



friendship force
INTERNATIONAL

Journey Guidelines

for Ambassador and Host Coordinators

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If ordinary people get to know each other as friends, they discover that the values and experiences they share are more important than their differences.

- Wayne Smith, Founder



Introduction

A Brief History

Wayne Smith, the founder of Friendship Force International, believed that friendship is a powerful force for change in the world. If ordinary people get to know each other as friends, they discover that the values and experiences they share are more important than their differences. They learn that differences do not have to divide. But how can we establish meaningful friendships across the barriers of language, culture, religion, and distance? Wayne Smith had an answer: employ the universal concept of hospitality to strangers as the means for bringing people together. Give people a few days sharing a home and they can become friends.

The Friendship Force envisions that friendships among people of different nations and cultures will not only be personally enriching for participants but also can promote international understanding on a broad scale. Based on this vision, Smith established The Friendship Force in March 1977 with the support of Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter. Mrs. Rosalynn Carter served as Honorary Chairperson of The Friendship Force through the first twenty-five years, working to ensure that the organization became vibrant and known around the world.

What sets Friendship Force apart from other cultural exchange organizations is the focus on a 5-7 day homestay, the purpose of which is to promote global understanding by bringing people together across the barriers that normally separate them. More than 600,000 ordinary citizens in more than 60 countries have learned that sharing a home for a few days is an ideal way to create new friendships. In the process, stereotypes that can lead to misunderstanding, fear, hatred, and even war, give way to understanding and goodwill.

Beginning with a bold series of large Journeys in the late 1970s, the concept took hold. Within a few years tens of thousands of citizen ambassadors and hosts could testify to the fact that a few days of sharing a home did indeed lead to lasting friendships. With the help of a USD\$3 million grant in the 1980s from the Sasakawa Foundation in Japan, Friendship Force transformed itself from a series of large exchanges to a global network of local chapters in more than 350 communities in 58 countries.

In the late 1980s, FFI became active in the former Soviet Union, pioneering homestay visits throughout the region. In large part because of this innovative program linking East and West, in 1992 Friendship Force was recognized internationally when it was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. Wayne Smith retired in 2000 and died in 2004. He was succeeded as President by Chip Carter (2000-2002) and Susan Smith (2003-2004). For a complete history of the first 20 years of Friendship Force International, see Charlene Terrell's book, *The Other Side of the Mountain*. Copies can be ordered from FFI.

Your Role as an Ambassador and Host Coordinator

The Ambassador and Host Coordinators is one of the most important Friendship Force leadership roles. It is also one of the most rewarding. As an Ambassador and Host Coordinators, you are the “face” of FFI.

As Coordinator for a Journey, you are responsible for planning the Journey, recruiting ambassadors/hosts, and leading the experience.

From the first Journey (exchange) in July 1977 until today, the Friendship Force mission is carried out by bringing together two groups of people: ambassadors who travel to distant lands, and hosts who open their homes to the visiting ambassadors. Each takes on three important roles in the Journey. The Ambassador is a guest, a citizen ambassador and an international traveler. The host is a host, a cultural ambassador, and a guide. Your role as Coordinator is to select, prepare and lead ambassadors and hosts on a Journey so that they are able to carry out their responsibilities while having an enjoyable cultural experience.

Each Journey is unique, but there are some basic ingredients for success:

- YOU! An enthusiastic and organized leader.
- Effective communications among Ambassador and Host Coordinators, FFI Regional Support Manager, and your local club leadership.
- Flexibility, patience, and understanding in dealing with other cultures.
- An appealing Friendship Force itinerary.
- A strong recruiting campaign that reaches beyond club membership.
- Qualified ambassadors/hosts.
- Cultural and logistical workshops.



Friendship Force Ambassador Pledge

By leading a successful Journey you will provide people from your club and community an important and rewarding cross-cultural experience. You will also be continuing a tradition that is reflected in the Friendship Force Ambassador Pledge:

As a member of the Friendship Force,

I recognize that I can make a difference.

I have a mission to be a friend to the people of the world.

As I embark upon this adventure, I know that others will be watching.

I know that through my example to my fellow citizens and the people of other nations, the cause of friendship, love and peace can be advanced.

I CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

Thank You

You and your fellow Coordinators around the Friendship Force world play a vital role in carrying out the mission of our organization. By serving as a volunteer Ambassador and Host Coordinators, you enable people from your community to establish direct links with people of another country and culture. Together they develop a level of cultural understanding that simply is not possible as ordinary tourists. This could not happen without your leadership. We hope you receive real satisfaction from knowing the importance of the contribution you have made.

On behalf of Friendship Force members in your community and around the world,

THANK YOU!

Chapter 1: Plan It

*What makes travel with the Friendship Force unique is the opportunity to live for a few days as or a week with a local host family. It is a very personal experience, as hosts **open their homes** to visitors from abroad, sharing their everyday life.*

Getting Started

Congratulations! You have been selected as a Coordinator for a Friendship Force Journey and now it is time to get started.

Many Ambassador Coordinators will not be familiar with the cultural richness and opportunities available in the host community. As Host Coordinator you can provide this information. **Promote your club** well in advance to make your community and program sound like a “must see and do!” A good club profile and website can be an advantage.

Both Ambassador and Host Coordinator will want to become familiar with the basic Friendship Force policies that pertain to your Journey. These can be found in the *Policies and Guidelines for Clubs and Programs* that are approved each year by the FFI Board of Directors.

In addition to the standard FFI policies that apply to all Journeys, you should also receive:

- A copy of any correspondence related to the conditions for your particular Journey.
- A Journey Agreement, also called “It’s a Match.”
- Suggested month of travel - try to plan the date of your Journey as close to the assigned period as possible since changing the month could affect the dates and success of other Journeys.
- Contact information for club leaders.

You are now ready to begin your planning by establishing direct contact with the people who will be working with you to ensure a successful Journey:

FFI Regional Support Manager

You will be assigned an FFI staff member, known as a Regional Support Manager, to support you and your counterpart Coordinator throughout the planning process. Your Regional Support Manager will provide you with their e-mail address and direct dial telephone number. Don’t hesitate to email or call any time.



Your Counterpart Coordinator

Your most important contact will be with your counterpart Host or Ambassador Coordinator.

- In some cases you will communicate with the club president until a Coordinator is chosen.
- Establish early contact and get to know your counterpart on a personal as well as professional basis.
- There are different protocols in giving and receiving club gifts. The two Coordinators should discuss these in advance.

Club liaison

As Coordinator for a club Journey you have been appointed by your club for this important assignment. You are in charge of the Journey, but you should maintain close communications with your club leadership throughout the planning process. Determine whom you should use as the primary liaison within your club—it may be the president or another member of the board.

Journey Committee

Some Coordinators like to establish a working committee from the beginning of the planning process.

Committee members are usually Journey participants.

- An assistant Coordinator is helpful both for training or emergencies.
- A financial assistant is also helpful. In some cases this is the club treasurer.
- Host Coordinators sometimes divide the program into segments (day, activity, etc.) assigning responsibility for each part to a different committee member.
- It is up to you to decide who to rely on for support and what kind of organizational style you believe will be most successful for your Journey. The important point to remember is that you do not have to do all the work yourself.
- DELEGATE!

