



friendship force  
GREATER DES MOINES



2025 FFGDM Calendar  
(Dates and activities subject to change)

|              |                                    |
|--------------|------------------------------------|
| Jan 8        | Lunch Friends                      |
| Jan 10       | Mahjong Club                       |
| Jan 13       | Board Meeting                      |
| Jan 16       | Table of Friends                   |
| Jan 20       | Winter Brunch                      |
| Jan 24       | Mahjong Club                       |
| Jan 27       | Book Friends                       |
| Feb 5        | Lunch Friends                      |
| Feb TBD      | Mahjong Club                       |
| Feb 10       | Board Meeting                      |
| Feb TBD      | Mahjong Club                       |
| Feb 18       | Department for the Blind Tour      |
| Feb 20       | Table of Friends                   |
| Feb 24       | Book Friends                       |
| March 5      | Lunch Friends                      |
| Mar TBD      | Mahjong Club                       |
| Mar 10       | Board Meeting                      |
| Mar 13       | Game Night                         |
| Mar 20       | Table of Friends                   |
| Mar TBD      | Mahjong Club                       |
| Mar 24       | Book Friends                       |
| ...          |                                    |
| May 20-28    | Journey to FF Lake Simcoe, Ontario |
| Jul 23-Aug 2 | Open World from North Macedonia    |
| Aug 11-17    | Journey from FF Kansas             |
| Oct 10-15    | Journey to FF Shelby, NC           |

*Friendly Reminder*

If you have not paid your 2025 membership fees, please print and complete the form on the last page and send it, with your check payable to FFGDM, to the address at the top of the form.

Join us for brunch on Martin Luther King Day



## Winter Brunch

Monday, January 20

10:00 am

Main Street Café

2510 SW White Birch Dr, Ankeny 50023

In honor of MLK Day and its call to community service, we ask members to bring a cash donation for the DMARC Food Pantry.

Guests are always welcome!

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED (if attending) . . .  
to Marla at marlakcarr@yahoo.com or  
text 515-238-6372 by January 13.

## President's Message



Dear Friendship Members and Friends,

Whew! A busy 2024 is behind us and we now look toward 2025 for more ways to share activities, make friends, and travel. The Activities Committee is firming up the schedule for 2025, the Board will pass a budget for the year at the January board meeting, and the Journey Coordinators are starting to plan the journeys to FF Lake Simcoe and FF Shelby and from FF Kansas. The flyer for FF Lake Simcoe is on page 4.

We have several open positions on the Board of Directors that can be filled by the Board at any time. A one-year partial term (ending December 31, 2025) and a two-year partial term (ending December 31, 2026) are available. If you are a newer member who wants to learn more by doing or an experienced member, even a former Board member, who is interested - let me know. You can view the 2025 Leadership team on page 4.

I hope to see many of you at the Martin Luther King Brunch on January 20 at Main Street Café. It's the first of our 2025 activities and includes a community service aspect. Please bring cash for the DMARC food pantry.

In friendship,  
Shelley Bain, FFGDM President



We're looking for a few good people to . . .

Join the **Activities Committee** and help plan the monthly activities  
Manage the FFGDM **Facebook Page** and post updates on our activities  
Apply to join the **Board of Directors** and fill a one-term or two-year term.

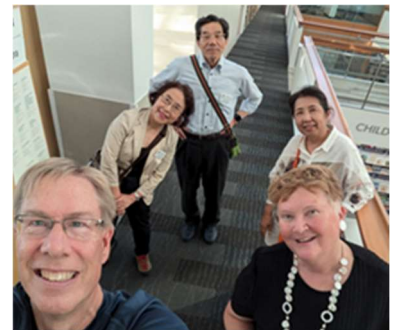
Contact Shelley at [bainshelley@gmail.com](mailto:bainshelley@gmail.com) for more information.

## Journeys



### FF Saitama Japan Inbound Journey

Our friends from Saitama were a delightful group and good sports who enjoyed the activities we planned for them. They were surprised and happy to have a Japanese interpreter at the State Capitol, World Food Prize Building, and Art Center. They loved learning about the ties between Des Moines, Iowa, and Japan such as the Hog Lift at the





World Food Prize Building, the Japanese Bell at the State Capitol, the Bonsai at the Greater Des Moines Botanical. Plus, one ambassador got to throw out the first ball and be on the jumbotron at the Iowa Cubs.



A big thank you to the Home Hosts – Ginny and Carmie Renda, Isabella Hurless-Banks, Gail and Gene Lucht, Marla Carr, Darlene Blake Beers, Nancy and Steven Lundstrom, and Carol Grimm.



