



friendship force

CEDAR RAPIDS-IOWA CITY

Calendar of Events

Dec 1 7:00PM Club Zoom Tivia

March 15-23 Open World-Kosovo

**April 16 Des Moines Club out-
going to Mexico**

**July 16-22 Inbound from Mil-
waukee WI**

**August 19-26 Out going Journey to
Edmonton, Canada**

**Late Sept or
Early Oct Incoming Journey
Willamette Valley
OR**

**Oct 7-9 Super Regional Con-
ference Milwaukee**

**Oct 9-12 Outbound Journey to
Milwaukee**



CEDAR RAPIDS-IOWA CITY FRIENDSHIP FORCE CLUB

www.friendshipforcecr-ic.org

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Cedar Rapids- Iowa City Friendship Force

December 2023

President's Message

What a beautiful day and a great turnout we had for our annual meeting! Thanks to all our outgoing officers for the fine job they did this past year. The recent holiday reminds us that we have much for which to be grateful, including the members who said "yes" to leadership for this next year. Planning is already underway for the Super Regional Conference in Milwaukee in October, and we've just been asked to report on what aspects of club or journey management FFI needs to offer more training or support. Those of you who have been involved for longer than I have can really provide some important input in this regard, so I hope you'll let our board members know so we can relay it to the planning committee.

It looks to be a busy and exciting 12 months ahead, with World Friendship Day and an Open World delegation from Kosovo before spring even thinks about arriving, followed by the all-Iowa picnic and an outgoing journey to Edmonton, Canada this summer. We'll have incoming journeys from Milwaukee, Wisconsin and Willamette Valley, Oregon in the fall, as well as the Super Regional Conference. Of course, there will be a couple of general meetings, Zoom trivia nights, LEOs, hiking, and other activities, too. Please join us for as many as you can. Friendship Force is a wonderful group, and you'll only get to fully appreciate your membership by participating. I look forward to seeing you soon!

Nancy York 2023 Club President

Annual dues for 2024

If you haven't yet paid your 2024 club dues please mail a check (\$45 per person) to:

Friendship Force CR/IC

PO Box 1001

Cedar Rapids, IA, 52401

Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the Cedar Rapids/Iowa City Friendship Force Club was held on November 18 at the Ronneburg Restaurant in Amana, IA. After a delectable brunch we held the annual meeting. The following officers for the 2024 calendar year were elected:

President	Nancy York
President Elect	Shirley Rosencranz
Treasurer	Sharon Bowers
Secretary	Mary Carsons



Here are the members of the current and next year board.

Thank you for all that you do!!!

ALEX - American Leadership Experience Program

Our Friendship Force welcomed a group of 10 Ukrainians to Iowa on Oct 26, with a weeklong stay after traveling to Warsaw, Poland and Washington, DC. Students Maksym Bulhakov, Anastasiya Drebot, Milyena Dubova, Andriy Herasymych, Khrystyna Hnidets, Alina Khuade, Darya Kinash, Oleysa Koberska and Vladyslava Kobets were led by Maria Kotsiurba, facilitator. Home host families were Emily/Cory Schneller, Joanie Lacayo, Christine Allen, Margaret/Ron Nelson, and Susan Johnson/Ann Rhomberg.



A welcome lunch was hosted by Mary Ann and Larry Nelson. Due to the rain, we didn't have a bonfire, but did carve pumpkins into jack-o-lanterns. On Friday, everyone had a full day at the University of Iowa, with presentations about the campus. The students were impressed by the Campus Recreation and Wellness Center. The evening concluded with Maggie's Farm pizza and the movie, Coco, with live music at Hancher.

Saturday was Dubuque day, Eagle Point Park, National Mississippi River Museum, Ichiban Hibachi Grill and back to Cedar Rapids in time for Orchestra Iowa. The weekend was rounded out with family time and a Friendship Force general meeting with Dr. Russell Ganim as guest speaker.



The schedule for Monday included the tour of the Cedar Rapids Public Library, lunch with Rotary and a visit with Cedar Rapids City Councilwoman, Ashley Vanorny. Tuesday's highlight incorporated the volunteer component of the program at Table2Table and the CommUnity Food Bank. As this was Halloween, the Ukrainians got their first experience with our US custom of 'Trick or Treat'. They had a great time putting together costumes and going out with the families.



Our final full day began with an introduction to the National Czech and Slovak Museum by Dr. Cecilia Rokusek, Museum Director, then a docent lead tour. Our wrap up lunch was at Pizza Ranch, with a special thanks to the manager who gave each student game vouchers for the arcade.

I truly would like to thank all of the host families, the dinner hosts, the day hosts and any and all of you who put your time and efforts into the ALEX home stay. This could never have come together without all of you!



NOW IS THE TIME

Please contact Judy Frascht-Miner

**if you are interested in going on any of our 2024
Out Bound Journeys or helping with Incoming
Journeys. Both are rewarding!!!**

319-540-1701 jjbm526@aol.com



Friendship Force in Kosovo

The recent visit to Kosovo, with our group of 6 Cedar Rapids-Iowa City travelers, was a success. My thanks to Marty Novak, Judy Frascht-Miner, Christine Allen, Shirley Rosencrans and Joanie Lacayo for traveling back to Kosovo with me in October.