Communicating Between Ambassador and Host Coordinators

The most important communication you will have will be with your counterpart Coordinator(s). Establish your relationship EARLY in the planning process.

- Determine the best way to communicate with your counterpart (email, telephone calls, texting, Skype).
- Adapt your correspondence to what is culturally appropriate for your Journey country and culture.
- Give your counterpart the opportunity for MAXIMUM, not minimum, response time.
- Talk about your planning process and deadlines.
- Call on FFI staff, experienced club leaders, and former Ambassador and Host Coordinators for support if you encounter problems.
- Remember that your counterpart may not speak or understand your language fluently.
- Confirm agreements in writing.

Planning the Journey Experience

Now you are ready to plan the actual Journey experience. **This should be a joint effort by the Ambassador and Host Coordinators** combining the best the host club has to offer with the interests of the ambassador club.

Set the Dates

- The first step in planning the Journey is to confirm exact dates.
- If there are two host clubs the process can be more complicated since both host clubs have to agree on dates that match outbound travel plans.
- If you have difficulty confirming the dates, do not just wait, as that can result in the loss of valuable planning time.
- If you have difficulties contact your FFI Regional Support Manager.

Each hosting experience will have certain elements:

The Homestay

What makes travel with the Friendship Force unique is the opportunity to live for a few days or a week with a local host family. It is a very personal experience, as hosts open their homes to visitors from abroad sharing everyday life. For the ambassador, it provides a wonderful opportunity to explore a culture from the vantage point of an insider, learning firsthand about the host culture, while sharing about his or her own culture.



Group Activities

- Welcome and Farewell: Clubs want to provide a warm and hearty welcome and also a farewell get-together to celebrate the friendships that have been formed.
- City or Area Tour: The hosts will want to share their community and their culture.
- Discuss any plans to meet with local officials and if it is customary to present some form of greeting.
- Invite potential new members as well as non-hosting members to these group activities whenever possible.

Customized Cultural Activities

- Some clubs offer special tours or activities such as going to a theme park, a music or theatrical performance, or taking an overnight coach tour to a nearby point of interest. If these activities would incur costs beyond the regular budget please refer to Helpful Hints for Host Coordinators on page 12. For more ideas on hosting activities, please see page 35.

Individual Time to Explore

- Offering a “Wish Day” enables ambassadors to pursue an area of special interest with their host.
- Some ambassadors would welcome time on their own to explore the area or a special interest.

Helpful Hints for Host Coordinators

- Hosting clubs frequently have more activities available than it is possible to do in a week! Wouldn't it be nice to share some of these as “choices” from which the Ambassador Coordinator could pick and choose according to the interests of the group?
- Do not over plan. Free time with the family is an essential part of the FF experience.
- Stay within your budget. Consider inexpensive or free activities available in your community.
- Adapt your plans according to traffic and transportation issues.
- Schedule time for ambassadors to “treat” their hosts to a dinner, either by cooking for them or taking them to a local restaurant.
- Encourage hosts to arrange for ambassadors to meet neighbors or other family members.

Planning Ambassador Travel

In planning the Ambassador itinerary, there are three approaches that have been used successfully by Friendship Force. You may increase your pool of prospective ambassadors by recognizing that people have different interests, budgets, and time available for them to travel.

Individual Travel Arrangements (full flexibility)

The Coordinator concentrates on the Journey experience and provides ambassadors with full information regarding the time and location for the beginning and end of the Journey, along with the cost for the “Journey only” experience.

The advantage of this approach is that it gives the ambassadors maximum flexibility to find travel bargains or use frequent flyer miles. Ambassadors are required to meet at an assigned location, such as an airport or hotel, by a specific date and time.

Group Travel with Optional Touring (partial flexibility)

The Coordinator creates an itinerary from their city or an international gateway city. An optional sightseeing tour can be added. This option provides flexibility for ambassadors who choose to return home after the homestay as well as those who choose to continue traveling on their own.

Group Travel With Required Touring (no flexibility)

The Coordinator may determine that an organized tour should be made a required part of the Journey.

Helpful Hints for Ambassador Coordinator

- Provide accurate information to ambassadors.
- Provide information on Visa requirements where applicable.
- Provide appropriate immunization requirements where applicable.
- Feel free to contact your Regional Support Manager for help with these issues.

Travel Insurance

Trip cancellation insurance can avoid financial responsibility should a person have to cancel.

Adequate travel and medical insurance is required. When signing the ambassador application, travelers state they will have adequate travel and medical insurance. However there is an option on the application for them to waive the requirement to carry travel insurance; and they agree to release Friendship Force International, its agents, the Ambassador and Host Coordinators, the host and any vendors who participate in this program from liability, loss or damages.

Ambassadors can select the travel and medical insurance of their choice, however FFI can assist in offering insurance through a preferred provider. Please contact your Regional Support Manager for more information.

Setting the Ambassador Journey Fee

Host Club Program Fee of USD \$150. Used by the hosting club to cover expenses associated with the Journey such as the welcome and farewell parties/dinners, group activities and at the host club's discretion, to enable the hosts to participate in these activities.

FFI Fee of USD \$165/week for US outbound Journeys and USD \$140/week for Journeys originating in other countries. This covers the cost of administrating and supporting Journeys. In addition, this fee is the basic revenue source for maintaining and supporting the entire FFI system.

Travel and Associated Costs The ambassadors are responsible for the costs of traveling to and from the host club(s), along with any touring before or after the homestay experience.

If you have included travel and/or tours as part of the basic fee, then you will be responsible for handling these funds as well as the FFI Journey fees.

If you use a travel agency you may be able to make arrangements for individual ambassadors to pay travel costs directly to the tour operator by credit card.

Optional host week activities In some cases the Host Coordinator may recommend activities that are not covered by the US \$150 fee. These activities should be optional. If the Ambassador Coordinator agrees that these activities should be included for all ambassadors, the Host Club Program Fee may be increased accordingly. However, if the Host Club Program Fee is more than US \$150, the Host Coordinator will present a full budget of all activities—both the basic cultural program and the additional activities—prior to the Journey and a post-Journey accounting of the actual expenses. Please communicate to the Host Coordinator early in the planning process if this might apply to your Journey.

Local Administrative Fee This is for ambassador club and should not exceed USD \$25. This fee is optional to cover such things as telephone, printing, postage, and other costs related to promoting your Journey. Note: The local administrative fee is non-refundable if an ambassador cancels AFTER acceptance on the Journey.

Ambassador Coordinator's Discount Ambassador Coordinators devote a great deal of time and effort to planning, conducting, and providing leadership throughout the Journey including any unforeseen emergencies. Because of this substantial responsibility the FFI Fee is discounted 75-100% depending on the number of fully paid ambassadors. Similarly, clubs are encouraged to authorize Ambassador Coordinators to include part or all of the cost of their travel in the Journey fee. Note: including part or all of the leader's cost is standard practice for many group travel programs, thus the Ambassador Coordinator should not feel that he/she is taking advantage of the other participants. Follow your club's policy in regard to including a pro-rated amount to cover the Coordinator's expenses. The FFI Ambassador Coordinator Discount is contingent upon compliance with the Fill-the-Seat policy outlined below, and is only applicable to International Club-to-Club Journeys.

