



President's Letter to Membership

Dear member,

We are getting close to the end of our FFCI year. This has been a great year. We got off to a rocky start, but with the involvement of many of our members we got to experience new places to eat, new sites to see, new people to meet and got to know each other better. We are planning on another great year in 2025.

As president, my goal is to continue improving our club. We need to continue making our club welcoming. I would like to help get our members more involved, make sure that FFCI is the club that we envision and that we are proud of. Would you like to do more but you do not have much time, let us begin breaking down larger jobs into smaller easy to do jobs. Dennis has been doing a great job on the newsletter, but he could use some help. If you are good at finding funny jokes or comics, consider finding some to send to Dennis to be used as fillers when he needs just a little bit more for the newsletter. We need someone to interview new and/or current members and write up the interview for the newsletter. There are many more ideas we can come up with, let us know what you love to do and we can find a way to use your talents. If you have traveled with Friendship Force, write up a story about that trip, where you went, who you went with, what you saw and did. Send that along with some of your pictures to add to the newsletter.

To improve our club, we need to encourage diverse growth. We can do this by inviting speakers to visit our club to tell us about their countries. We can invite international students who have no place to go for the holidays to join us for our holiday dinners. Thanksgiving is coming up, consider inviting a student to join you and your family for dinner. We need to provide a children's section for incoming journeys, this would be an opportunity for grandparents to bring their grandchildren along with them. (Introducing the next generation to Friendship Force.) If you have any other ideas let us know and we will consider implementing your ideas.

This club is OUR club, it will take all of us to continue to make this club a fun, exciting, inclusive club for all members.

Alta Byg
FFCI President

Contact information for New Member

Jean Larson
10239 Country Circle
Johnston, IA 50131
jeanlm4931@gmail.com
515-710-1023



Calendar of upcoming events

December, 2025

Board of Directors Meeting
2127 Coneflower Court (all welcome)

December 7, 2024

**FFCI HOLIDAY GATHERING. 11:30
until 2:00.**

Village Cooperative of Ames

March 2025

WORLD FRIENDSHIP DAY

**We will pass the
activities sign up
calendar at the
Holiday Pot Luck
so you can de-
cide which month
would work best
for you to plan an
activity.**



**Friendship Force Central Iowa
Holiday Potluck**

**Saturday, December 7th,
11:30am to 2pm.**

**Village Cooperative of Ames,
2525 Bobcat Drive, Ames, IA**

**Please bring a dish to share for the potluck, and a
Wrapped White Elephant gift (the funnier the better).**

Drinks will be provided by the club.

Please RSVP to Charene.larcha1623@gmail.com, or Dot.dotdake42@gmail.com

Please do not arrive before 11:30, there will not be anyone to let you in.

Business cards for FFCI Members

Jerry and I went to Milwaukee, Wisconsin for the North American Friendship Force Conference. We met a lot of people and many people asked for our contact information. We did not have anything to give them. When meeting new people, we are happy to talk about Friendship Force, but then we do not have anything to hand to them to say "Contact me" and I will give you some additional information about our wonderful organization. Are you like Jerry and me? Do you need something to hand out to people you meet? Friendship Force of Central Iowa will be printing Business Cards with our members' contact information on them along with an elevator speech to give when you meet people. If you would like a business card, please send me your name, address, phone number, and email address. Once I get enough people who would like a card, I will get some printed.

Send your information (address, phone numbers and email addresses) to: altajerbyg@gmail.com, in the subject line please put FFCI Business Card

<p>Alta & Jerry Byg Friendship Force Central Iowa 2127 Coneflower Court Ames, IA 5010 Alta cell: 515-450-8397 Jerry cell: 515-450-3353</p> <p>Alta email: altajerbyg@gmail.com Jerry email: jabyg@msn.com</p> <p>A World of Friends is a World of Peace!</p>	 <p>friendship force CENTRAL IOWA</p> <p>Our mission is to promote understanding across barriers that separate people</p> <p>Friendship Force International is a non-profit organization focused on promoting understanding, cultural education, and citizen diplomacy through homestay journeys and personal friendships around the world</p> <p>www. Friendshipforce.org</p>
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Friendship Force Central Iowa Brochure

We had our first printing of the Friendship Force Central Iowa brochure. We passed out brochures to the people who attended the Annual FFCI meeting on October 26. We will bring some to the FFCI Holiday Party for people to pick up. If you need one before then, you can contact me at altajerbyg@gmail.com or call me at 515-450-8397 and you can stop by to pick some up.

