



friendship force
CEDAR RAPIDS-IOWA CITY

Calendar of Events

Dec 5 7:00PM	Club Zoom Trivia
March 9-13	Nebraska Sandhill Crane Journey
April 6 - 11, 2026	Out Going Journey to Birmingham, Al
April 24-26 2026	North American Conference Memphis TN
May 28 – June 4	Incoming From Western Washington/ North Idaho
July 13-18,	Quilting Journey
Sept 7-12 2026	Outgoing Journey to Peru
Oct 7-14, 2026	Incoming Journey from Utah



CEDAR RAPIDS-IOWA CITY FRIENDSHIP FORCE CLUB

www.friendshipforcecr-ic.org

Follow us on Facebook:
Cedar Rapids- Iowa City Friendship Force

December 2025

President's Message

Welcome December!

I just returned from Thailand with 10 other members of CR-IC FF and 4 others from Des Moines, Florida and Michigan. We had a spectacular visit with the members of Chiang Mai club. This is why we joined: to meet new people, visit other cultures and learn what is important to them. This knowledge of others is what helps to promote peace. As we understand why others live as they do, we can re-evaluate how we think and at times even change our habits. This month may we find peace within and spread it to others.

Stephanie Schulte

2026 CR/IC FF Club President

Annual Meeting November 9

The Annual Meeting of the Cedar Rapids/Iowa City Friendship Force Club was held on November 9, 2025 at the El Vieso Mexican Restaurant in Marion. 2025 club president Shirley Rosencranz called the meeting to order after the meal. Tom Hess gave a treasurer's report. The club is in good financial shape. There was a recap of the many activities and journeys we were able to do this past year. The mission of Friendship Force was reviewed and the change in dues discussed. Elections for 2026 Board Officers were held. The new Board Officers are:

President Stephanie Schulte

President Elect Patty Potter

Secretary Jean Thomas

Treasurer Tom Hess

The full list of 2026 board members are listed on page 9 of this newsletter.



Zoom Trivia December 5

The next Club Zoom trivia will be **Friday December 5th at 7:00PM**. As usual an email with the Zoom link will be sent. Come join the fun. It is always a learning experience. Looking forward to seeing you there.



Membership Dues for 2026

At the Nov. 8 Annual Meeting dues increase for 2026 was presented. The new fee for each club member will now be \$115 starting January 1. \$100 will now be due directly to FFI, and \$15 to the Cedar Rapids/Iowa City Club for local dues.

FFI will be sending out instructions for members to pay dues online around the first of the year. The \$15 local dues are being collected by our Treasurer Tom Hess. Please go ahead and send your \$15 local dues to Tom Hess at 785 West Main Street, Robins IA 52328.

If you want to mail your FFI dues of \$100, mail it to:

Attn: Payments

Friendship Force International

279 W Crogan St

Lawrenceville, GA, 30046

Make sure to tell them you are with the Cedar Rapids/Iowa City Club

If you have not already done so, please proceed to establish your member account at https://my.friendshipforce.org/en/users/sign_up

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Western Washington/Northern Idaho Club will be visiting us May 28th to June 4th. A planning committee to develop the itinerary is being formed. If willing to help, contact Jerry and Carol Burke jbcburke@yahoo.com.

It takes a group to plan a great experience for our guests!

CHANGED DATE Birmingham, April 6 - 11, 2026



We have 2-4 openings for this journey. Birmingham, AL is located at the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains. Birmingham was born out of the iron and steel industry. The city is well known for its role in the Civil Rights movement. Modern Birmingham is a much different place brimming with entertainment, the arts, outdoor recreation and world class cuisine. Several local chefs have received or have been



nominated for national awards, even the James Beard Foundation Award. It is home to art galleries, golf courses, antique shops, and trendy malls. There are many family green spaces such as Railroad Park. With a mild climate



nearly year round, outdoor activities abound for citizens and visitors alike. The city is also home to the Birmingham Barons Baseball team. The health industry is now the largest employer with the University of Ala-

bama in Birmingham at the top of the list. Birmingham is a city with lots of history but with a modern and safe environment. Many suburbs surround the city giving the metropolitan area a population of approximately 1.2 million. Birmingham was chosen to host the World Games July 7-17, 2022.



GO TO MEXICO WITH CHICAGO - FEB 13 - 19

The Chicago FF Club has some openings for their **Feb 13-19** journey to **Chiapas Mexico**. The following is the itinerary.

If you are interested please contact **Larisa Sorkin** sork8@aol.com

The **international global** ambassadors will be hosted by members of the Friendship Force club in Tuxtla Gutierrez, the capital and the largest city of Chiapas in Mexico.

Everyone must arrive at Tuxtla Gutiérrez International Airport to be ready to meet the group on **February 13** for the welcome lunch or dinner.