Contingencies In some cases an Ambassador Coordinator will add a small amount to cover unplanned expenses along the way.

Financial Management for Ambassador Coordinator

The Ambassador Coordinator should have a thorough understanding of any contracts made with airline and travel vendors and enter the dates where penalties would be incurred into a master calendar.

Your club will advise you regarding its banking policy.

A substantial deposit should be collected payable to your club at the time applications are submitted.

After the ambassador's acceptance on the Journey, these fees should be deposited into the appropriate club bank account and held until time to be transferred to FFI and host club according to FFI policies and deadlines.

Cancellation Policy: Cancellation from a Journey may result in financial penalties for the ambassador. These penalties, especially those related to travel arrangements, may be substantial depending on the date of cancellation prior to departure. It is vital for ambassadors to protect their investment appropriately with insurance.

The US \$150 host club program fee is non-refundable if an ambassador cancels from the Journey less than 60 days prior to departure and must therefore be transferred to the host club with the participating ambassadors.

For more information about cancellation policies for the FFI portion of the fees, please review our "Policies" on our website.

Making your Master Calendar (Ambassador and Host Coordinator Checklists)

The next step in the planning process is to make a master calendar. Friendship Force now allows nearly one year to plan and develop a Journey. You'll find this is the best way to ensure you keep on schedule as you move from the **planning** to the **selling** (recruiting) and **leading** phases of the Journey.

Adapt the Ambassador or Host Coordinator Checklists on the following pages to suit your particular Journey:



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Ambassador and Host Coordinator Checklist

9-12 Months Before Journey Date

For Ambassador Coordinators

- Journey assignment confirmed
- Contact FFI Regional Support Manager
- Contact the Host Coordinator(s) to establish:
 - dates,
 - maximum number of ambassadors; and
 - any extra
 - host fees
- Informal discussion and information gathering with club
- Plan itinerary and tour options.
- Select travel agent or airline if traveling as a group
- Provide itinerary and pricing to FFI
- Establish Journey budget and financial procedures
- Develop recruiting flyer or brochure
- Plan recruiting strategy
- Hold first introduction/informational workshop
- Let FFI know if you would like any additional weeks

For Host Coordinators

- Journey assignment confirmed
- Contact FFI Regional Support Manager
- Establish contact with Ambassador Coordinator
- Confirm Journey dates
- Let the Ambassador Coordinator and FFI Regional Support Manager know how many you can host



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Ambassador and Host Coordinator Checklist

6-9 Months Before Journey Date

For Ambassador Coordinators

- Begin recruiting ambassadors
- Implement promotional plan for Journey
- Hold additional informational workshop(s)
- Begin receiving Ambassador Application and Agreement forms with deposits
- Delegate certain jobs or committee responsibilities
- Select an assistant Coordinator from guests
- Establish cultural and pre-departure workshop dates, locations and content
- Continue communications with Host Coordinator
- Continue communications with FFI Regional Support Manager
- Use FFI Resources to help with recruitment if needed (contact your Regional Support Manager)
- Check on visa and health requirements for host country

For Host Coordinators

- Establish a Journey committee, delegating as appropriate
- Decide if you wish to propose any added options to the Ambassador Coordinator communicating these ideas and costs for consideration
- Get written confirmation if additional costs are involved



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Ambassador and Host Coordinator Checklist

3-6 Months Before Journey Date

For Ambassador Coordinators

- Finalize recruitment and selection of ambassadors
- Report final details and ambassador numbers to FFI
- Confirm final details and payment schedule with the Host Coordinator
- Provide updated information to travel/airline agent to meet deadlines
- Finalize Journey program itinerary and payments with the Host Coordinator
- Confirm from the Host Coordinator what you need to take to officials in host city (letters, gifts, etc.)
- Hold cultural workshop(s) for ambassadors

For Host Coordinators

- Decide on how to handle your finances according to your club policy
- Prepare a preliminary program of activities for the Journey
- Communicate any choices within the program to the Ambassador Coordinator
- Recruit hosts among your membership or prospective members
- Visit/evaluate host homes where appropriate
- Confirm final details with the Ambassador Coordinator
- Obtain Ambassador/Host matching form from the Ambassador Coordinator
- Prepare host matching form and send to the Ambassador Coordinator
- Reserve locations if needed for welcome and farewell parties

CHAPTER 2: Sell It

*A successful Journey begins and ends with an enthusiastic Ambassador and Host Coordinator who truly believe that the Friendship Force provides great opportunities for people to **experience the world** while making new friends.*

Developing a Successful Recruiting Strategy

Your recruiting goal is to solicit enough applications so that you can have a full Journey with excellent ambassadors and hosts. If you have done a good job in planning the Journey, this should be an achievable objective. Participating in a Journey entails a major commitment of time and money on the part of both ambassadors and hosts.

Armed with an excellent itinerary and an enthusiastic attitude, where will you find prospective ambassadors and hosts? Consider the first three separate target populations below for both ambassadors and hosts and the fourth one for just ambassadors.

Your fellow club members

You should start publicizing the Journey in your club's newsletter and on the website as soon as your Journey is confirmed. Make sure, however, that you let your members know the type of Journey you are planning and the degree to which it will be physically challenging. Be sure the members of your club understand that they are **applying** as ambassadors or hosts. They are not simply signing up on a "first come, first served" basis.

The broader community


It is equally important to look to the larger community to recruit new participants. One of the best ways to do so is to see your Journeys as an excellent way to enlist new people from the community. There are many other ways to get the word out: local newspapers, radio announcements, speaking to civic organizations, placing flyers at local libraries, or seeking support from a local university professor.

Your friends and colleagues

Do not forget to invite friends, family and professional colleagues to consider joining you on the Journey.

Friendship Force members from other clubs

Coordinators are recognizing that other clubs provide an excellent source of potential ambassadors. Even if you would like to fill the Journey from within your own community, you should look for ways to promote the Journey to other clubs from the very beginning. Too often Coordinators wait until they



know they have vacancies before doing this and then very often it is too late.

The key is to pursue all categories simultaneously. The mistake that is often made is to focus only on the club membership during the early months of recruiting. The problem with this approach is that if the club membership does not provide sufficient qualified applicants, then it may be too late to recruit from the other categories.

Promoting The Journey

The best way to begin promoting your Journey is to produce flyers or brochures that can be produced and distributed electronically, along with articles in your club newsletter that can be used as the basis for press releases and other written material.

In getting the word out beyond your club members, there are a number of avenues that can be pursued:


- **Media:** Depending on the size of your community, the local newspaper may be interested in a Friendship Force story. Or try local access cable television and Internet bulletin boards.
- **Business, Civic and Religious Organizations:** Members of your club may be affiliated with other local organizations. Consider approaching these groups as partners in your promotional efforts. Place a notice in their newsletter or on their website promoting your Journey; ask to address one of their meetings to promote your Journey.
- **Local International Organizations:** Some good places to start are university international student offices and programs, Sister Cities, International Visitor Councils, and student exchange organizations.
- **Be Creative!** See your Journey as providing a service to your community and look for ways to offer that service as broadly as possible.