The Friendship Force International leadership was impressed and has granted Kosovo chapter an 'in development' status. We will mentor our Kosovo friends through Friendship Force. In order to continue forward progress, I would like to propose a **2024 journey to Kosovo**. It will be a small group, consisting of other Friendship Force members from Iowa, with a direct flight to Pristina. It will not be a full home hosted journey, but there will be wonderful hospitality and insight into the culture and people of Kosovo. Please contact Connie Williams at 319-396-4747 or cmw1226@yahoo.com if interested.



Hiking with the CR/IC FF Club

Hiking is now wrapped up for 2023 and we are looking forward to making our wish list for 2024. This past year has included a city tour of Iowa City, a ranger led tour of Wapsi State Park, a prairie trail hike at Indian Creek Nature Center, guided tour of Effigy Mounds State Park, a guided tour of Kent State Park, guided tour of the Frank Lloyd Wright house at Quasqueton, and a three and a half mile walk on Amana's Kolonieweg Trail after our annual meeting. Thanks to all who helped plan and carry out all these events. Look forward to seeing more of you join us in 2024. Please call Jean Thomas, 319 830-5092 with questions. Happy New Year!



Don't Forget About Traveling With Other Clubs

Sharon Bowers and Marty Novak joined the Central Iowa club on their journey to Missoula - Western Montana in September. Traveling with another club is a great way to meet people from around the country and even around the world. Montana is a beautiful state, and the people are very warm, kind, and welcoming. We would love to have our club visit there, but if we go, pack your hiking shoes! The trails in the surrounding area are spectacular!



When the pandemic seemed mostly behind us, we wanted to once again engage with the world. Our club's March 2023 journey to Australia and New Zealand filled up quickly, so that was not an option. Then we learned that Friendship Force of Greater Des Moines had openings for a September journey to Leuven, Belgium. We signed up right away and are so glad we did!

Nine members of the Des Moines club welcomed two ambassadors from the Quad Cities, two from South Carolina, and us on their memorable 11-day journey. The Leuven club members showed us the sights of their picturesque, cobblestoned university town in the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium. There seemed to be as many bicycles as there were residents! We also took day trips to beautiful Bruges, crisscrossed with canals, and to Brussels, where we visited the home of the European Union. Most of us spent another three days in Brussels after our Leuven stay. The best part of the journey was, as usual, the wonderful people: our hosts Gaya and Gustave (who served Belgian chocolate on our toast every morning!) and the members of Friendship Force of Leuven and Greater Des Moines.



--Gayle Bray and Larry Shostrom

Let's Go to Mexico With The Des Moines FF Club!!

Journey to FF Xalapa in April 2024

Hello Friends,

I'm excited to share with you that our journey to FF Xalapa, Mexico, is accepting applications. FF Xalapa received rave reviews from a Canadian club that recently visited them and after seeing their sample program, I expect we'll have rave reviews as well. The deadline for applying is **December 30**.

Here are the highlights:

Duration: 7 nights in Xalapa, 1 night in a hotel in Veracruz City

Dates: 4/16/24 arriving in Xalapa – 4/24/24 departing from Veracruz

Estimated costs: \$1513-\$1643 total per ambassador

Deadline: Saturday, December 30, 2023

I hope you can join me on this exciting adventure.

In friendship,

Shelley Bain, Ambassador Coordinator

shelleybain@centurylink.net 515-330-9981 (phone or text)



Journey Calendar by Judy Frascht-Miner

SIGN UP SOON if you are interested in joining a journey. Say **YES** to getting involved in our journeys, even if in a small way. There are so many ways to be involved whether you travel on a journey or help host visitors. It takes a village! Don't wait to be asked, contact me and discuss options:

Judy Frascht-Miner jjbm526@aol.com 319-540-1701

MARCH 13th 2024-OPEN WORLD WITH KOSOVO

APRIL 16-2024—Join the Des Moines Friendship Force on a journey to **Xalapa, Mexico**. See the article earlier in the Newsletter.

JULY 16-22-2024— Shared Inbound from Milwaukee — The Quad Cities along with us, Cedar Rapids-Iowa City, will host Milwaukee. The journey will be divided between the two locations. Patty Potter is our Host Coordinator. Volunteers are needed for the planning committee, home hosting, day hosting, and dinner hosting. Please contact Patty pattyspotter1001@gmail.com or myself jjbm526@aol.com if interested.



AUGUST 19-26 2024 Outbound to Edmonton — Jerry and Carol Burke will be the Host Coordinators. If you would like to join the journey please let Jerry and Carol or myself know soon. It is filling up fast. Jerry and Carol Burke, jcburke@yahoo.com or Judy Frascht-Miner,

LATE SEPTEMBER/EARLY OCTOBER 2024 Incoming from Oregon's Mid-Willamette Valley— If you would like to be part of the planning of this incoming Journey contact Judy Frascht-Miner, jjbm526@aol.com

OCTOBER 9-12TH— Outbound to Milwaukee. We have been invited to stay in Milwaukee a few extra days after the North American Regional Conference



Safe/Fun Traveling in 2024

I look forward to traveling with many of you soon!

2023 Cedar Rapids/Iowa City FF Officers

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President-Elect

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