



President's Letter

Dear Members,
I hope you and your family were able to get together during the holiday season. Time spent with family and friends is always special.

Review of 2024, we had a lot of great times throughout the year.

If you have forgotten, check out the November/December newsletter for a refresher of events during the year. Thank you, Corry, for the recap of the year. We are looking forward to another great year in 2025. We have much to look forward to in 2025.



March 1st is Friendship Force's International Friendship Force Day. Our club will be planning on an event sometime during the month. The hope is to have an open house at the Ames Public Library. Your input and your help would be greatly appreciated.

The All-Iowa Picnic will be held and hosted by the Greater Des Moines Friendship Force on June 28th. Put this date on your calendar.

In late September, we will be hosting Brandon & Area Friendship Force.

In early November, we will hold our FFCI Annual Business Meeting. In December, we will have our Holiday Party.

These are not the only events we will have throughout the year. Our Activity Committee is looking for people to add to the calendar. **If you have not already signed up for a month, please contact Charene, Margaret, or Dot. This will be another year we can look forward to.**

We are also looking for people to help in creating the newsletter. We are looking for reporters (someone to contact new or continuing members to interview, get a picture and write up a short article). Photographer (take pictures for events and send to Dennis). Social reporter (gather members birthday, find out if people have a special event and if we need to send out get well wishes to our members). If you have traveled or will be traveling, make sure to write up and share your experience. Do you have a passion you would like to share with the group, how about starting a special interest group. Many hands make light work!

This is a brief overview of our year. I hope you will be joining me in making a New Years Resolution to enjoy another year with Friendship Force of Central Iowa.

Alta Byg
FFCI President

FFCI Game Day - February 16 th

Green Hills Retirement Community

An email with details about event will be sent on Feb7. Please respond promptly.

World Friendship Day - March 29th

(Location and time to be determined)

Watch for emails announcing.

Board meetings are open to all members,

please feel free to attend either in person

or via Zoom. Zoom Link: <https://zoom.us/j/719641140?pwd=K29JUWM3VnNhWn-RCVW1xRkxPc3Eydz09>

us/j/719641140?pwd=K29JUWM3VnNhWn-RCVW1xRkxPc3Eydz09

Upcoming Board Meeting Dates

(put these dates in your calendar):

Board meeting - March 18 at 4 pm.

Board meeting - June 17 at 4 pm.

Board meeting - September 16 at 4 pm.

FFCI Annual Meeting: November 8 at 10 am.

Death of Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter



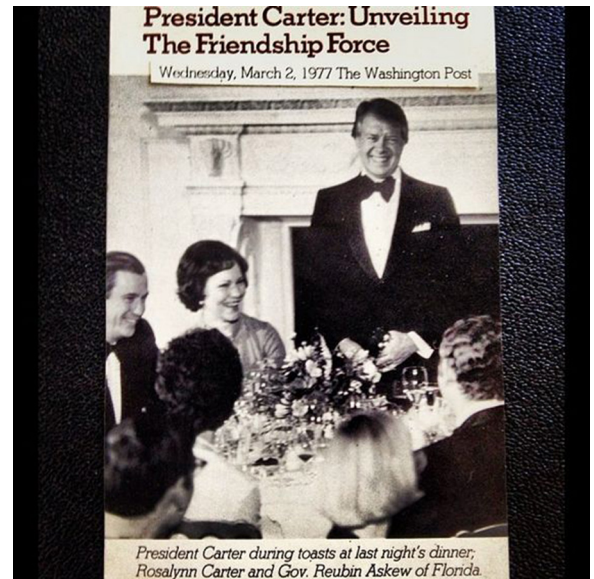
friendship force
INTERNATIONAL

Former U.S. President and Nobel Peace Prize winner, Jimmy Carter, passed away on December 29th, at his home in Plains, Georgia. Friendship Force International announced the death of President Carter with sadness and respect for his work with FFI and peace in the world.

Carter's connection to Friendship Force dates back to 1977, when the newly inaugurated President, in support of his long-time friend, FFI founder Wayne Smith, formally introduced Friendship Force at a White House gathering of State Governors.



Rosalynn Carter receiving award from Wayne Smith



The two men could not have known how much this decision and the vision behind it would impact world communities in the next 45 years. What began as an experiment has become a global phenomenon, with thousands of people from more than 80 countries having participated as hosts or citizen ambassadors to date.

Post-presidency, Carter continued with his gracious support of the organization for many years, and the late First Lady Rosalynn Carter served as its Honorary Chairperson until 2002. The Carters attended the International Friendship Force Conference in Wisconsin in 2000 to celebrate the retirement of Friendship Force's then-president, founder Wayne Smith. President and Rosalynn Carter also visited the offices of Friendship Force several times to show their support for the staff headquartered there.

FFI owes a profound debt of gratitude to President and Mrs. Carter for their unwavering advocacy and steadfast belief in the organization and its mission: promoting peace, democracy and human rights around the world.