The Host Coordinator may help promote the Journey by preparing an invitation for potential ambassadors. This can be used as part of the promotional materials for the Journey.

Remember, until ambassadors submit an application with a significant deposit they are just “interested.” They have not really applied. You will have succeeded once you “close the deal” by having them submit deposits with their applications.

Fill-the-Seat Policy

If a journey is not full at 100 days prior to departure, the journey must be listed on the FFI online journey catalog. A full journey is one in which the number of ambassadors matches the hosting capacity of the host club. For multi-club journeys, the hosting capacity of the smaller



club will determine the overall hosting capacity. Domestic and EU and Schengen journeys are excluded from this policy.

What to Look for in Potential Ambassadors and Hosts

Most people who genuinely support the goals of Friendship Force will make great ambassadors or hosts. As you consider whom to include on your Journey, here are some characteristics to look for in your candidates:

- **An Open Mind:** The ability to keep one's opinions flexible and receptive to new stimuli.
- **A Sense of Humor:** The ability to laugh and find humor in things helps guard against disappointment and frustration.
- **Flexibility and Adaptability:** The ability to cope with new situations as well as keeping options open and judgmental behavior to a minimum.
- **Positive Regard for Others:** The ability to express warmth, empathy, respect, and positive regard for others with a willingness to communicate both verbally and non-verbally.

The Selection Process

The selection process begins with the *Ambassador or Host Application and Agreement* form, which should be completed and signed by each applicant.

- The interview process is important for both prospective ambassadors and hosts. Guidelines can be found on the website.
- Applicants should be made aware of the specific requirements for your Journey including fees and deadlines, travel options (if any), as well as the physical and cultural conditions you anticipate.
- The Coordinators are in an excellent position to recruit new members. Being a host or an ambassador is a wonderful way to become involved with the Friendship Force for the first time.
- You should get to know each applicant personally before determining whether or not to accept him or her for the Journey. This may be through a formal interview or perhaps over the phone.
- Ask for written references or people you can call if the ambassador has not been on a Journey or is applying from another city.
- Remember, you are responsible for the entire Journey and will want to make certain that each person you accept will be a great Friendship Force ambassador or host.

- **Prior club membership SHOULD NOT be made a precondition for a person to apply to be an ambassador.** However, some clubs have a policy that all who join a Journey are required to join the club. It is simple to include club dues as a part of the Journey Program Fees for non-members.
- It is a mistake to follow a “first come, first served” approach to recruiting - rather emphasize from the outset that you are looking for those that are best qualified. Applicants are not signing up the way they might for a cruise or a conference. They are applying and need to be accepted before they can be considered on your Journey. If you make this clear from the beginning you can avoid problems later on.
- Strive for a true cross section of the community. If, after completion of general recruiting, the group lacks participants from certain races, ethnic groups, occupations and ages, specifically seek to recruit them.
- The final ambassador list with profiles should be sent to the Host Coordinator as early as possible. If host matching information is received well in advance, contact can be made by mail or email before the Journey.

Additional guidance is available in the Ambassador and Host Selection documents available on our website.

Special Note on Mobility and Health Limitations

Ambassador Coordinators are responsible for accepting only those who can comply with the physical requirements of the Journey program. Ambassadors must be able to join in with the activities of their hosts. Extensive walking, carrying one’s own luggage, riding public transportation, and climbing stairs without assistance are all normal within a Journey. Participants must also be alert and capable of following directions.

Here are some tips for screening potential ambassadors:

- Review the health section of the Ambassador Application with the applicant and make sure that any potential or current health problems, including mobility and stamina issues, are adequately noted. Limitations or conditions within the hosting homes or community should also be taken into consideration. This could be everything from the form of public transportation available or altitude of the host city.
- Ask applicants direct questions about their daily routine, travel habits, and level of physical and mental abilities. Explain the nature of activities proposed on the Journey.
- If the applicant has traveled previously with Friendship Force, check with the applicant’s most recent Ambassador or Host Coordinator. Or, ask for references that can speak about the applicant’s level of physical and mental capabilities.
- If concerns remain, ask for a letter from their health provider indicating that the applicant will be able to meet the requirements of the Journey.

- Use common sense. There will come a time when each of us will no longer be able to travel comfortably. If you believe that to be the case, be candid but caring, sharing your concerns. Make sure they realize that it is not fair to the other members of the Journey if you accept a person who is unable to cope.

FFI does support the participation of ambassadors with health limitations and physical disabilities. However, without exception, they can only be accepted on a Journey upon full disclosure of their limitations to both the Ambassador and Host Coordinators and with written agreement from the host Journey community and/or travel suppliers that they are able to accommodate the limitation.

Host Matching Process

As you begin matching your ambassadors and hosts, here are some helpful suggestions:

- Pay particular attention to age and activity level so that both hosts and ambassadors can enjoy comparable activities.
- Thoroughly review the list of ambassadors when you receive it from your counterpart. Check interests, hobbies, occupations, age and gender to match with a host.
- Organize one or two workshops where the culture of the ambassadors and activities scheduled will be discussed. The workshops provides an opportunity for experienced hosts to share their experiences with those who are new.
- Pay special attention to ambassadors who smoke, have pet issues or that have allergies, special food needs or disabilities. It is important that prospective hosts are aware of any special requirements and are able to accommodate them.
- Make note of pets and/or smokers in host families to ensure allergic ambassadors are not matched with them.
- Check the number of bedrooms and type of bed in each host home. Both will influence the matching process. Look over the paperwork to see if certain ambassadors want to be hosted in the same household.
- Find out early which home hosts require a day host because of work or other commitments so an adequate number can be recruited.
- It is a good idea to have hosts in reserve in case of an emergency.
- Provide each host (both home and day) the name, address, phone and email of their ambassador as early as possible to allow for a letter of welcome and a chance for both guest and host to develop an acquaintance.
- Day hosts should make arrangements regarding the ambassadors directly with the home hosts.
- Free days should be included as part of the program so that hosts can tailor activities to their specific ambassadors.

- Explain to hosts that the ambassadors should invite them out or cook for them one evening meal during the week. Confirm this tradition with the Ambassador Coordinator.
- In a city where admissions and parking are expensive, guests should be provided with a list of optional activities and explain what EXTRA costs will be involved.
- Advise the hosts to discreetly bring problems, which may arise to your attention. Early identification of a problem can result in early resolution.


Enthusiasm!

There are many ingredients to a successful Journey, but perhaps the most important is to make sure you approach the process with the right attitude. According to one experienced Friendship Force leader, to be successful in filling a Friendship Force Journey you need to know just three words:

Enthusiasm! Enthusiasm! Enthusiasm!

It probably isn't that simple, but it is true that a successful Journey begins and ends with an enthusiastic Ambassador and Host Coordinator who really believes that the FF provides great opportunities for people to experience the world while making new friends.