Planning Committee - Darlene Blake Beers, Marla Carr, Mike Davis, Pat Headley, Janette House, Cathy Jensen, Anita Lindfield, Nancy Lundstrom, Lenne Orona, and Alice Rasmussen.



Day Hosts - Polly Antonelli, Mike Davis, Cathy Jensen, Lenne Orona, and Cathy Walters.

Dinner Hosts – Pat Headley, Sandra Olson, Anita Lindfield, Carol Grant, Cathy Walters. Mike and Ronda Davis, and Karen Sol.



--- Ginny Renda and Shelley Bain, co-Coordinators

# Let's Go North!

Friendship Force of Greater Des Moines  
to  
Friendship Force Lake Simcoe, Ontario, Canada

May 21 arrival—May 27 departure  
6 nights with FF Lake Simcoe



## Examples of Activities

Cruise on Georgian Bay on Lake Huron or  
Muskoka Lakes  
Sainte Marie Among the Hurons  
historic reenactment  
Big Chute Marine Railway on the Trent Severn  
Waterway  
Nature Walks with a Naturalist  
Lawn Bowling  
Waterfront Activities  
Museums  
Dinner Parties  
Lunch outings, and more

FFLS Host Coordinators are looking at what will be  
available in May to plan an excellent journey.

## Estimated Costs

Payable to FFGDM

*(based on 12 ambassadors)*

|            |                            |
|------------|----------------------------|
| 25         | Administration Fee         |
| 50         | Ambassador Coordinator Fee |
| 150        | FFI fee                    |
| <u>210</u> | Program fee                |
| 435        | Total                      |

Additional costs payable by Ambassador

- Airfare (DSM-YYZ RT) - \$328-\$537 est.
- Bus (Toronto-Orillia RT) —\$80 est.
- Hotel at Toronto Pearson Airport
- Toronto Activities

## Application Information—Journey 25095

The application deadline is **Friday, January 17.**

Please send the \$25 administration fee (payable to FFGDM) with your application to:  
Shelley Bain, 1008 38th St, Des Moines 50311

Applications (printable or fillable Google.docs) are on myFriendshipForce.

**Or Ask** Ginny to email the link to you.

## Questions?

Ginny Renda, Ambassador Coordinator  
Email: rendaginny@gmail.com | Phone or Text: 515-778-8506



## 2025 FFGDM Leadership

### Board Members

Shelley Bain – President  
shelleybain@centurylink.net

Darlene Blake Beers - Veep  
darleneblake@hotmail.com

Janette House - Secretary  
j.house@mediacombb.net

Mike Merritt - Treasurer  
merritt2007@sbcglobal.net

Alice Rasmussen  
off4ever@aol.com

Ginny Renda  
rendaginny@gmail.com

Karen Kilpatrick  
karenkilpatrick@gmail.com

### Task & Committee Leaders

Mike Davis – Journey Director  
mjdavisconsulting@gmail.com

Marla Carr – Activities Co-Chair  
marlakarr@yahoo.com

Nancy Lundstrom – Activities Co-Chair  
nancylundstrom@mchsi.com

open – FaceBook Coordinator

### Social Clubs

Ginny Renda – Table of Friends  
rendaginny@gmail.com

Christine McQuillen – Lunch Friends  
1ordmco@gmail.com

Pat Westphal – Friends of the Arts  
WestphalP@central.edu

Connie Walter – Book Friends  
yourfriendconnie@gmail.com

Sally Merritt – Mahjong Club  
merritt69\_99@yahoo.com

## Activities



### Happy Feet Holiday Lunch

Thirty-four members and guests gathered on December 3 for a festive Happy Feet Holiday Lunch at Greenbriar Restaurant.

Karen Kilpatrick, Happy Feet Coordinator, reported that 423 pairs of socks were donated this

year as well as some hats and gloves.

Thank you to Karen and all our thoughtful members, many of whom were decked out in their holiday sweaters. As Karen said “We are a small group but a generous group”.



### Tour the Department for the Blind

Tuesday, February 18  
1:00 pm

524 Fourth Street (at Watson Powell Pkwy), Des Moines 50309  
*Metered parking on the street or parking garage at 4th and Grand.*

Reservations, if attending, by February 2 to  
Alice at 515-865-6331 or [off4ever@aol.com](mailto:off4ever@aol.com)..



**Special Interest Groups**

**Mahjong Club** Our newest club is well underway and challenging but Sally Merritt’s lessons have been an excellent introduction to the game. The Mahjong Club meets twice a month on Friday at 1:00 pm at Sally’s clubhouse. If you are interested in learning this intriguing game or joining the club, contact Sally at [merritt69\\_99@yahoo.com](mailto:merritt69_99@yahoo.com).

