



friendship force
GREATER DES MOINES



2020 FFGDM Activities

(dates and activities subject to change)

Sept	Activity TBD
Oct	Activity TBD
Nov	Annual Meeting and Election
Dec 1	Happy Feet Holiday Lunch

President's Message

Despite all the cancellations we've made this year we seem to stay busy enough. Twice now, we've had a splendid time via a picnic in a lovely garden setting; first at the Enabling Garden in Altoona and recently at the Demonstration Garden in Urbandale, with eleven and 22 people attending, respectively. I enjoyed seeing people I haven't seen in months, and from the sound of

the many conversations I heard others enjoyed it as well. I must admit though, it took me a couple of minutes to recognize some of you behind those masks. I was pleased to see some of you wearing the gorgeous pins FFI sent to those who donated to their recent fund drive. The pins are but a token of their thanks for our generosity.

The small group gatherings are going quite well. We started out with 27 people the first month and are up to 33 in August. By the time you read this you will have heard from me asking you to let us know if you would like to continue the groups into September, and to invite those of who haven't joined us yet to do so. We will also need hosts. We may be able to extend the small groups through October, and the way this heat sticks around like an unwanted guest, we might celebrate Thanksgiving together outdoors. Wouldn't that be cool? I'd even consider cooking you a turkey in a bean hole for a new experience.

We are planning on having the annual meeting in early November. Crown Point has assured us they will spread the tables out, so we utilize the entire room, rather than having the tables in a cluster like we usually do. We will also limit how many people sit at a table. It may be a short meeting since there isn't much to catch up on, but we will have a slate of nominees running for board positions for you to vote on. We are currently trying to procure a speaker and will give you more information on that as we get it.

About journeys – well – what can I say? We've cancelled or postponed all journeys until at least the fall of 2021, and if we must, we will kick those down the road a bit further. Time will tell. I can tell you we are working on two outbound journeys; one to Knoxville, TN and one to Dayton, OH, an inbound from Ottawa, Canada, and a few others. FFI will also be asking our input later this year about our preferences for 2022. Geesh, that seems like a long way off.

Speaking of Journeys, have you been on the FFI web site lately? You should. I want to tell you about a few initiatives FFI is providing us during this time of hiatus, hesitation, and hope. One is "Virtual Journeys." A club videotapes places and happenings around town where we might take ambassadors if only, they could be here. I'm giving you a simplified version but it is more detailed than that. If you'd like to learn more about that go to their website at www.thefriendshipforce.org and watch one that's already been done. You can click on the tabs "Discover Australia," "India," "Japan," and others. . . . continued

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FFI will also be launching a “pen pal” program. Yes, it’s just like we did as teenagers, when all you needed was pencil, paper, envelope, and a stamp. How many of would have to relearn how to use a stamp? Details and guidelines on that initiative will be coming soon.

What else is FFI doing? I’m glad you asked. On their website first click on “Virtual Experiences” at the top of the page and all this wonderful stuff shows up. There are “Learning Spaces,” cooking lessons, and trivia quizzes. Be aware that upcoming virtual experiences are listed in their local time, but FFI conveniently provides a “Convert time zone” button so you can click on that ahead of time to know when to watch it our local time. Do be aware that not all the virtual experiences are in English. But, hey, challenge yourself and watch it in another language and see how much you understand or make up a story to go with what you are seeing.

Well, that’s about all the news that is news, and I’ve probably stretched that out to some degree. I do hope you will visit www.thefriendshipforce.org and check out some the initiatives I’ve mentioned. Something should pique your interest. Until our next event or small group gathering, please be well, be safe, be happy, and above all, be grateful we are all part of such a wonderful organization.

Pat Headley
FFGDM President

Update from FFI

More from President Pat Headley . . . Shortly after I submitted the president’s Message, I received the following updates from FFI. I do hope you will be interested in at least one of them.

Fundraising - FFI has done well with the recent fundraising appeal. Internationally, FFI raised \$486,000, with \$345,000 of that coming from the U.S. FFI also received \$100,000 from the stimulus package.

Pen Pal Program - FFI is giving this a bit more time before launching to give more people time to sign up. Here is how to access it:

- On the FFI website (www.thefriendshipforce.org) click on Virtual Experiences
- Click on the “here” link just below the three virtual experiences icons
- Scroll down the page and find Friendship Force Pen Pals. Do a single click and a google document link will appear
- Information on the pen pal program and a registration link are in the document.

