



friendship force
GREATER DES MOINES



2023 FFGDM Calendar (Dates and activities subject to change)

Sept 6	Lunch Friends
Sept 16-27	FF Leuven outbound journey
Sep 24	World Peace Day Celebration <i>page 3</i>
Sep 24	Danish Heritage Celebration <i>page 4</i>
Sep 25	Book Friends
Sep 28	Table of Friends
Oct 2 – 5	FFI Conference, Croatia
Oct 3	Lunch Friends
Oct 11-16	FF Tallahassee IB journey
Oct 11	FF Tallahassee Welcome Party
Oct 16	FF Tallahassee Farewell Party
Oct 19	Table of Friends
Oct 23	Book Friends
Nov 1	Annual Meeting & Elections
Nov 8	Lunch Friends
Nov 16	Table of Friends
Nov 27	Book Friends
Dec 5	Happy Feet Lunch
Dec 18	Book Friends
Dec 21	Table of Friends



Annual Meeting and Election of the Board of Directors

Wednesday, November 1, 2023

District 36 Wine Bar & Grille
Ankeny

Look for your email invitation in early
October

President's Message

Where has the summer gone? It has been a very busy time and perhaps that is why the summer has gone so fast.

Now as we look forward to Fall, we are eagerly anticipating an inbound journey. FF Tallahassee, Florida, is coming to Des Moines from October 11 to 17. The nifty flyer on page 2 has the activities I hope you will attend. All reservations are due by October 4.

Welcome Potluck – Bring yourself and friends to the Welcome Potluck at Crown Point on October 11 at 6:00 pm. Please email me at rendaginny@gmail.com or call me at 515-287-3999 if you plan to attend and let me know what you plan to bring. We will need casseroles, vegetables, salads, and desserts.

Mainframe Studios - Join the group at Mainframe Studios on October 13 at 2:45 pm. RSVP to me at rendaginny@gmail.com.

Lunch at Main Street Café and **John Deere Tour** – Join us for lunch (on your own) at Main Street Café at 11:45 on October 16. Lunch will be followed by a tour of John Deere Des Moines Works at 1:30 pm. On the tour, you must wear closed-toe shoes, long pants, and have a Picture ID. RSVP to me at rendaginny@gmail.com.

Farewell Party – The Farewell Party, at AH Blank Golf Course Club House at 6:00 pm on October 16, will be a pizza party with antipasti appetizers, salad, onion rings, assorted pizzas, and dessert. The cost of this meal is \$30 per person. Please make the check payable to FFGDM and mail it to Ginny Renda, 2821 Wolcott Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa 50321 by October 4.

In Peace and Friendship,
Ginny Renda



FFGDM Member Reservations for **Friendship Force of Tallahassee Journey Activities**

RSVP, if attending, to Ginny at rendaginny@gmail.com by Wednesday, October 4.

Welcome Potluck Wednesday, October 11

6:00 pm

Crown Point Community Center, 6300 Pioneer Pkwy, Johnston, IA 50131
Please let Ginny know if you plan to bring a casserole, side dish, or salad to share. .
Beverages provided.

Mainframe Studios Friday, October 13

2:45 pm

JJ Gaffer, glassblowing demonstration
900 Keosauqua Way, Des Moines, IA 50309
No cost

Lunch at Main Street Café Monday, October 16

11:45 am

2510 SW White Birch Dr #1,2, Ankeny, IA 50023
Order lunch and join our reserved table

John Deere Des Moines Works Tour Monday, October 16

1:30 pm

825 SW Irvinedale Dr, Ankeny, IA 50023
No cost

Guidelines and safety requirements will be sent to you via email

Farewell Pizza Party Monday, October 16

6:00 pm

\$30 per person

Blank Golf Course Club House, 808 County Line Rd, Des Moines, IA 50320
Includes assorted pizza, antipasti, salad, bread, onion rings, and dessert. Cash Bar.

RSVP, if attending, by sending a check with \$30 per person payable to
FFGDM and mailed to Ginny Renda, 2821 Wolcott Ave, Des Moines, IA 50321

Journeys



Journey Director's Report

FFGDM will participate in four journeys in 2024. Three of those are outbound journeys—to Xalapa Mexico, Southern Oregon, and Wichita. The other exciting opportunity is an inbound journey from Saitama Japan. The last newsletter included information about all of those. Dates are still to be determined.

Four of our members have graciously offered to coordinate these journeys. Coordinators will be Darlene Blake Beers for the inbound from FF Saitama, Japan, Shelley Bain for the outbound to FF Xalapa, Veracruz, Mexico, Lenne Orona for the outbound to FF Southern Oregon, and Elese Johnson for the outbound to FF Kansas (Wichita). We greatly appreciate their willingness to make these journeys possible. More information will be sent to members as dates and other information are available. It's exciting that we have been able to plan a full set of journeys that give you a wide range of opportunities to engage in the mission of Friendship Force.