Chapter 3: Lead It

*A Friendship Force homestay has built-in energy that draws people together and progresses on its own. Let the qualities of **flexibility, good humor, patience, and respect** be your guides.*

Workshops to Prepare Ambassadors and Hosts

Journey workshops are extremely important to prepare ambassadors AND hosts for the role of citizen diplomat and cross-cultural friend. It is at these workshops that goals and objectives of the Friendship Force are presented. They also serve as an important review for experienced participants and are a vital part of host/ambassador preparation – as they build excitement and momentum for the friendship experience.

Informational Workshop

These should be fun, friendly, and informative. Serve refreshments and invite some experienced members so they can help answer questions from those who are new to Friendship Force. These early workshops are good tools for selling your Journey!

Cultural Workshop

Here are some suggestions for cultural presentations:

- Information about the partner city and country. Use videos, art, music and food, or a guest speaker.
- Provide information on the culture, history, government, geography, climate, and language. Review cultural differences.
- Ambassador Coordinator should review suggestions for the gift-giving protocol.
- Distribute the Journey program or itinerary.
- Keep language instruction simple—but do it! Knowing even a few basic greetings is a sign of respect.
- Ask each ambassador to write a letter about themselves that you can forward to your counterpart Coordinator and their host(s).

Pre-departure (for ambassadors)

You will need to spend time at the final workshop on the logistical details for the Journey—or you may want to have a separate workshop just for this purpose. You will need to cover the following:

- Details regarding departure.
- Currency needs.
- Any health related information.
- All logistics related to the Journey, including any post-homestay tours.
- Emergency contact and health insurance.
- Final information that has been provided by the Host Coordinator regarding hosting assignments.

Pre-arrival (for hosts) workshop

Booklets (in each language if applicable) for the Journey should be prepared and should provide the following:

- Contact information for both ambassador and Host Coordinator.
- A list of ambassadors and their hosts with addresses, phone and cell numbers and email.
- An itinerary and description of hosting activities with maps as needed.
- Information about the host city or area.
- Hosts need to know exactly where to meet their guests. It is very important to be on time.

Both Ambassador and Host Coordinator should be prepared for many detailed questions—some of which you will not be able to answer. Tell them that you will be accessible throughout the Journey if they should have any difficulties or need to contact you. If any of the ambassadors or hosts seem particularly worried, you may want to schedule an individual meeting with them to provide the reassurance they need.

Deadlines

Keep track of deadlines for payments to FFI, hosting club, tour operators and other contractual obligations.

Be sure to make arrangements for payment of Friendship Force fees and host club program fees at least 60 days prior to departure. If there are any questions regarding this, consult your FFI Regional Support Manager. If an ambassador cancels less than 60 days prior to departure, the Friendship Force and host club program fees are non-refundable.

Being Prepared for Emergencies

Each year FFI conducts over 300 Journeys with over 5,000 participating ambassadors. The majority take place without any problems at all. Therefore, it is important not to spend too much time in your workshops focusing on emergencies that are not likely to occur. There are two kinds of situations that you should be prepared to handle, however.

Group Emergencies

Travel delays and surprises: There is always the possibility of changes in the itineraries due to weather or airline-related changes. Have 24-hour phone numbers for any travel agents, tour operators or airlines. Insure that all travellers have contact details for the Ambassador Coordinator. Have all contact details for the Host Coordinator so you can alert them to changes in arrival times.

Political unrest or natural disasters: FFI and your host leaders will keep you informed prior to your departure and if there were any concerns the Journey would be cancelled or postponed. Should there be unexpected emergencies or natural disasters, you should immediately contact your country's nearest embassy or consulate and they will provide you with very clear instructions on how to proceed. (You should have this information with you as part of your emergency contact list.)

Individual emergencies

- An ambassador or host is hospitalized or has to be treated for more than a minor illness during a Journey.
- An ambassador leaves a homestay during a Journey, either voluntarily or involuntarily.
- An ambassador or host has engaged in inappropriate behavior. Use Ambassador Pledge included in Ambassador Application & Agreement, or other instructions to avoid misunderstandings.
- An ambassador or host is an alleged victim, perpetrator, or witness to a crime during a Journey.
- An ambassador loses his/her passport or other vital document, particularly if this results in the need for separate travel arrangements.

Helpful Hints

Ambassadors should keep copies of their passport identification page in a location separate from the original (making it much easier to replace a lost passport).

Some Coordinators ask the ambassadors to provide a sealed envelope with detailed health information, to be opened only in case of an emergency.

If the emergency is health-related, first make sure the ambassador receives the necessary treatment—the travel insurance company can be of assistance as well. Your second task is to contact the appropriate family member back home.

If the emergency takes place during the homestay experience, your Host Coordinator will be the best source of support, since they understand the local situation.

If the emergency takes place during the travel portion of the Journey, the best assistance will come



from the travel provider.

Contact the FFI staff in Atlanta. Use the 24-hour emergency number if the office is closed. That number is 404-522-9490. There will be a message directing you to the on-call staff member who will assist you.

Final Preparations

As the departure day approaches, make sure all of the preparations are in order:

Travel Arrangements

If the Journey includes travel or tours, make sure all of the arrangements are finalized well in advance, payments have been made, and ambassadors are informed of details.


Documents

Secure all of the documentation needed for emergency situations from ambassadors. Other vital pieces of information are: contact numbers for both Coordinators, travel suppliers, and the embassy or consulate in the host country.

Leadership During the Journey

A Friendship Force homestay has a built-in energy that draws people together and progresses on its own. Let the qualities of flexibility, good humor, patience, and respect be your guides.

- An Ambassador or Host Coordinator is a spokesperson, and may be asked to make comments or presentations at Journey functions, at meetings with local dignitaries, or perhaps with the news media.
- Should any problems arise during the week, your role is to help define the situation, serve as liaison between those involved and to help resolve the difficulty.
- In many cases the two Coordinators will be staying together and should work closely together regarding each step of the program itinerary.
- It will be important for each ambassador and host to know how to contact his or her Coordinator.
- When there are group activities, speak with each ambassador and host to make sure all is going well. Encourage those who are having any difficulty and deal decisively with any situations that require a change.
- Occasionally, even with careful recruiting and workshop preparation, an ambassador or host who appeared to understand the goals and objectives of the Friendship Force prior to a Journey behaves in a manner to the contrary. When this happens, the Ambassador and Host Coordinators have the authority to handle the situation in the best interest of everyone



concerned. Behaviors such as abuse of alcohol, illegal drugs, verbal or physical abuse are unacceptable at any time.

- Working with your counterpart Coordinator you should first try to resolve the situation with tact as well as firmness. Sometimes a private conversation between the ambassador or host and relevant Ambassador and Host Coordinators will be sufficient to solve the problem. The Ambassador Coordinator has the authority to remove an ambassador from a home and place them in a nearby hotel. This would be at the ambassador's expense if they were the offender.
- If the problem appears to be related to the hosting situation the Host Coordinator can change hosts and handle the problem with discretion.

Your Final Assignment: Have Fun!

- You planned a great Journey.
- You recruited a winning delegation of ambassadors and hosts.
- Your entire delegation is well prepared for the experience.