WhatsApp - FFI staff presented information about “WhatsApp.” Apparently, some people are abandoning good ole reliable email for this new platform. If any of you techies out there want to explore this phenomenon and sing its praises to the rest of us, feel free. *Note: See information about WhatsApp in a separate article.*

Blog – From FFI’s homepage you can click on Virtual Experiences to see these recordings. At that point, you can also click on News & Updates. There will also be more links to access Virtual Journeys, other initiatives, the pen pal project, and more. Be aware that these other links may show up on the right side of the screen or at the bottom, depending on the mood your computer is in that day.

Virtual Journeys – Virtually no clubs have responded to this idea yet. FFI is fervently hoping for at least two clubs to respond to this idea; one to be host and one to be ambassadors. . . . *continued*

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Coffee Chats – Details are being finalized, but FFI will be hosting them when the program is ready to go.

Language Practice – These will be done in breakout rooms and will be offered in English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese. It's open to anyone wanting to practice a new language.

Faces & Places - Offers a variety of learning opportunities such as games, trivia, photography, and other interests.



What's WhatsApp

As a free service, WhatsApp allows for messages and calls on both desktop and mobile devices. Part of what makes this app appealing is that it works on various phone and computer operating systems. It can also take advantage of Wi-Fi and cellular data to make one-on-one or group calls. I encourage all FFGDM members to become familiar with it. You can learn a lot by Googling “WhatsApp” and also reading these two articles to get you started: [How to use WhatsApp](#) and [What is WhatsApp?](#)

WhatsApp users as a percentage of total internet users aged 16-64: Philippines (90%), Vietnam (78%), Columbia (75%), Mexico (75%), Thailand (74%), Portugal (71%), New Zealand (70%), Egypt (68%), Brazil (67%), and Denmark (66%). *Source: Global Web Index's 2019 Social Media User Trends Report*

Looking at these top countries, there are some key trends: For years, messaging apps like WhatsApp have been growing as an attractive cheaper alternative in countries where SMS messaging is expensive. This may help account for the app's widespread popularity in Asia and Latin America.

Additionally, as the world becomes more globalized, WhatsApp and other messaging platforms provide an easy and cheap way to stay connected with friends and relatives abroad — particularly in countries with prominent diasporas, such as the Philippines.

WhatsApp is the preferred method of communication for Friendship Force members in the countries above who often do not respond to email. I encourage you to learn more about it. If there is interest, I would be happy to coordinate a workshop about WhatsApp once we can resume meeting.

--- Shelley Bain, Newsletter Editor

Club Activities

Lunch at the Enabling Garden

Ten Friendship Force members met at the Enabling Garden in Altoona for lunch at noon on Thursday, July 9. We had a brief program given by Judy Goshorn who is a Master Gardener and a co-chair of the garden.



This garden was started in 2002 as a collaborative effort between Polk County Master Gardeners and the City of Altoona. The primary goal is to welcome people of all ages and abilities to experience the garden by utilizing the design concept of barrier-free gardening.

There are raised beds for people who are in wheelchairs or suffer from arthritis that would still like to get

their hands dirty and feel the earth sift between their fingers. It has a vegetable garden, a fairy garden, garden sculptures, a children's garden, and beautiful perennials and annuals. It takes a lot of tender care by the volunteer Master Gardens who built and maintain it. The Enabling Garden has grown into a hidden jewel that many people in Altoona are unaware of, but it's worth a visit if you love looking at a beautiful garden. You might even get some inspirations for your own flowerbeds.



Gathering at the Demonstration Garden



Svetlana and Mary

We did it again! Another month and another garden where we can enjoy each other's company while social distancing in a lovely setting. Twenty-two Friendship Force members and guests met at the Polk County Master Gardeners' Demonstration Garden in Urbandale on Thursday, August 20. Master Gardener Shelley Bain gave a brief introduction and a handout that included the garden's mission and history as well as a map. Beverages and cookies were provided and members brought their lunches, lawn chairs, and masks. It was good to see so many members enjoying the garden on a sunny day with a light breeze.