For many years, we have requested to be matched for an outbound journey to Belgium, and we got that for this year. In September, 15 members of FFGDM and other clubs will travel to Leuven. After the hosted journey, many of the ambassadors will stay 3 additional days, based in Brussels, to experience more of Belgium.

October brings Tallahassee to FFGDM. As you know, we enjoyed the Tallahassee hospitality last April, and that club is completing it's reciprocal journey to us from October 11-17. Coordinator Ginny Renda and her planning committee had put together a full and interesting agenda that will include a trip to the Covered Bridge Festival and a wide range of interesting Des Moines features. A big thank you goes out to those people who will serve as home hosts, day hosts, and dinner hosts.

Believe it or not, Friendship Force International planning for journey requests will start soon. You can start thinking about suggestions for outbound journeys. More information will come out as we learn it.

Mike Davis, Journey Director
mjdavisconsulting@gmail.com

Activities

World Peace Day - Peace, Love, Art



Friendship Force members are encouraged to Join our friends at IRIS (Iowa Resource for International Services) for a celebration of World Peace Day. The celebration will include art, dance, music, and booths that showcase different cultures around the globe.

Sunday, September 24

10:00 am – 2:00 pm

Mainframe Studios, 900 Keosauqua Way, Des Moines, IA 50309

Free to the public

Even if you can only stop by, we would love to see as many people as possible celebrating global peace, as well as having fun doing it! This event is perfect for all ages, so bring your kids, and help IRIS celebrate different cultures coming together and promoting peace, love, and art!



Friendship Force members are invited to join our friends of Danish Brotherhood for their celebration.

Danish Brotherhood Lodge #15
Celebrating 140 years of Danish Heritage

Sunday, September 24

1:00 – 4:00 pm

Luther Memorial Church, 1201 Grandview Ave, Des Moines, IA 50317

Danish cookies, cake, kransekage, pastries, punch, and coffee will be served.

All are welcome!

Æbleskiver Brunch



Sunday, October 15
Luther Memorial Church
10:30 am - 12:30 pm

Æbleskiver, sausage, fruit
juice box, and coffee
Cost: \$8 or donation

Join us and bring friends!



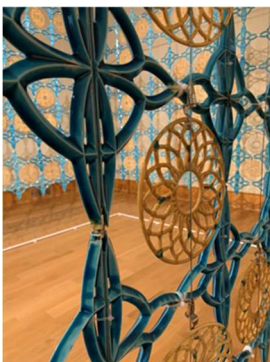
Bastille Day Fête

On July 14, thirteen members of our club were joined by six members of FF Central Iowa to celebrate Bastille Day with the Des Moines Sister Cities Commission, Alliance Française of Central Iowa, and 70 of their closest friends.

Congratulations to Kuire Chung of FFCI who won a \$25 Cheese Shop gift certificate for her delicious and beautifully presented Salade Niçoise. Congratulations, also, to our own Jean Vesely who won a bottle of French Rosé for the best blue-white-and-red outfit of the evening.



The food was excellent, the accordian music was festive, the pétanque game was lively, and there was plenty of food and wine for all. Save the date for July 14, 2024.
---- Shelley Bain and Pat Westphal



Des Moines Art Center Tour and Lunch

Saturday, July 22, twenty-two members and guests toured the Art Center permanent collection. The tour was followed by a relaxing lunch, and perfect weather, on the patio.

The group was fortunate to visit while the exhibit “Underneath Everything: Humility and Grandeur in Contemporary Ceramics” was showing. The exhibit was impressive with an outstanding selection of US and international artists. Their stories, as written in the artist’s statements for each piece, were enlightening.

Two of the editor’s favorite pieces are a curtain-like installation by Eliza Au and a pomegranate-theme floor installation by Iranian-born artist Katayoun Anjadi . The entire exhibit is intriguing and well represents the overall theme of humility and grandeur. The exhibit runs through September 10.



Thank you to Gail Sheridan-Lucht for coordinating this popular tour and lunch.



Sundaes on Sunday and Community Service

Sundaes on Sunday returned this year on August 27 after a 5-year hiatus. There was plenty of cool ice cream and delicious toppings to enjoy but an important aspect was that we collected cash or items needed by the recently merged non-profit Families First.

Our guest speaker, Missy Reams, explained that Bidwell Riverside Center and Hawthorn Hill traditionally worked in parallel to provide different programs with the similar goal of helping children and families in need. In July, they merged into Families Forward, an organization where the original four programs - Bidwell Pantry, Bidwell Child Development Center, New Directions Shelter, and The Home Connection - work together to provide compassionate, life-changing assistance to families and their path to self-sufficiency.