In case there are no early arrival flights available on February 13, ambassadors shall plan to arrive one day earlier and stay overnight at a hotel. Recommendation: **Hotel del Carmen - \$20 per person** (double occupancy, two beds)

Journey Program and Schedule

Day 1 - Friday, February 13, 2026

Arrival and coordinated transfers to the hosts' homes

Welcome lunch or dinner (depending on arrival time)

Day 2 - Saturday, February 14, 2026

Breakfast with hosts at 8:00 AM

Visit **Sumidero Canyon National Park**, a federally protected natural area. The park has multiple viewing platforms which offer panoramic views of the **Sumidero Canyon and Grijalva River** from above. The **Sumidero Canyon** boat ride (two hours) on the Grijalva River provides stunning views of towering cliffs, waterfalls and diverse wildlife. **Lunch**

Chiapa de Corzo, a Magic Town of colonial past and beautiful craft traditions

Private Marimba Concert

Dinner with hosts at 20:00 PM

Day 3 - Sunday, February 15, 2026

Breakfast with hosts at 8:00 AM

Transfer from Tuxtla to the Ocozocoautla de Espinoza (40 minutes' drive).

The Zoque Coiteco Carnival, a vibrant/colorful festivities that blend ancient Zoque traditions with Spanish beliefs. The carnival features masked parades, vibrant costumes, and traditional music. Lunch

Transfer back to Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Visit the Marimba Park

Dinner with hosts at 20:00 PM

Day 4 - Monday, February 16, 2026

Civic program at Fray Matías de Córdova y Ordóñez Elementary School, 8:00 – 9:30 AM

Breakfast at school, 9:30 - 11:00 AM

Visit to Miguel Álvarez del Toro Zoo (ZOOMAT) located in a nature reserve - lunch

Free time to rest or optional visit to the Handicrafts Museum, 16:00 – 19:00 PM

Dinner with hosts at 19:30 PM

Day 5 - Tuesday, February 17, 2026

Breakfast with hosts at 7:00 AM

Departure to San Juan Chamula, Zinacantán and San Cristóbal (1.5-hour drive)

Visit the indigenous villages of San Juan Chamula and Zinacantán

Lunch in San Cristóbal de las Casas

San Cristobal walking tour of the Cathedral, Santo Domingo Church, and Handicraft Market

Return to Tuxtla Gutiérrez

Dinner with hosts at 20:30 PM

Day 6 - Wednesday, February 18, 2026

Breakfast with hosts at 9:00 AM

Visit Coffee Museum and Cathedral of San Marcus

Visit Christo de Copoya, a 62-meter tall cross with profile of Jesus Christ in its interior

Appreciation Lunch offered by ambassadors to FF Mundo Maya hosts

Free afternoon

Farewell dinner at Las Pichanchas Restaurant at 20:00 PM

Day 7 - Thursday, February 19, 2026

Transfers to Tuxtla Gutiérrez International Airport according to flight itineraries

JOURNEY COST PER PERSON \$560.

Friendship Force North American Regional Conference 2026 Memphis, USA

**Experience the spirit of Friendship Force in Memphis—
networking, discovery, and community at the
2026 Regional Conference.**

April 24 - 27, 2026 · Hyatt Centric Hotel

The registration for the North American Regional Conference is now open. **Open up your member's Portal to access the registration information.** There you will be able to see the agenda, speakers, hotel information and sign-up for the special excursions. Check with other club members to see about car pooling and possible room sharing. A riverboat cruise is offered at the conclusion of the conference. It looks to be a great event.



Journey Calendar by Judy Frascht-Miner

HAVE A WONDERFUL HOLIDAY SEASON!!!

NOVEMBER 18-24, 2025 - Outbound to Chiang Mai, Thailand - We had a wonderful time. Look for more details in our next Newsletter!

DATE CHANGE - APRIL 6-11, 2026 - OUTBOUND TO BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

Jerry and Carol Burke are the Ambassador Coordinators. **There are a couple of openings** and they are accepting applications now. Are you interested??? Contact Jerry and Carol 563-939-0190 jbcburke@yahoo.com Journey # 26188.



MARCH 9TH-13TH 2026- SANDHILL CRANE JOURNEY WITH NEBRASKA

Christine Allen is the Ambassador Coordinator. It is limited to 10 and is presently full. There is a waiting list. Have Questions, contact Christine callenivy@gmail.com 319-330-3536 .



JULY 13 - 18 2026 - QUILTING JOURNEY– This is a Special/Global Journey, which means it is posted on the International Website and is open to applicants from across the world. It will be exciting to see where our guest will be coming from. How about home hosting? Curious, contact Patty Potter pattyspotter1001@gmail.com 319-551-5179.

MAY 28 - JUNE 4TH 2026 - INCOMING FROM WESTERN WASHINGTON/ NORTHERN IDAHO - Jerry and Carol Burke will be the Ambassador Coordinators. Volunteers to help with the planning are needed. Contact Jerry and Carol if willing to be involved!

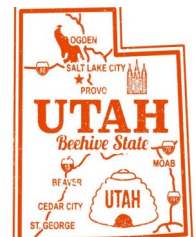


jbcburke@yahoo.com



SEPTEMBER 7-12 2026 - OUTBOUND TO LIMA PERU - Christine Allen is the Ambassador Coordinator who is already busy negotiating plans. If interested contact Christine callenivy@gmail.com. 319-330-3536. Ad on options are being looked into. Journey #26068

OCTOBER 7 - 14, 2026 - INCOMING FROM UTAH - Nancy York and Tom Hess will be Host Coordinators putting together a planning committee. Contact Tom and Nancy. 319-929-8208 stampingtoncy@gmail.com and 319-213-7762 tomhess8@gmail.com. Journey # 26135



2026 Cedar Rapids/Iowa City FF Officers

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