Purple tomatoes



Candle Fire okra

The Demonstration Garden is the oldest of the Polk County Master Gardeners' projects and has existed since 1988. It's the product of a cooperative arrangement between the Polk County Extension and the City of Urbandale. The mature fruit trees and the many deciduous bushes and shrubs double as a learning lab where Master Gardener trainees receive hands-on experience in proper pruning techniques. The apple orchard and raised vegetable beds regularly provide fruit and vegetables to the Urbandale Food Pantry. The remaining beds showcase particular plants (roses, soft fruits, hostas, grasses, small conifers, daylilies) in great variety or themes (purple passion, cutting garden, butterfly garden, birdhouse island) or AAS (All-American Selections) for the year. The garden also receives regular visits from students at Valerius Elementary School who use it as a learning environment as well as a respite from the classroom.

If you didn't join us, you're welcome to visiting the garden on your own at any time.



Book Friends

The Friendship Force Book Club met in July to discuss MIDNIGHT IN CHERNOBYL a non-fiction book about the terrible nuclear disaster that occurred in the Soviet Union in 1986. One of our Friendship Force members, Svetlana Baranova, who was living in Russia at the time of this disaster, attended this meeting. Although she was not living in the area, she knew people from this area. The information she shared with the book club was both interesting and informative. Some say that this nuclear disaster was a turning point in world history and a key event in the downfall of the Soviet Union. This accident devastated an area of the Soviet Union and its effects continued to destroy lives and ravished the land around Chernobyl for many years. The Chernobyl disaster brought to light the notion of radiation as an invisible killer.

For August, the book club read THE RED UMBRELLA by Christina Diaz Gonzalez. This book tells the story of a Cuban family soon after the Communist Revolution and gives an account of the experiences of two Cuban children who leave Cuba and end up on a farm in Nebraska.

The Friendship Force Book Club meets the fourth Monday of each month. Any Friendship Force member who would like to join the book club should contact Nikki Hubbard at nihubbard@aol.com.

- Ginny Renda at grpbeards@aol.com



Walking Club

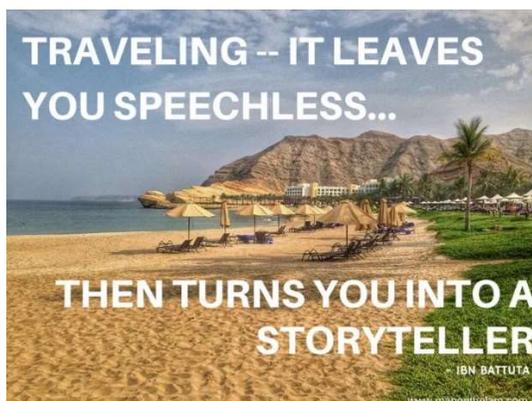


The FF Walking Club has been out and about and is planning more walks. The next opportunity is to walk with Van Hardin of WHO Radio on September 4 (first Friday). The walk starts at Fleet Feet in the East Village at 10:00 am.

Contact Cathy at skyhicathy@q.com or Mary at dpmmgm@msn.com if you are interested.

The mayor wants us to wear masks!

Please wear your FFI pins and help promote FFI to the other walkers. If you have FFI cards might be nice to bring them along.



Membership News



Our sympathy to the family of former member

William “Bill” Bullington
1928 – 2020

Reminder

If you have any change to your email, phone, or address, please send the information to Alice at off4ever@aol.com so we can update the membership roster and you’ll continue to receive the newsletter and club reminders.

--- Alice Rasmussen and
Charlotte Buttin,
Membership Committee



Please welcome, and add to your roster, new member

Member Roster Change

Anita Lindfield has a new email address, please make a note of it!

anitalindfield@gmail.com

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2265 Grand Ave - Unit 5
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2020 FFDGM Board and Committee Chairs

Board Members

Pat Headley – *President*

Ginny Renda – *Vice-President*

Janette House - *Secretary*

Marla Carr – *Activities Committee Co-Chair*

Mike Davis – *Journey Director*

Cookie Major – *Community Service Coordinator*

Mary Marshall

Gail Sheridan Lucht

Connie Walters

Term ends

2020

2020

2021

2022

2021

2020

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2022

2022

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Other Committees and Tasks

Barbara Bailey – *Treasurer*

Shelley Bain – *Newsletter Editor*

Nancy Lundstrom – *Activities Committee Co-Chair*

Alice Rasmussen – *Membership Chair*

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