Events since our last Newsletter

Outbound Journey to Puerto Vallarta, Mexico

Judy Mongin, Joan Mathews and I (Diane Oppedal) headed to the Des Moines Airport at 2:30 AM (Yes, AM!) on Saturday, January, 11, 2025 for departure to Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. We had signed up for a one-week Friendship Force Global Pilot Journey, "The Other Side of Puerto Vallarta". We stayed at the Hotel Encino in Old Town. International's goal was to make connections and establish a club there by 2026, with Miguel as President.

Prior to departure, Vicki, a global coordinator, collected our paperwork etc. and set up WhatsApp for we 23 ambassadors to stay connected. Miguel's good friend, Paul, who had lived in PV, set up the weekly schedule for our group. Vicki also arranged for a December Zoom meeting so we could meet Paul.



Diane and Rose enjoy double Margaritas.



Judy M. in Puerto Vallarta



Water Taxi

The very basic Hotel Encino was located close to the Malecon, the area bordering the ocean and decorated with lots of sculptures. There, people were strolling, eating at outdoor restaurants, boarding the Hop-On, Hop-Off bus, taking pictures, watching for numerous whales and just enjoying the sun and sounds of the ocean.

Although we didn't get to do many of the events on the schedule, we did enjoy a water taxi to Quimixto, a sandy beach where we enjoyed lunch one day. Everyone succeeded in climbing down a vertical ladder into the bobbing boats. Returning was a bigger challenge, as the tide had receded; a longer climb up to the dock!



We visited a local jungle school and delivered the requested school supplies we had brought with us. The small classroom housed students from kindergarten through sixth grade. In hot weather the students eat their sack lunches outside in a screened enclosure for protection from the mosquitoes. That day, we also toured a government orphanage. Although Social Services places the children, the government provides no funding.



Another interesting outing was to a beautiful Botanical Garden, with lots of blooming flowers, a small chapel and a large, colorful restaurant, where we ate lunch and listened to some musicians.

We enjoyed meeting ambassadors from all over the US. I was especially excited to see my 2018 Dallas Art and Architecture host, Patty. Patty hosted me, my long-time travel buddy, Rose and Debbie from FL. Debbie was also on this trip!

We three tired gals arrived back home early January 19...about 2:30 AM!



Diane, former host, Patti, Rose and Debbie



Whole group
on the beach

2024 Holiday Party

December 5, 2024

Before our family Christmas celebrations became a blur, Friendship Force of Central Iowa members gathered for a time-honored tradition: The Annual Potluck and White Elephant Holiday Party! Our host Judy Mongin prepared the tables, made the coffee, and took care of details. The rest of us brought food and silly gifts.

This year Corry Bertlesen led the Activities Committee that served and cleaned up. Thanks to Corry for all she's done for the club. She's, our rock!



The Belles in full song

After dessert, The Belles led a few familiar carols, before Master of Ceremonies Stu Huntington took over. (Stu's career in stand-up comedy is only just beginning, which he demonstrated as he honed his skills during our White Elephant exchange. We can only imagine where this promising start may lead.)

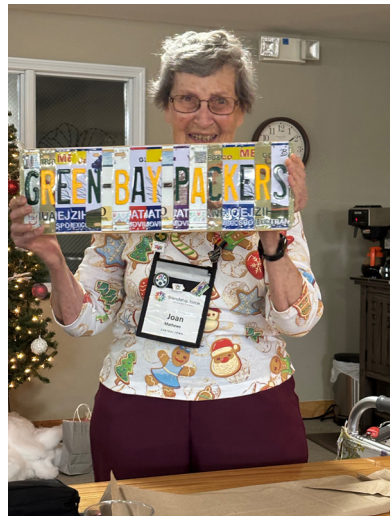


Stu Huntington, our wonderful Master of Ceremonies

Photos shot during some of the white elephants were taken by Dennis Dake. If anyone desires a gently chewed racoon dog toy, Dennis may be able to track it down.



White Elephant Prize Winners



White Elephant Prize Winners



Until the next Holiday Party
December 2025!!!



Incoming International Journey: Brandon, Manitoba
Late September 2025



friendship force

CENTRAL IOWA

a world of friends is a world of peace

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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Photo/Video Release Form

Photo/Video Disclaimer Consent

I consent and authorize Friendship Force International (FFI) or any entity authorized by Friendship Force International (such as Friendship Force Central Iowa (FFCI)) to copyright, use and publish any of the images in any format taken of me during the current FFI year. I understand these images may be used for a variety of purposes and may appear on the club or FFI website, in the FFCI newsletter, promotional materials, or any other media now known or to be invented. I also understand that Friendship Force International or any entity authorized by Friendship Force International will use the images exclusively for FFI-related purposes and not for any commercial gain.

Since anyone can download an image from the internet or make copies from printed materials, I agree that Friendship Force International is not responsible for unauthorized use of the images. I am aware that I am not entitled to any compensation and that the images may appear with or without my or my club's name.

*If you do NOT want your picture taken, please make sure to step out of the photo, better yet offer to take the picture.

By signing below, I acknowledge I have read and understand this release.

Current FFCI year

Club name

Print name

Complete mailing address

Signature

Date