Log into My.friendshipforce.org

Friendship Force of Central Iowa will only be traveling or hosting as a club once a year. That does not mean that you can not travel. You are still able to sign up to travel by logging into My.friendshipforce.org where you can view other available journeys, and join other clubs to travel within Friendship Force International. You can also view the current club calendar and information. Below is a step-by-step process to login to My.friendshipforce.org. Margaret Epplin has offered to help anyone who would like some extra help logging onto and navigating around the website. Her email is: MargaretEpplin@gmail.com, contact her to set up a time to get together.



Sedahlia Crase, Alta & Jerry Byg, members of Friendship Force Central Iowa, attended the first ever North American Friendship Force Conference held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on October 7 through 10th. We arrived at the Drury Hotel to snacks provided by Greater Milwaukee Friendship Force. After checking out our room, we were offered drinks and snacks by the Drury. The snacks were more than enough that we skipped eating out. Two drink tickets and free snacks were provided for us each evening from 5 to 7. Eating out for the evening meal was not necessary and this was a great way to network with others. This was open to all people staying at the Drury Hotel, many of us were able to practice our elevator speech on anyone who was not wearing a NAFFI lanyard.



We had a presentation about Technology, it is here to stay, and we need to learn how to make it work for us. We learned that younger people want to know that their clubs are interested in Diversity. That our clubs are conscious of Sustainability and Ethical travel.



There was a panel discussion where a group of speakers answered questions. These questions ranged from how do you help get members involved, to how you remove members who are not an asset to our clubs. Many questions were asked and answered. Jeremy Snook, Friendship Force CEO, (third from Right), and all members were very knowledgeable. They had many good ideas and suggestions.

We heard from one young woman who traveled to Cali, Columbia with her parents and 100 other ambassadors. She has been a member for over 40 years. She did not make a very good impression with the owner of a Coffee Plantation, because she did not like coffee. She encouraged us to take our children, grandchildren, or great grandchildren on journeys with us to help get the next generation involved in FFI.

We met Judi M Smith from Lower Columbia, USA who was one of the first ambassadors traveling with Friendship Force International. When she was first traveling, they did not tell people where they were going, they only told people what kind of clothing to pack.



We got a refresher course on the steps needed to take for incoming Journeys. You do not have to recreate the step-by-step process, just go to My.Friendshipforce.org, log in and on the left-hand side, click on “Help Center” then Click on Journeys. There are checklists, for incoming, out-going, Health, and Mobility and many more items which are available for our use.

Jeremy Snook requested feedback on how we thought we could improve and grow Friendship Force International. The big idea we took away is that we cannot rely on just one person to do the roles at club level. People are busy and many jobs seem too big and overwhelming, therefore, people are afraid to take on any role. These roles can be broken down into several smaller easier to manage jobs.

One other item which was stressed was to remind our members that we are a group whose main mission is “To promote understanding across barriers that separate people”. This should be done not only while we are traveling, we should make one or two of our events throughout the year, where our group would be of service to our community.

This was the first ever North American Friendship Force Conference and there is talk about holding another conference in the future. If you get a chance, we would highly recommend attending a future conference.

MESSAGE FROM OUR MIDWEST REGION FIELD REP. - Connie Williams

Hello to all the Midwest leadership who regularly attend Bob Mitchell’s Regional meetings! Since the Milwaukee conference, Bob has resigned and I’m to replace him as Regional Field Representative. As it is the holiday season, are you all OK with getting updates/notes via email? I am happy to share the highlights of the regional field rep meeting with you. And please feel free to contact me with any questions you might have for FFI, I’ll bring them to the next meeting, mid-January.