Your final assignment is a very important one. Enjoy your own Journey experience! The entire Friendship Force leadership system is based on volunteers enjoying the Journey experience. Remember that some of your ambassadors and hosts are potential future Coordinators. You will want them to see you having a great time as well as providing effective leadership.

Post-Journey Activities

Ambassadors have returned home; hosts are getting back to their normal routine – but there are still several important post-Journey responsibilities to complete.

Reunion party

It is fun to get together for an informal reunion. The sharing of photos and stories is a way to remember the experience and to keep alive the friendships developed. Consider community activities that might help promote the Friendship Force by sharing the results of your Journey with the local media and with FFI Headquarters.

Keeping the international friendships alive

New friendships can be long lasting, but only if they are nurtured.

- Cultures differ regarding the etiquette pertaining to thank you notes and other communication following the Journey. However, it is the responsibility of the Ambassador Coordinator to make sure each ambassador sends a “thank you” message to their hosts.
- Discuss with ambassadors and other club members how best to stay in touch and share with each other your successes (and failures) of long-distance communication.

- If a club has not hosted a delegation from previous host country recently, invite them for an official Journey.
- Members of the delegation may want to invite their new friends to come on private visits.
- Either way, you will be continuing the mission of the Journey to establish lasting friendship and understanding.

Journey evaluation

Following the completion of the Journey, your FFI Regional Support Manager wants to know how things went, both the good and the not as good. Your FFI Regional Support Manager will send you and all other Journey participants an online evaluation form to fill out. The survey is confidential and only FFI staff will see the results. Your FFI coordinator will provide you with an overview of the results upon request.

It is very important to provide a candid and accurate report on the Journey so that we can work with all clubs to correct any difficulties. The FFI staff is also interested in learning what went well, so that future Coordinators can have the benefit of your experience.

Pictures are always good! We love sharing your Journey photos via our FFI website, our Facebook page or other media. Send photos by email to your FFI Regional Support Manager. Be sure to include the location, date and names of people in the photo.

Financial Report

To be prepared for the local club or FFI on request.



Supplemental Information

Appendix I: General Information


Friendship Force Ambassadors and Hosts

The goal for a Friendship Force Journey is to promote global understanding across the barriers that separate people. This is achieved by bringing together two groups of people: the ambassadors who travel to distant lands, and the hosts who open their homes. The hospitality provided by the host provides a unique setting for the Journey of ideas and culture at a very personal level. In a few days time, ambassadors and hosts become friends, despite their differences, and begin crossing the barriers that normally separate them.

THE AMBASSADOR

A Friendship Force ambassador, traveling to another country, takes on three distinct roles: guest, ambassador, and traveler.

- 1. Guest:** What makes travel with the Friendship Force unique is the opportunity to live for five to seven days with a local host family. The ambassador becomes part of the host family, sharing everyday responsibilities around the home while learning firsthand about the host culture. Living conditions vary around the world, and the ambassador should be physically able to meet the requirements of the host community. This may include walking to the market, traveling on public transportation and climbing stairs in the home. Lodging and meals in the home are provided by the host, and group activities, such as welcome parties and local sightseeing, are included in the basic Friendship Force fee. Other expenses outside the home are the responsibility of the ambassador: local transportation (or a tank of gas), admission costs to local attractions, and meals outside the home. Sometimes ambassadors like to share their culture by preparing a meal in the home—purchasing the items required at the local market. Being a good guest also means expressing gratitude in appropriate ways. Taking the host out to dinner and sending a thank you note (not just a quick email) after the Journey.
- 2. Ambassador:** Those who travel as Friendship Force ambassadors go not just for their own personal goals but also to represent their home community and their country. This means that in addition to learning about the host culture, they can share about their own. As they make friends in the host community, ambassadors provide a very personal and unique connection on behalf of their country. They should go prepared to be a true ambassador, reflecting the best of their country.

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3. **Traveler:** A Friendship Force experience is a great way to experience the world from a new and unique perspective. With local citizens as guides, the ambassador is introduced to the best attractions of the region. Interested in particular opportunities? Just ask! Ambassadors who enjoy exploring on their own will find ample time for it. Traveling as a FF ambassador is enjoyable and enriching, but it also requires special dedication and preparation. A spirit of adventure, flexibility, and being open to new experiences are all essentials for a successful ambassador experience.

THE HOST

The Friendship Force host also takes on three roles: host, cultural ambassador, and guide.

1. **Host:** The host provides home hospitality to the visiting ambassador(s) for up to one week, offering what is natural for them and their culture in the way of food and activities in the home and community. Each guest should be provided private sleeping quarters, but it is fine for guests to share bath and toilet facilities with members of the host family. The time spent in the home is used to establish a close personal friendship between the host and guests. This can be done without host and guest sharing the same language—but it helps to have someone available who does speak the ambassador's language. At all times the host should be respectful of the culture of the ambassador. While the host may choose to invite the guest to participate in religious observances, these should always be optional. Meals in the home are the responsibility of the host, but the ambassador should be expected to pay for meals and activities outside the home. It is also customary for the ambassador to invite the host to dinner one night or to offer to prepare a meal in the home. The host should accept these offers as they help ensure the establishment of a mutual and balanced relationship. A good host also recognizes the visitor's need for rest! After a long international trip or a busy day sightseeing, the visitor may need some time to rest and catch their breath before another busy day.
2. **Ambassador:** Although the Friendship Force assigns the title “ambassador” to the visitor, in many respects the hosts are also ambassadors, representing their communities and cultures. The host should see this as an important and enjoyable aspect of serving as a Friendship Force host. As hosts get to know the visitors, they should look for ways to share their culture—through ordinary experiences in the home and through activities in the community that can help the visiting ambassador better understand the host culture. Hosts should also introduce their visitors to others in the community, finding opportunities for family and friends outside the home to meet the visiting ambassadors.
3. **Guide:** The visiting ambassadors are provided some formal cultural tours as part of the overall Journey program. They also may be traveling in the region separate from their Friendship Force experience. Even so, the host has a great opportunity to serve as a local guide, providing the visitor with insights into the local community and culture that normal tourists never see. To see a new community through the eyes of the local host rather than from the window of a tour bus is part of what attracts people to a Friendship Force Journey. On days when no formal activities are planned, the host can take the visitors into the community, sharing places of mutual interest. In some cases ambassadors may want to explore the community on their own. Hosts should recognize that this is part of the thrill of

experiencing a new community. If ambassadors want to have time on their own, the hosts can arrange the best way for carrying out this goal.

Offering a Strong Cultural Hosting Program

Travel to make friends? I don't have time to keep up with the friends I have now! This was the statement of a young woman who attended a focus group FFI conducted in an effort to keep our organization cutting edge. So, we have a CHALLENGE to attract the next generation. We know that in each of our 350+ communities we have a way to give an excellent cultural experience. Now, not only can this person make friends, but have a wonderful cross cultural education in the process!

Pretend you are the Host Coordinator and just received the following E-mail:

Dear [Host Coordinator],

I have good news! We are coming to your club with a full Journey.