Photo of Lavonne and Missy.



Thank you to coordinators Alice Rasmussen and Karen Kilpatrick and their helpers - Janette House, LaVonne Neerland, Del Christensen, Gail Sheridan-Lucht, Gene Lucht, Elaine Bredesky, and Polly Antonelli.

Special Interest Groups

Book Friends

Book Friends meets the 4th Monday of each month (except December), usually at 3:00 pm at Northwest Community Center or Gray's Lake Park. **Join Us!** We are open to all Friendship Force members and their friends - the only membership requirement is a love of books. Contact coordinator Connie Walters at 515-971-1916 or yourfriendconnie@gmail.com for more information.

2023 Selections

Discussion DATE	TITLE	AUTHOR	HOST	NOTES
Sep 25	Lessons in Chemistry	Bonnie Garmus	Nikki	Gender Equality
Oct 23	<i>Member Recommendations For 2024</i>			Cultural Perspectives
Nov 27	Honolulu	Alan Brennert	Polly	Hawaiian immigrants
Dec 18	The Birchbark House	Louise Erdrich	Connie	Native American Ojibwe

Performing Arts Club

Our newest club was created to allow members who are interested in the performing arts to share information about local art events and find similarly minded members to attend the events with them. The club has been embraced by a small group of performing arts lovers and welcomes more.

In June, members attended three Zenith Chamber Music concerts, *The Play That Goes Wrong* at the Ankeny Community Theatre, and the Des Moines Storytellers Project. In July, members attended Bela Fleck: My Bluegrass Heart at Hoyt Sherman Place. In August, members had fun at a staged reading of the play *Witch* by Jen Silverman at TeeHee Comedy Club. It was an excellent summer for our new club!

If you are interested in joining, contact Pat Westphal, PAC Coordinator, at WestphalP@central.edu.

Lunch Friends

Our second lunch was July 5, at the Hibachi Grill & Supreme Buffet in West Des Moines, hosted by Deana Carfrae. Several lunch Friends were impressed by the variety and quality of the food. Host Christine McQuillan invited the group to St Kilda Collective on August 1. St Kilda offers Australia-California style food such as Grilled Peach & Ricotta Salad and Avocado Toast.

We look forward to our next lunch on Wednesday, September 6, hosted by Ginny Renda at Baratta's.

Lunches alternate between the first Tuesday and first Wednesday of the month to accommodate members' schedules. If you would like to join our lunch group, please email me at 1ordmco@gmail.com. Our gatherings are open to anyone who enjoys delicious food, engaging conversations, and a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Feel free to invite your friends and family to join us. The more, the merrier!

--- Christine McQuillan, Lunch Friends Coordinator

The only thing better than lunch is lunch with friends.

Table of Friends

Ginny Renda selected District 36 Wine Bar for dinner in July. Favorite entrees included Lemon Garlic Shrimp, Peppercorn Steak Deburgo, and Crispy Chicken Sandwich. After dining, several diners went to the Nash Nights concert at Town Square Park to enjoy the music and fine weather.

Carmie Renda invited the diners to her home for an Italian dinner in August. Who can resist such an offer? Not 10 of us! Carmie prepared a baked pasta dish and the rest of the diners provided appetizers, bread, salad, wine, and dessert. Thank you to Carmie and Ginny for your generous hospitality and sharing the secret of their nonna's pasta sauce.



We meet the third Thursday of the month at 6:30 pm unless that date conflicts with other FF activities. Let me know if you would like to join the group.

---- Shelley Bain, TOF Coordinator, shelleybain@centurylink.net

Life is a combination of magic and pasta. – Federico Fellini

Member News



Mike Merritt has accepted the position of FFGDM Treasurer. Thank you, Mike! Like Mike, all members are encouraged to consider how they can contribute to the club, usually as a committee member, a Board member, or by volunteering for a specific task. When you complete your member renewal application later this year, please indicate what are your interests because we all know "Many hands make light work".



Carol Grimm – September 14
Pat Westphal – September 16
Mary Marshall – September 18
Polly Antonelli – September 30
Janette House – October 1
Norm Huitt – October 4
Donna Archer – October 30
Pat Headley – October 30