**Friends of the Arts** Friends of the Arts is a group of members who attend concerts, art galleries, art festivals, dance, opera, and plays by inviting each other to join them. Typically, two to eight members attend each performance they are invited to. If you are interested in joining the club and inviting members to activities you wish to attend, contact Pat at [WestphalP@central.edu](mailto:WestphalP@central.edu).

**Lunch Friends** Lunch Friends is a social club where we meet at different restaurants around the Des Moines area to enjoy great food and conversation. Starting in 2025, we’ll meet on the first Wednesday of every month at 11:30 AM. If you’d like to check out our group, here are the details for our next lunch:

The Chicken Coop  
12725 Meredith Dr, Urbandale, IA 50323  
Wednesday, January 8th at 11:30 AM

RSVP: If you’d like to join us for lunch on January 8th, or if you’d like to get email invites for future lunches, please contact Christine McQuillan, the Lunch Friends Coordinator at [1ordmco@gmail.com](mailto:1ordmco@gmail.com).

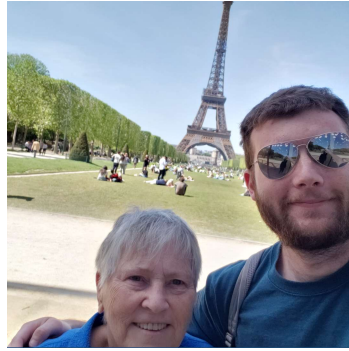
**Table of Friends** We meet the third Thursday of the month at 6:30 pm unless that date conflicts with other FF activities. Let Ginny know if you would like to join the group at [rendaginny@gmail.com](mailto:rendaginny@gmail.com).

**Book Friends** Join us on the 4th Monday of each month from 2:30 to 4:00 pm at Northwest Community Center, 5110 Franklin Avenue in Des Moines. In the summer we sometimes meet at Gray’s Lake Park. We are open to all Friendship Force members and their friends - the only requirement is a love of books. Contact coordinator Connie Walters at [yourfriendconnie@gmail.com](mailto:yourfriendconnie@gmail.com) for more information.

| Discussion DATE | MEMBER           | TITLE                                    | AUTHOR                            | SETTING                            |
|-----------------|------------------|--|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Jan 27          | Charlotte Buttin | French Like Moi: A Midwesterner in Paris | Scott Dominic Carpenter           | France - Nonfiction                |
| Feb 24          | Ronda Davis      | Looking for Lost Bird                    | Yvette Melanson with Caire Safran | Jewish w/ Navajo Memoir            |
| Mar 24          | Nikki Hubbard    | The Lost Girls of Paris                  | Pam Jenoff                        | Paris WWII - Historical Fiction    |
| Apr 28          | Ginny Renda      | The Fountains of Silence                 | Ruta Sepetys                      | Spanish Dictator Novel             |
| May 26          | Anita Lindfield  | The Violin Conspiracy                    | Brendan Slocumb                   | American to Russia - Fiction       |
| Jun 23          | Charlotte Buttin | Say Nothing                              | Patrick Redden Keefe              | Ireland Narrative                  |
| Jul 28          | Sally Merritt    | Untamed                                  | Glennon Doyle                     | Iowa Author Memoir                 |
| Aug 25          | Dee Willemsen    | The Seed Keeper                          | Diane Wilson                      | Native American Novel              |
| Sep 22          | Polly Antonelli  | Molly Sand Must Die                      | Laura Snider                      | Iowa Author Thriller               |
| Oct 27          | Anita Lindfield  | The Girl Who Came Home                   | Havel Gaynor                      | Ireland to US - Historical Fiction |
| Nov 24          | ALL MEMBERS      | BOOK SUGGESTIONS                         | For 2026                          | For Cultural Understanding         |
| Dec 22          | Connie Walters   | Miss Benson’s Beetle                     | Rachel Joyce                      | New Caledonia - Fiction            |

## Where in the World

**Where in the World** . . . are Pat Headley, Gail and Gene Sheridan Lucht, Pat Westphal, Shelley Bain, and Jane Escobar in 2024? Amsterdam, Paris, Scotland, Botswana, New York City, and South Africa! If you have a journey to share with club members, just send a few photos and a short narrative to Shelley.



## Member News

*Welcome*

SueTempero  
3660 Grand Ave #410  
Des Moines, IA 50312  
317-442-0316  
tempero5774  
@sbcglobal.net

### Year End Treasurer's Report

A Treasurer's Report was not available at the Annual Meeting. If you would like to receive, by email, a copy of the 2024 Year End Treasurer's Report, contact

Mike Merritt  
[merritt2007@sbcglobal.net](mailto:merritt2007@sbcglobal.net)

You can expect to receive the report after the January 13 Board Meeting.



