force? Join The Friendship Force 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; you have a curiosity about the world and enjoy learning about cultures and ways of life. Go to our website: www.friendshipforcecr-ic.org complete the Membership Form and mail your check to our P.O. Box 705, Cedar Rapids, IA 52406-070

18. 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.

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

You will receive periodic e-newsletters titled "Yours in Friendship," and frequent e-mails about activities, new members and journeys. Check out the local club's website: www.friendshipforcecr-ic.org and for news on the international level, go to: www.thefriendshipforce.org. Check out the "World of Friends Catalog" of travels and home stays under "travel for good".

20. What types of Social Activities does the club have?

Our club has several general meetings each year and some are potlucks. We also have Let's Eat Out (LEOs) at local restaurants and welcome or farewell parties for incoming journeys. Our volunteer activities at Freedom Festival are also a social event.

21. Am I required to host or go on Outbound Journey if I am a member?

There is no requirement by our club for members to host visitors or go on outbound journey. 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.

22. 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 other ways to travel. FFI offers global or themed journeys. These journeys include members from around the world. Also, you may travel with other clubs 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 at least every other year. See the list of journeys and events on the FFI website. Go to 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

General Club Information

Membership & Dues

Membership is open to anyone who accepts Friendship Force principles and pays annual membership dues. Our current dues are \$30 per person. This includes your initial complimentary name badge. The membership year is from January 1 – December 31. The club collects dues for the following year beginning October 1; all dues should be submitted by the end of November. New members joining after July are prorated at \$15 for dues for the rest of the year. As a member of The Friendship Force of Cedar Rapids-Iowa City, 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 club 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, www.thefriendshipforce.org , “Sign up for email alerts.”)**

Meetings and Social Events

- **All-Member Meetings** are conducted three or four times a year and usually center on a recent outbound journey, an incoming journey or World Friendship Day.
- **The Club Annual Meeting** is held in November with election of officers for the following year. The club journeys and activities for the following year are discussed.
- **Let's Eat Out or “LEOs”** are held four or five times a year depending on the number of other club activities. These meals are usually held at a restaurant. Each person orders off of the menu and receives an individual check.
- **Board of Director's Meetings** are held periodically. See the calendar page in the *Yours in Friendship* newsletter for the time and place of these meetings.

All meetings and social activities are listed in our e-newsletter and/or announced via group emails to our members and prospective members.

Newsletter

A club newsletter is produced bi-monthly or monthly, as needed; it is posted on our website: www.friendshipforcecr-ic.org. A group email is sent to all members and prospective members with the newsletter attached. For the few individuals who do not have email, a copy can be mailed.

Name Badges

New members are issued a complimentary name badge. You will be asked to indicate your preference for a pin or magnetic attachment plus your name as you would like it to appear on the badge. All members are asked to wear their name badge to meetings and social events so we can get to know you. 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 November. Our elected positions that serve one-year terms are: President, President-elect, 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 ways: home host ambassadors, day host, small group dinner host, and/or attend journey activities.

Want More Information? Go to: www.friendshipforcecr-ic.org or contact a board member.