2023 FFDGM Board Members & Committee Chairs

Board Members	<u>Email</u>	<u>Term ends</u>
Ginny Renda – <i>President</i>	rendaginny@gmail.com	2023*
<i>Vice-President - open</i>		
<i>Treasurer - Mike Merritt</i>	merritt2007@sbcglobal.net	
Janette House - <i>Secretary</i>	j.house@mediacombb.net	2025
Pat Headley – <i>past co-President</i>	headleypatricia651@gmail.com	2023*
Mike Davis – <i>Journey Director</i>	mjdavisconsulting@gmail.com	2024*
Darlene Blake-Beers	darleneblake@hotmail.com	2025
Nikki Hubbard	nihubbard@aol.com	2024
Anita Lindfield	anitalindfield@gmail.com	2024
		*2nd term
Other Committees and Tasks		
Marla Carr – <i>Activities Committee Co-Chair</i>	marlakcarr@yahoo.com	
Nancy Lundstrom – <i>Activities Committee Co-Chair</i>	nancylundstrom@mchsi.com	
Alice Rasmussen – <i>Membership Chair</i>	off4ever@aol.com	
Shelley Bain – <i>Table of Friends Coordinator</i>	shelleybain@centurylink.net	
Christine McQuillen – <i>Lunch Friends Coordinator</i>	1ordmco@gmail.com	
Pat Westphal – <i>Performing Arts Coordinator</i>	WestphalP@central.edu	
Connie Walter – <i>Book Friends Coordinator</i>	yourfriendconnie@gmail.com	
Shelley Bain – <i>Newsletter Editor</i>	shelleybain@centurylink.net	

Where in the World...

... is Darlene Blake Beers? In Australia!

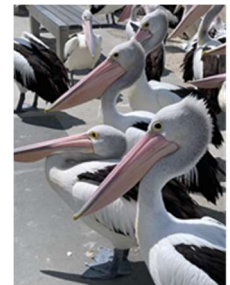


This was my first international journey with the Friendship Force. I am very well-traveled and I expected this to be just another trip to a country I had not been. I had no idea that this journey would be a life-changing event. I travelled with FF Knoxville - we had 4 from Knoxville, 2 from Georgia, and 1 each from Canada, Texas, North Carolina, Alabama, and Iowa.



The first three days we spent in Sydney getting to know each other and acclimated to the time change of 15 hours ahead of Iowa time. We went on ferry rides, toured the historical sights, visited museums, saw the Sydney Opera House, ate in lovely restaurants, went to beaches, and walked and walked and walked until we could walk no more.

We started our group adventure with FF Gold Coast (525 miles north of Sydney) and the host club went out of their way to make us feel welcome, ensure our comfort, and fulfill our every need and expectation. I had the good fortune to stay with a most charming lady, who became a close friend.





We watched surfers on one of the best surfing beaches in Australia, Surfers Paradise. Afterward we had dinner at a local restaurant where you could watch the fishermen bringing in their catch of the day. We fed pelicans after we fed ourselves with a traditional fish and chips lunch. We soared to the top of the 322.5-meter high Q1 Tower that was the world's tallest residential building from 2005-2011 where we had lunch with a panoramic view. We toured the Volunteer Marine Rescue facility and cruised on their rescue boats the length of the harbor.

At the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary I had my first encounter with kangaroos, Tasmanian devils, koalas and deadly reptiles. We visited Burleigh Heads, toured the Aboriginal Center, and saw Tamorin Mountain. We had dinners at the home of several club members that cemented our friendships. We said goodbye knowing some of us will meet again.



Our next adventure started with a train ride to the North Moreton Bay Region, north of Brisbane. The area has beautiful beaches, scenic mountains, lakes, rainforest walks, boutique wineries, kangaroos on the doorstep, and the warmest people. Upon our arrival we were welcomed at lunch with most FF North Moreton members in attendance and met my host, another charming lady I now call my friend.

The next day we had morning tea at Friendship Grove in Caboolture, looked out at the Glasshouse Mountains Lookout, had a picnic lunch at Mary Cairncross Scenic Reserve, visited a quaint village – Montville, and had dinner in Toorbul on Pumicestone Passage opposite Bribie Island where kangaroos bounce along. We toured South Bank, the premier lifestyle and cultural destination on Brisbane River, with lush parklands, world-class eateries, stunning river views, museums that were constructed on the site of 1988 Brisbane's World Expo.



We toured City Hall that has a fabulous gallery of local artists, cruised the river on a catamaran, and walked and walked and walked.

After our day in the big city, we were whisked away to Maryvale, a small village where the Club President lives on a cattle farm where we were treated to traditional country hospitality and hosted overnight by Maryvale locals. On way back we visited Queen Mary Falls and town of Killarney.

We spent a day at Steve Irwin's Australia Zoo, whose television program I have enjoyed for years. This is where I made a new friend who was surprisingly heavy.

The Melbourne Cup Day Farewell Party and Dinner was the highlight of our trip. This race is much like our Kentucky Derby with all the fanfare. We all dressed in our best with exotic hats and had the opportunity to be jockeys in the race. I am not a fast runner so I didn't win, but I did make the trophy presentation to one of the winners.



All too soon our journey was over. Traveling is one of the best ways to promote global understanding across the barriers that separate people. The Friendship Force is a force to be reckoned with.