



friendship force

INTERNATIONAL

Friendship Force of Sarasota, FL Q&A

WHAT IS FRIENDSHIP FORCE? Friendship Force (FF) of Sarasota is affiliated with Friendship Force International (FFI). FFI promotes global understanding through "journeys" that include home hosting, sharing meals, & visiting local landmarks & off the beaten sites. We are a non-profit, non-political organization. We have over 350 clubs worldwide in over 70 countries including a number of clubs in Florida. Our Sarasota club has around 100 members mostly from Sarasota & Manatee counties. Our members include both year-round residents & snowbirders.

WHAT IS A JOURNEY? A journey (formerly known as an "exchange") is domestic or international travel in which our FF club participates each year. Travel can be an "inbound" (a FF club from the U.S. or another country visits us) or "outbound" (we visit other clubs). A journey is usually for about a week. Other optional travel may be planned in conjunction with these journeys. The number traveling on each journey is around 15-20 FF members - not our whole club. Journeys provide our members an opportunity for unique travel through which they can experience different views & discover common ground with other FF members around the world.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING A JOURNEY? The FF club that hosts a journey organizes various large group activities, including welcome & farewell dinners & group visits to area venues. Individual local FF members can participate in a variety of ways in hosting our visitors (known as *ambassadors*), depending on their preferences. Members can serve as *home hosts*, essentially providing "bed & breakfast" for our ambassadors. If hosting people in one's home is not preferred, there are other options for engaging in a journey & meeting interesting people. For example, members can accompany our visiting ambassadors on one or more of our group activities (*day host*) or host a small dinner party for ambassadors & their home hosts (*dinner host*) or participate on the committee that plans the inbound journey. The person chairing our local FF club committee that plans for hosting visitors to Sarasota on inbound journeys is called the *host coordinator*. For outbound journeys, we have *ambassador coordinators* who coordinate planning for our members who will be ambassadors to clubs in other states or countries.

IS MY TRAVEL LIMITED TO JOURNEYS PLANNED BY OUR LOCAL CLUB? FF clubs around the world plan journeys each year. You, as a member of FFI, can go on one of our local club's journeys &/or you can choose to go on a journey with another club in the U.S. or another country. To do this, go on the FFI website at <http://www.friendshipforce.org/> & click on "Journeys" to see the listing of the various journeys being planned by FF clubs worldwide & get info on how to contact that club to apply to go on a journey with them. This is a common practice & a great way to make friends around the world.

WHAT IS AN EXAMPLE OF A JOURNEY? In 2012, our club went on a journey to Albania with 21 FF members. Travelers included members from our club as well as members from other parts of the U.S., Canada, New Zealand & Australia - such interesting fellow travelers! We learned so much as a result of being home hosted & participating in varied & interesting activities their club had planned for the week. A FF journey is a cost effective way to travel...but most importantly, it is a fabulous way to experience another country & culture at a level far superior to typical travel. Often, we add an extension for additional travel before or after our journeys. For example, after our week in Albania, 18 of us extended our trip by way of an 11-day commercial tour of Croatia, Montenegro & Slovenia ending in Venice.

WHAT ARE RECENT & FUTURE JOURNEYS?

- 2017 - Inbound journeys from members worldwide to "Experience the Arts of Greater Sarasota" late January/early February + from Wellington, New Zealand club October. Outbound journey combining two 1-week trips to Cornwall & Isle of Wight England in August/September.
- 2018 -Inbound journeys from Florianopolis, Brazil late April/early May & from Rostov-on-Don, Russia November. Outbound journey to Xapala & Mundo Maya de Tuxtla, Gutierrez, Mexico February. Domestic journeys still to be determined.

WHEN & WHERE DOES FRIENDSHIP FORCE SARASOTA MEET? Our regular meetings are the first Thursday of the month September through June at the Waldemere Fire Station Meeting Room (2nd floor), 2070 Waldemere Street, Sarasota (across US 41 from Sarasota Memorial Hospital). Our meetings are usually 7:00-9:00 PM. We have a short business meeting at which we discuss upcoming journeys & other club activities followed by a program on various topics...usually travel or culture related. We do not have regular meetings in July & August but plan some type of "summer happening". In addition, we have small group activities to offer members a chance to get to know each other better in more casual settings. These include wine tasting groups & a movie group. Upcoming meetings at which we welcome your attendance are:

- MAY 11, 2017: Thursday, 7:00-9:00 PM. Program: Director of the Film Industry of Sarasota.
- JUNE 1, 2017: Thursday, 7:00-9:00 PM. Program: Director of the Ringling College Life Long Learning Academy describing the opportunities for on-going learning in our community.
- SEPTEMBER 7, 2017: Thursday, 7:00-9:00 PM. Program: To Be Determined
- OCTOBER 5, 2017: Thursday, 7:00-9:00 PM. Program: To Be Determined
- NOVEMBER 2, 2017: Thursday, 7:00-9:00 PM. Program: To Be Determined

WHAT ARE COSTS? Annual dues are \$25 + \$12 for first-time members for membership badges. Because our journeys involve weekly home stays & excursions planned by the host club, travel costs are typically very reasonable.

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

- Our facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/Friendship-Force-of-Sarasota-Florida-214749765219652/> & website at www.friendshipforcesarasotaflorida.org have loads of information - pictures, newsletters, activities & more!
- If you have any questions, please give feel free to contact our Membership Chair, Peggy Hayden, at 941-306-5197 or hayden.peg@gmail.com.