

## September 2025 Outgoing Journey



We have 8 people who have indicated an interest in traveling to Richmond, Virginia. We really need a couple more to come along with us. It is not too late to add this journey to your fall travels. Richmond, said that they would like 10 to 12 guests, there is space for additional people. Please feel

free to ask someone to come along with us on this very interesting journey. They do not have to be a member in our club, although they would need to be a member of Friendship Force. The journey is planned for **September 2025 (exact dates to be determined)**. If you would like to be added to the group who is interested in going, please complete the survey at the following link

<https://forms.gle/QV3rmjGYqi4Y17fR9>.

## September 2026 Outgoing Journey

Central Iowa, USA has been given an outgoing journey for 2026. Our club will be traveling to Greater Hamilton and Burlington, Canada. Greater Hamilton and Burlington Canada is in the Niagara Falls area. On our recent journey to Azerbaijan and Armenia, we were very lucky to have the opportunity to



R to L: Jane Carr, Rose Schultz, Joan & Willie Avis

meet Willie & Joan Avis, who are members of Greater Hamilton and Burlington, Canada. They are an awesome and funny couple and it sounds like their club will show us a fabulous time while we are visiting. I am excited about this journey since I have never been in that area. I hope you will be excited about this opportunity as well.

## Your input is needed for an incoming journey for 2026

We have received information about the upcoming journey for 2026. The Southern New Jersey club would love to visit our club in 2026. We did not ask Friendship Force International for an incoming journey for 2026. We need to



let Taryn with FFI know if we are NOT interested in hosting an incoming journey in 2026. I need your input. The good news is that we have prepared for Brandon as an incoming journey so much of the preparation work has been done. I have created a Google form to gather information. Click on the link and complete the survey: <https://forms.gle/tg2wGBddkuxfEPDa6>.

### Friendship Force World Friendship Day

For Friendship Force World Friendship Day, we had nine speakers talking about some of their journeys through Friendship Force. Margaret Epplin, Ron Mowers, and Diane Oppedal talked about their journey to Western Montana. Dennis Dake talked about the Journey to Long Island, NY. Jerry Byg talked about some of the farms which were visited in New Zealand. Alta



Byg talked about her first Journey to Ukraine. Ginny and Stu Huntington talking about some of their Peace Corps experiences. Ginny was in Pakistan and Stu was in Turkey.

Dorothy Dake talked about the journey to Brandon, Canada. Dot and Peggy had us all singing about the highlights of their visit to Canada. We were sorry Brandon; Canada will not be able to join us here in Ames. We were hoping to return their hospitality.

We had great presentations, great music and even some good cookies.

## **New Member Orientation**

Description: While this training is geared towards new members, anyone is welcome. Register

here: <https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/s0wQ2PP8TB2dwGVr0ZaAYw> Starts: 6:00PM CDT on Jun 09, 2025

### **New Members Karen Tegtmeyer and Mardell Christian**

Say hello to our newest members!

**Karen Tegtmeyer.** Karen's address is 5542 Boston Court, Johnston, 50131. Her phone number is: 515-494-0426 and her email is: [karen@javadiva.com](mailto:karen@javadiva.com).

**Mardell Christian.** Mardell's address is 433 Frette Dr., Story City, 50248. Her phone number is 515-460-1896 and her email is: [mardellc@gmail.com](mailto:mardellc@gmail.com).

Please join me in welcoming Karen and Mardell!

## Save the date for the North American Conference

The North American Conference is planned for Memphis, TN in April 24-27, 2026. This is a very interesting and informative event. Great way to meet new people and renew friends who you may have met in previous journeys. There is a Riverboat Cruise which you can sign up for as an extension to the Conference and there are a couple people who are interested in this journey. Please contact me if you would also like to be included on this trip.

### Upcoming Journeys available

Greetings from Pennsylvania,  
FF San Antonio is going to FF Greater Harrisburg, PA on an inbound journey that is being planned for this October (10/7-14). San Antonio may only have a few ambassadors and they need to seek additional people who are interested to travel with them (looking for 10-15 ambassadors). Cost to FF Greater Harrisburg would be \$250. We encourage ambassadors to consider coming early or staying late and seeing NYC, Philadelphia, or Washington DC independently. We are connected by train :) If you are interested in traveling to Harrisburg, contact: Lisa Cordell <[lisacordell@embarqmail.com](mailto:lisacordell@embarqmail.com)> Of course, there are many more journeys from which to choose by logging into [https://my.friendshipforce.org/en/users/sign\\_in](https://my.friendshipforce.org/en/users/sign_in) and clicking on "Journeys" on the left-hand side to view all the upcoming journeys.

# An Open Letter from FFI Board



Dear Friendship Force Family,

In a world that sometimes feels more divided than united, our mission—to promote world peace and understanding by creating an environment where individual friendships can be established across the barriers that separate people — has never been more important.

We are living in times of political tension. But we must remember: our work is not political. It is personal. It is human. It is about meeting face to face, heart to heart, and building understanding where it may not have existed before.

Let us be clear—Friendship Force does not exist to take sides in any conflict. We exist to bring people together in spite of conflict. Political challenges may arise. Borders may grow tense. But those are precisely the moments when our work is most vital.

As we continue this work, we carry with us the legacy of our organization’s founder, Wayne Smith, and our long-time supporter, President Jimmy Carter. They believed deeply in the power of citizen diplomacy—that individual, not just governments, could bring peace and build bridges across cultural and political divides. Their vision still guides us today. Their lives remind us that just one person’s commitment to peace and understanding can cause ripples across the world. We cannot let political challenges distract us from our purpose. Instead, let them strengthen our resolve.

Now is the time to lean into our mission—to continue opening our homes, sharing our lives, and extending our hands in friendship. This is how understanding grows. This is how peace begins.

Thank you for your dedication to this extraordinary organization. Thank you for standing strong for friendship, even when it is not easy. The world needs us—now, more than ever.

In friendship,

Donna Simek

Chair of the Board

Friendship Force International