Here are the highlights, please share with your board & your club. If you like, put Midwest Minutes in your newsletters.

Charter Renewal & Membership Dues for 2025 are due now through January 15, 2025. Send dues to (your local membership/treasurer/etc)

2026 Journey assignment process has begun. Be mindful of the deadlines.

Outbound Request Form Sent: January 6, 2025 Due: February 16, 2025

Journey Assignments Mid April

Giving Tuesday, Dec 3, 2024 campaign emails. The Friendship Force mission is more important than ever! “To promote global understanding across the barriers that separate people.” Live by it, recruit new members with it, donate your end of year contributions to it!

Message as we close out 2024: Let’s be grateful for the network of friends Friendship Force provides for us. Let’s involve our members on all levels of FF activity, from providing snacks to leadership. Let’s enjoy the connections and friends we have, including those we will meet, grateful for the opportunities supplied to us by Friendship Force. Happy Holidays to all! Looking forward to continued positive adventures in our Midwest Region in 2025!

Connie Williams
Friendship Force of Cedar Rapids-Iowa City
Midwest Region Field Rep
Mobile: 319-361-8452

EVENTS SINCE LAST NEWSLETTER

October 26 - Annual Business Meeting and Pizza Party

The annual business meeting was held at Northcrest Fireside Room located at 2300 Northcrest Pkw
Those who participated in Chair Yoga knew exactly where the Fireside room was located.



10:00 Annual Business Meeting Called to Order by FFCI President, Alta Byg.

11:45. Pizza Party followed



FFCI Activities 2024: A yearlong celebration of our revitalized club

IN JANUARY IT LOOKED AS THOUGH THE FFCI CLUB WAS READY TO BE DISSOLVED. THEN A REMARKABLE thing happened. Alta Byg said she was willing to serve as president, and Jerry Byg said he would continue as treasurer. Then Marcia Thompson said she would serve as vice president. Corry Bertelsen, Charene Starcevic, and Dorothy Dake agreed to oversee the activities. Dennis Dake said he would be the newsletter editor. Diane Oppedal agreed to be the historian, and Cheryl Binzen was recruited at the Holiday party to be the secretary. By the end of January, the only board positions that weren't filled were publicity and membership. Alta did a fine job of hosting Board meetings in her home and keeping the members informed of local events and opportunities to travel with other clubs. There was new energy and excitement generated for the organization.



2024 Officers in January



In February there was a **LEO held at the Village Co-op** where member Judy Mongin lives. People filled out forms and paid their dues for 2024. That was followed by a meal that was part catered from Hickory Park and part homemade (pasta salad and desserts). There was a business meeting.

In March Alta advertised a Pop-up LEO at Texas Roadhouse since there was no planned activity for that month.



April 20th ten people participated in Stash the Trash for the City of Ames. They were given South 5th St.--the road going west from Aldi grocery store. Peggi Faden got a little overzealous and wanted to clean out a water retention area, but they would have needed a truck to haul all that debris.



Mary Mary Beth Buchele and Dot Dake hosted an international potluck at Mary Beth's home. The guest list needed to be limited to the number that could fit around a dining room table with all the leaves in. The table was full! Diners told about what significance their dish meant to them.