Most of our ambassadors are in the 45 – 60 year old age range and this will be their first-ever Friendship Force Journey. We have worked very hard to attract this next generation of Baby Boomer type folks and feel the future of our club depends on the success of this Journey. I know they will be exposed to an excellent cultural experience with your club, but my ambassadors are so excited, they would like to hear more specifics.

Please share some details and especially how these ambassadors will learn more about your culture on their first Friendship Force adventure!

With Great Anticipation,

[Ambassador Coordinator]

How would you respond? Clubs around the world are coming up with ideas on how to create excellent programs emphasizing their culture. **Read on!**

Early Communication and Planning

- Early communication between host and ambassador clubs is essential.
- Communication between Host and Ambassador Coordinator must be very good.
- Let incoming club know what is available.
- Get feedback from the other Coordinator.
- Offer options and let the Ambassador Coordinator choose from them.
- Give suggestions.
- Advise Ambassador Coordinator of opportunities and costs.

If these are “extras” beyond the typical Journey program they would be presented as an option to be agreed upon in advance, along with an explanation of extra costs involved, e.g. a special activity or excursion.

- Find ambassador sporting interests to see if a game can be organized.
- Ask Ambassador Coordinator to provide more feedback on individual ambassador interests, group expectations. Ask for profiles – not just circling of options on application forms – this helps to know more clearly the needs and wishes of the individuals in the group.
- Establish a strong committee and make sure the committee gets the ambassadors' interests prior to making the program.
- Ambassador Coordinator should inform applicants of the Friendship Force Health and Mobility Policy, so that a program tailored for a fit and healthy group would be appropriate . Some alternatives can always be provided within the program - active ambassadors could go canoeing or kayaking down the river whilst others enjoy a picnic on the river banks.
- List of community cultural events, including sporting events, are available on the internet up to a year in advance so the hosting committee can plan ahead. These community events allow the ambassadors to meet the local community as well as the other way around and may increase publicity for your program.
- Understand the other culture which may be more formal or informal than your own. Make opportunities for the formal or allowances for the less formal.
- Learn about the other group's culture when developing the Journey program.
- Seek out Baby Boomers to participate.
- Share club profiles.
- Be careful not to overpower with information, especially if translating between languages is required.
- Giving people positive attitudes is very inspiring.
- Be sure the Ambassador Coordinator understands the protocol if you are having a civic reception and whether tokens of greeting are exchanged.
- Recruit hosts in same age range and consider ambassadors and hosts with matching interests.
- Offering "Wish Days" in which individual ambassadors can pursue a special interest is easier with advance planning, but can sometimes be accommodated if hosts communicate with ambassadors at the beginning of the Journey.
- Be positive to meet the requests and the challenges.
- Day hosts are essential to allow ambassadors to hear the views of another club member. They can even be used to host a "Wish Day" or flexible day.
- Invite a quarter of the ambassadors plus a quarter of all club members to individual homes for an activity.
- It is important to visit other homes besides that of the host.
- Divide ambassadors into groups who are interested in specifics: schools, hospitals, environment, tramping/hiking, and include club members who will facilitate.



Welcome Ideas

- Greet with banners and wear Friendship Force shirts.
- Have reception at the airport.
- Invite all club members to the Welcome Party.
- Cocktail welcome party featuring local wines and food specialties with a general bar available.
- Potluck Dinner (since these are indeed representative of some cultures).
- Outdoor BBQ with beer/wine.
- Invite family members and younger neighbors or friends to help with the welcome party. These folks might become interested in Friendship Force.
- Prepare a Welcome Bag with the program, local maps, small gifts, etc.
- Take travel weariness and time of day into account when planning welcome event.
- Have some local cultural content to the welcome event.

Civic Reception

- Arrange well in advance with government officials.
- Give Ambassador Coordinator the proper title and name for the mayor, governor, or other official who will be greeting the contingent.
- Some town councils or legislative bodies welcome a visit by an ambassador group which can then see government in action.

“Treat” the Host Time

- Some clubs schedule an evening when ambassadors treat their hosts to dinner at a local restaurant.
- Some ambassadors bring special foods and prepare a dinner for their hosts in their home.
- Consideration should be made so as not to choose a restaurant that is too expensive and would be a hardship. As someone said, “Being a friend is more important than money.”

Friendships and Food

- Progressive dinners give a chance to see other homes and include non-members.
- Have an event featuring local food products and specialties.
- Wine tasting and wine and cheese gatherings are popular.
- Micro-breweries or breweries can be of interest.
- When dinner hosting, invite younger neighbors who are not FF members.
- Have small dinner parties in members’ homes.

- Breakfast, brunch, lunch on the beach or at a park.
- Outdoor BBQs are always popular.

Activity Ideas

- Vintage car tour.
- Wildlife sanctuary visit or zoos.
- Visiting gardens or arboretums.
- Acknowledge traditional land-owners and incorporate their culture in the program, such as the aboriginal peoples/Maori/Native Americans, etc.
- Fishing (one group went fishing and had their catch “smoked”).
- Shopping (which could be a drop-off and pick-up of the shoppers).
- Sports activities.
- Seeing little children play football or soccer or baseball is fun to watch.
- Singing can be added to many activities.
- Four-wheel driving.
- Evening Plans: music, clubs, theater, opera, dancing – organize hosts for transport.
- All kinds of dancing: line dancing, folk dancing, square dancing, some dances are native to a particular culture that would be fun to teach the ambassadors.
- Outdoor activities: boating, hiking, biking, swimming.
- Play acting: re-enactments of a famous trial or other historic event.
- Lawn bowls.
- Car rally (Bakersfield, California USA does one with clues that was very popular!).
- Visit local schools or university.
- Visit museums or art galleries.
- Visit local historic or cultural sites, unique community projects, environmental sites.
- Have a “Fun Day” featuring a local sporting event or a celebrity guest.

Unique Ideas

- Find unique activities that no one would do just on their own: use your members for ideas.
- Hold a street party with hosts to meet local residents and neighbors.
- “Wish Day” where individuals have the opportunity to do something of special interest either with or without their hosts.
- Celebrate a national holiday with all of the traditions, even if it is on a different date!
- Riding through coastal sand dunes.
- Bushwalks, beach or trail walks ending at a pub!

- Contact other “special interest” organizations to become involved, e.g. car rally clubs, quilting guilds, sporting groups. The local council and the internet can help with these contacts.
- One night – mix members and make pizzas!
- Camping or orienteering
- Quizzes between clubs. Each one answers questions about their own culture. Then reverse to see how well you know the other culture!
- Going to the outback, the mountains, the wilderness, the woods, whatever is near you that would be a different treat for your ambassadors.
- Explore local volunteer, humanitarian, or environmental issues.

Excursions


Some side trips and activities can be accomplished within the US \$150 Club Hosting Fee, but others would have to be covered by charging the ambassadors more, such as overnight excursions, trips to the Great Barrier Reef, Walt Disney World or other theme parks, or special theatrical or musical performances. These can be done as a part of the Journey or as a pre-Journey activity or post-Journey activity. The important thing is that they be presented as an option with costs outlined in writing and the ambassador Coordinator agrees in advance. Protocol can be found in current policies accessible when following the instructions on page 53.

