

Journey Report
Outbound to FF Kansas
August 2024

This is a condensed version of the activities we enjoyed during our outbound journey with the Friendship Force of Kansas. It took place August 22 through August 28. The 17 Des Moines Ambassadors knew it would be hot but temperatures of 100+ degrees put us to the test. Our hosts did a good job of getting us in to places where we were comfortable.

This is a summary written by the ambassadors that traveled by car to Wichita.

Welcome to Wichita! by Nikki Hubbard Thursday 8/22/24

By 4:00 pm, Thursday, we had arrived and were heading to our host's homes to settle in. At 6:00 we met for dinner at the gracious Harrington's. They had built a new home connected to their former home so they had plenty of space for us to be comfortable. The generous choices of food were topped off with a plethora of delicious desserts. The Wichita people were so easy to share conversation with that we felt we had found new friends.

Friday AM 8/23/24 by Ronda Davis

After a nice breakfast with our hosts, Steve and Kathy Smith, on Friday we went to Botanica, a spectacular botanical garden. We were greeted by a beautiful Lego creatures and sculptures on display. We began in the butterfly house. Unfortunately, it was not warm enough for the many butterflies to flutter. The variety of gardens included peaceful woodlands, the Shakespeare and Chinese gardens and a wonderful children's garden. We were like a bunch of kids pounding drums, hitting the pipes with mallets to make music, and appreciating the sculptures. Many of our group rode the beautiful carousel. We enjoyed the delightful morning.

Friday Noon 8/23/24 by Mike Davis

After the garden, we all went to the Pump House in the Historic Old Town district. Originally established in 1931 as a filling station, it is now known for its pizza included in a large varied menu. Of special interest in the restored building is in the bar area. An old "grease" pit in the lower level was converted into a wine cellar—you can look down into it from an industrial glass ceiling from the floor in the bar.

Friday 8/23/24 by Pat Westphal

In the afternoon we visited the Wichita Art Museum, which was founded in 1935 by Louise Caldwell Murdock. We had a group picture taken under their exuberant Chihuly. We spent most of our time in a special exhibit of work by the well-known portrait photographer Annie Leibovitz. The subjects of revealing portraits came from all walks of life, but the most fun were the hundreds we could identify.

Friday 8/23/24 Dinner/Play by Ron Munsinger

Friday evening we enjoyed a 3 meat barbecue with all the trimmings at the Mosley Dinner Theater in the Historic Old Town area. Audience participation of ooh, boo, hiss in the melodrama production of a karaoke competition. The second half of the show was a look back on 80s music. All 6 performers did a great job.

Saturday 8/24/24 by Ginny Renda

On Saturday we went to the Kauffman Museum in Newton, Kansas which showcased the story of the Mennonite people during the time that they settled in Kansas in the 1870's. The museum had a number of authentic exhibits that were beautifully arranged with nice artifacts of the Mennonites in the Kansas area. Besides the many displays of these pioneers, there was a barn and a farmhouse behind the museum that

transported us in to the time period of the 1870's. This experience gave us additional insight into the lives and history of these immigrants from Russia and Germany as well as other countries in Europe and Asia. This old order of Mennonites came to a new world to find peace from persecution so that they could practice their religious beliefs in a free country. The Kauffman Museum is a must stop in you visit this area in Kansas.

Saturday 8/24/24 by Claudia Holcomb

We had lunch at the Anchor Inn in Hutchinson. It was a Mexican restaurant with three huge rooms for seating. Colorful decorations were everywhere, even a large indoor working fountain. A huge choice of entrees, salads and desserts were available from the buffet line. It was quick and delicious. This property was formerly a harness shop, an implement company and a body shop.

Saturday 8/24/24 by Marla Carr

We visited the Stratata Salt Mine in Hutchinson, Kansas. The Carey Mine Company mines road salt that is 650 feet below ground level. It sells for \$25 a ton. There are 200 square miles of tunnels underground. There are 250 tons produced for every four walls of salt. 500 to 1,000 tons of salt are hauled away every day, The next time I see salt being spread on the road, I will remember this tour.