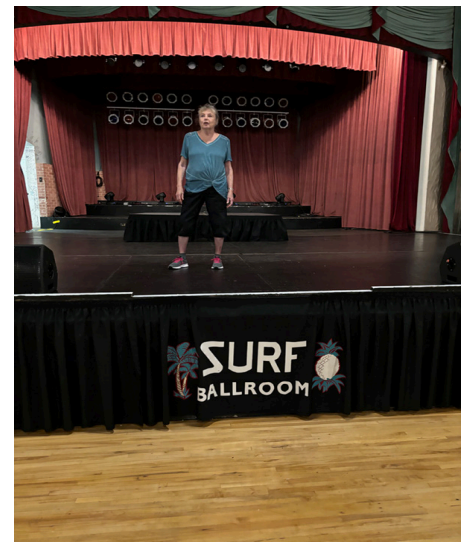


Lynn Avant and Lynne VanValin hosted a potluck at Bandshell Park on Thursday, June 27, the night when there was a band concert. It was attended by 20 people. The picnic tables had been moved to the east side of the park, so that is where the group sat. Lynn Avant provided iced tea and lemonade and everyone brought a dish to share. Masters of Ceremony Mr. Larkin gave the Friendship Force a shout out from the stage. It was nice that this traditional activity which disappeared during covid was back.



In mid-July four members went to the Cellar Winery north of Slater to listen to blues music.

On July 22 at the home of Dot and Dennis Dake the people who were making the trip to Clear Lake the next day watched the movie *La Bamba* about the quick rise to fame and death of Ritchie Valens. The next day nine people went to Clear Lake and toured the Surf Ballroom, ate sack lunches in the City Park, bought sweatshirts at the thrift shop because the weather took a change, took a narrated drive around the lake, went to the Gardens of North Central Iowa, and ended the outing by eating supper at the Half Moon restaurant. The paddlewheel boat did not go out that day, and a strongly-worded letter was sent complaining about the boat owner's lack of interest in promoting tourism. The trip was hosted by Corry Bertelsen, Dorothy Dake, and Dennis Dake.



Cheryl Binzen and her daughter, Mira, introduced the club to chair yoga moves at the Northcrest Fireside Room on Aug. 27. Refreshments were provided by Diane Oppedal, Carole Magilton, and Cheryl Binzen.



On September 18 fourteen members went to The Lucky Pig in Ogden for tasty things like the meatloaf special, tenderloins, and pulled pork sandwiches. Then they drove to Jefferson to Deal's Orchard and had a short lecture from the owner about the different crops he has tried, what he grows now, and what has proven successful in the business. They were served homemade double crust apple pie or Dutch crumb topped apple pie and ice cream. People looked at the variety of pumpkins and gourds, perused the gift shop, and walked over to see the field of sunflowers. Planners of the event were Ginny and Stu Huntington.



On October 26 the annual meeting was followed by a pizza lunch with side dishes brought in by board members.

The Holiday Party will be held at the party room at the Village Co-op on Saturday, December 7, at 11:30. No one should show up early, as the room is reserved for a specified amount of time. Members are asked to bring a potluck dish to share and a wrapped white elephant gift. Main dishes will be needed. Attendees are asked not to go out and buy a bottle of wine or anything new for the white elephant gift. The goal of this activity is to entertain participants rather than to give or acquire genuinely valuable gifts. Most people can find something they don't want any more in their house. The more amusing or impractical the better!

Submitted by Corry Bertelsen



2025 Friendship Force of Central Iowa Membership Form

Name: _____ Name: _____

Address: _____
Street City State Zip Code

_____ New member _____ Renewing member

If you are NEW to FFCI or have a CHANGE in email or phone please complete:

E-mail Address: _____ E-mail Address: _____

Telephone (H) _____ (C) _____

Telephone (H) _____ (C) _____

Membership (FFI & Club dues): \$40.00/adult _____

Club dues (only): \$10.00 _____ Donation: _____

If you are new or would like a new name tag. Name on tag _____

Total Enclosed: _____ Make checks payable to: The Friendship Force of Central Iowa
 and send along with this form to: Jerry Byg, Treasurers 2127 Coneflower Ct Ames, IA 50014

- We correspond mainly via email, please indicate if you wish to receive all emails, including journey information or if you wish to only receive club activities.

_____ Club activities only _____ All Club and FFI information

The club needs your help, please circle all that you are interested in being involvement with:

Officer Publicity Inbound Journey Outbound Journey Membership	Transportation Activity Planning Club Activities Hosting Photography	Newsletter Music Food Other:
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