- Biking/hiking in the rain forest, through the park, on the local walking trails.
- Theme Parks such as Sea World, Disneyland, etc.
- Train trips.
- Boat trips.
- Ferry rides.
- Overnight tours.
- Two-day trips, to a national park, to explore nearby points of interest, to go to a special destination.
- Staying in a youth camp at a park.
- Bus trip to a unique area exploring cultural points of interest along the way.
- Going to a special festival or unique cultural event.

Guidelines for Travel Arrangements

Here are some suggestions to help you get started with the process. If at any time you need further assistance, feel free to contact FFI staff for advice and recommendations.

1. Begin researching possible airlines and travel itineraries as soon as your Journey assignment is



confirmed. While it is not possible to get final pricing and confirmations more than a year in advance, use the internet to investigate sample airfares, tour itineraries, etc. early.

2. FFI staff members can provide advice on itineraries that have proved successful in the past and may also be able to refer you to Ambassador and Host Coordinators who have traveled to the same destination or provide a list of recommended travel suppliers.
3. In conjunction with the host club(s), establish your exact Journey dates as well as the program for any pre- or post-Journey touring. You will receive better service from travel providers if you have a fairly firm idea of your plans before they begin researching options while still being open to suggestions.
4. Decide whether you feel more comfortable working with a local travel agency or with a large, national consolidator or tour operator. You may get better prices from a consolidator, but you might receive better service by working through a local agency. Don't be afraid to interview several agencies to see which one feels like the best fit.
5. Select an agency to work with and ask them to make the airline bookings and/or tour arrangements and confirm the price to you.
6. It is standard practice to require a deposit to hold airline space in advance, usually \$100 per seat. This allows the airline to hold a block of seats for your group on specific flights at a guaranteed price without knowing the passengers' names and with the actual ticketing not taking place until closer to the departure date. The club should assist with the payment of this deposit – the funds will be returned after the group travels as long as the terms of the contract have been fulfilled. Ideally, you will want to have a confirmed program and price about six months before your Journey to allow for maximum recruiting time.
7. Don't wait until the Journey is recruited before making travel arrangements. It may seem easier, but it can lower the participation on the Journey in the end by discouraging potential guests as they can be reluctant to commit to a Journey without knowing the final cost in advance.
8. Make sure you understand the terms of your airline and/or tour contract. In most cases with airline contracts, you can hold all seats without penalty until 90 days before departure. At that point, you will need to start guaranteeing the number of participants or risk losing your deposit. Typically, at 90 days out, you must guarantee 80% or 90% of the travelers. You will still want to hold as many additional seats as you can in order to have space for late additions to your Journey, but you will need to cancel seats that may not be used in order to protect your deposit. Keep in mind that usually there is a minimum of 10 people required to travel together in order to receive the discounted group fare. Take care to also get clear information on the airline's policy about deviations from the main itinerary – whether it is allowed, if there is any extra cost involved, etc.
9. When pricing your Journey, use the worksheet provided by FFI.
 - a. Make sure that you know in advance any potential expenses in addition to airfare, hosting fees, local club fees and FFI administrative fees.
 - b. Are you asking your host club to arrange any special activities that will result in additional cost?
 - c. Consider transfers from your arrival airport to the host club, or between Phase I and Phase II

hosting. Keep in mind that standard hosting fees do not include the cost of airport transfers.

d. If there is a land package included in the program fee, do you want to include money to cover tips and gratuities?

e. Consider including a small amount as a “contingency” fund to cover unanticipated costs such as an increase in airline taxes. If this money is not used, you can return it to the ambassadors, pick up the tab for a meal not covered on the program, or donate it to a charity in the community you will be visiting.

f. Some Ambassador Coordinators include in the price the earned seat for the Ambassador Coordinator so that their costs for the Journey are fully covered with 20 or more paid ambassadors and discounted proportionately with 10 or more paid ambassadors. Discuss this with your board or your Regional Support Manager.

10. If your program fee includes a tour or land package that is priced according to the number of participants (for example one price for a minimum of 15 people, lower if there are 20 or 25, etc.), we recommend that you set your price based on a lower number of participants than you expect. For example, if you hope to have 20 ambassadors on the Journey, use the tour quote based on 15.

a. Let your ambassadors know that if more people sign up for the Journey, the price can be lowered for everyone. It is a lot easier to lower the price than to increase it! It will also encourage others to join the Journey.

b. You also want to protect your pricing from a situation where your Journey might be full but some ambassadors may choose not to join the tour so that your tour numbers are lower than total travellers. This will also protect you against late cancellations from the tour that might cause the price to be raised for all participants.

11. Once you have your arrangements set and priced, you’re ready to recruit!

a. Be sure to keep your Regional Support Manager at FFI updated as to your dates, plans, and status so that he/she can assist you.

b. As ambassadors sign up for the Journey, make sure they provide you with a photocopy of their passport along with their application. You will need to provide a list to the airline with the names exactly as they appear in the passport.

c. Check that all of the ambassadors have passports valid at least six months past the return date of your Journey since some countries require this before allowing entry.

d. Your Regional Support Manager can also help you find out if your ambassadors will need visas for travel to your country of destination and what the procedure is for that process.

e. Be sure to provide ambassadors with information on the FFI travel insurance policy; remind them that they are required to have adequate insurance coverage for the Journey.

Downloading Information from the FFI Website

The FFI website can be very useful for Ambassador and Host Coordinators. Supporting materials for Friendship Force volunteers are located in the Member Resources section of the website. The most current policies and forms are posted here for you to download, read and print easily.

Go to the Friendship Force website: www.thefriendshipforce.org.

Click on the Member Resources link on the homepage footer. This section is designed especially for Friendship Force volunteers and contains supporting materials and information.

Click “Open” or “Allow” if prompted.

When the document opens, you can save it to your own computer or print it.

Index of Journey Documents

The following Journey documents, including policies and forms, are available for download on the FFI website. Go to www.thefriendshipforce.org. Click on Member Resources on the homepage footer.

- ❖ How to Complete a Fillable PDF Form
- ❖ Friendship Force Policies:
 - Policies and procedures approved by the FFI Board of Directors to govern all Friendship Force club and Journey activity.
- ❖ Health and Mobility Checklist:
 - A checklist for the Host Coordinator to complete and give it to the Ambassador Coordinator. Providing this information well in advance of the Journey allows the Ambassador Coordinator to recruit well-qualified ambassadors to participate in the Journey.
- ❖ Ambassador Application and Agreement:
 - To be completed by all members interested in participating in a Journey and submitted to their Ambassador Coordinator.
- ❖ Host Application and Agreement:
 - To be completed by members interested in hosting. This helps Ambassador and Host Coordinators to select hosts who are representative of their community or region. The detailed information provided also helps match host families with ambassadors.
- ❖ Ambassador and Host Matching Form:
 - A useful tool to help match ambassadors and hosts.

- ❖ Links to the Journey Evaluation Forms:
 - After the Journey, give your feedback to FFI by completing this online evaluation form, which will be sent to you by your FFI Regional Support Manager.
- ❖ A guide for dealing with emergencies and the form to submit to FFI in the unlikely event of an emergency.
- ❖ Insurance Information