Saturday 8/24/24 Small Group Dinners

We enjoyed our dinner with various dinner hosts this evening. It was a good way to visit with other members of the Kansas Club. One group enjoyed a piano performance by one of the hosts.

Sunday 8/25/24 by Jerry Dunkin

I was looking forward to the air show but woke up to thunder, lightning, rain and some wind. We arrived at the air show in time to find it was cancelled. We visited Cowtown which is a reenactment of a rural town in the 1800's. I watched the black smith make several items one of which I made in my FFA class. I noticed that you had to be multitasked to survive as a business man. I enjoyed seeing the old tools used in many of the stores. The guns were really loud during the shootout on main street. Curtis, our host, did a good job playing drums with the Native American Drummers.

Sunday 8/25/24 Morning

We were scheduled to attend the Air Show at McConnell Air Base but Mother Nature had other plans. Wichita experienced torrential downpours as thunder with lightning and high winds caused the cancellation of the event. Several planes were overturned and debris was everywhere. Fortunately for us we were able to see a preview of the flying maneuvers when we arrived in town. Our path (I35) was in line with the Blue Angels practice line.

A quick thinking host, Lynn Harrington, who is also a docent at the Allen House, designed and built by Frank Lloyd Wright arranged for a spur of the moment tour. It was a nice addition to the day.

Sunday 8/25/24 Afternoon

We were on our own after lunch with our home hosts. Some visited Cow Town with old west gunfights and others took in the stores and local sites in Wichita. Dinner was with our home hosts.

Sunday 8/25/24 Evening

The group met for a first time event for this club during a Journey—Game Night and it was a lot of fun. In addition to non-combative games, snacks and beverages were available.

Monday 8/26/24 Morning

The group visited the Tanganyika Zoo. A non-profit that primarily works to enhance the population of endangered species through interactions with zoos across the country. Next to Disney Studios, Tanganyika is the largest zoo of its type. We were able to interact with Giraffes, Lemurs, Rhinos, Penguins, Goats, Turtles and Birds. Some of us had Lemurs sit on their laps and then let them take feed from our hands. The Lemur's hands are very soft and look just like a human one complete with finger nails. They are one of the world's best pollinators.

Monday 8/26/24 Afternoon/Evening,

After a group lunch we all headed off for a free afternoon to shop at the stores or places that were not on the itinerary. Some visited the Sculpture-Keeper of the Plains, the Nifty Nut House and Artists Workroom. That evening we took our home hosts to dinner. Meddy's was a favorite spot featuring Mediterranean Food in a casual environment. A chain, the closes one to Des Moines is in Kansas City.

Tuesday 8/27/24 Final Day and Farewell

The morning was a free one with some visiting the Spice Merchant, the Rally House, Historic Old Town, and River City Brewing Co.

We gathered again at the Sedgwick County Historical Museum.

The museum has been housed in Wichita's original City Hall, a landmark building constructed in 1890 and is considered an exhibit in itself. a wide variety of the Museums exhibits showcase life in Wichita over the centuries, from the Wichita Indian tribe, whose name the town adopted to the cowboys who drove their cattle here, to the dawn of aviation and the City's role as the Air Capital of the world. They have special exhibitions that follow an Art Deco on the Plains in various media. The building was designed by Proudfit & Bird.

Farewell Dinner

Our Farewell dinner was held near Yoder, population 25, on an Amish/Mennonite Farm. The family of 8 children of which 6 participate in the maintenance of the farm. Our host told us of their lifestyle and that some of her children have left the faith for a non-denominational church because of restrictions but they rally as a family. Our dinner was Wedding Chicken, Meatloaf, green beans, corn, mashed potatoes and gravy and wonderful homemade rolls. Dessert of pie and ice cream finished the meal. It was a nice ending to a fun filled week.

It was announced that Alice Rasmussen of FFGDM will be in inbound Journey Coordinator when Wichita visits us at Fair time next August (2025).

Compiled by Else Johnson and Lenne Orona