



friendship force
GREATER DES MOINES



2025 FFGDM Calendar
(Dates and activities subject to change)

May 7	Lunch Friends
May 7	REAL-ID goes into effect for domestic flights.
May 9	Mahjong Club
May 12	Board Meeting
May 13	Animal Rescue League Tour
May 15	Table of Friends
May 16 TBC	Game Night Friends
May 20-28	Journey to FF Lake Simcoe, Ontario
May 23	Mahjong Club
May 26	Book Friends
Jun 4	Lunch Friends
Jun 9	Board Meeting
Jun TBD	Islamic and Cultural Center Tour
Jun 13 TBC	Mahjong Club
Jun 19	Table of Friends
Jun 20	Game Night Friends
Jun 23	Book Friends
Jun 27 TBC	Mahjong Club
Jun 28	All-Iowa FF Gathering
Jul 7	Board Meeting
Jul 13	Sundaes on Sunday
Jul 14	Bastille Day Potluck
Jul 23-Aug 2	Open World from North Macedonia
Aug 11-17	Journey from FF Kansas
Sep 8	Board Meeting
Sep 12 TBC	Middlebrook Farm Tour
Oct 3	Dept of the Blind Tour
Oct 10-15	Journey to FF Shelby, NC
Nov TBD	Annual Dinner Meeting
Nov 10	Board Meeting
Dec 2	Happy Feet Lunch
Dec 8	Board Meeting

All FFGDM Members and their friends are invited –

Animal Rescue League of Iowa Tour



Tuesday, May 13

1:00 pm ARL tour

5452 NE 22nd St, Des Moines, IA 50313

Participants are invited to make a cash donation or bring any of the following: creamy peanut butter (no xylitol), canned pumpkin, canned tuna, dog or cat treats, Benebones (l/XL), baby food, or cat toys. See more at <https://www.arl-iowa.org/donate/other-ways-to-give/fetch-list/>

11:30 Lunch at Smokey D's (optional)

5555 NW 2nd Ave, Des Moines 50313

<https://smokeydsbbq.com/pages/main-location-menu>

Reservations by 5/9/25 to Karen at
karenkilpatrick@gmail.com

President's Message



Dear Friendship Members and Friends,
FFI wants to hear from you for this new book.

✧ Capturing the Legacy of Friendship Force ✧

A [new Friendship Force book](#) is being written covering our history from 1997 to present day. Share your stories, photos, and memories to help preserve our global legacy!

Email: History@friendshipforce.org

I sent to FFI the “My First Journeys” stories collected by Pat Headley in 2021. Some of you have more stories to tell, please share them with FFI directly using the links above.

FFI Special Assessment

Club Leaders received an email from FFI explaining a special; assessment on all ambassadors traveling from May 1 thru December 31, 2025. An excerpt from the email. . .

. . .To address this challenge and help close the budget deficit, the FFI Board of Directors has approved a special assessment of \$15 USD per ambassador for all journeys taking place from May 1st through the end of the year.

This decision was not made lightly, but it is essential to ensuring that Friendship Force remains financially sustainable and can continue its vital mission of breaking down barriers and fostering global understanding. . .

Your FFGDM Board of Directors voted to pay for these assessments as a donation to FFI. The donation covers the assessment for ambassadors to FF Lake Simcoe and FF Shelby.

We love and hate technology, but here is an article I hope you'll find helpful and even fun. The subjects are listed below but you can click <https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/reviews/iphone-tips-tricks/> to access the whole article. If you can't open the source, ask me to send the article to you via email attachment.

18 Things You Didn't Know Your iPhone Could Do

1) Identify plants or animals, 2) Transform your phone into a portable white noise machine, 3) Ask Siri to read things to you, 4) Schedule a text to send later, 5) Keep people out of your private tabs, 6) Create gestures that you can trigger with your voice, 7) Quickly remove the background from photos, 8) Use two fingers to select all, 9) Copy or translate text with the camera, 10) Look up laundry-care icons, 11) Lock apps you don't want people to open, 12) Keep people from snooping through your phone, 13) Become a faster photographer with Camera shortcuts, 14) Limit screen time for specific apps, 15) Move a group of apps to another page on your home screen, 16) Share a Wi-Fi password via QR code, 17) Record calls without downloading an app, and 18) Automatically transcribe voice recordings.

In Friendship,
Shelley Bain
FFGDM President

Journeys

2025 Journeys



FF Lake Simcoe OB
May 20-28, 2024
Ginny Renda
Ambassador Coord

FULL



FF Kansas (Wichita) IB
August 10-15, 2024
Alice Rasmussen and
Nancy Lundstrom
Co-Host Coords

PLANNING IN PROGRESS

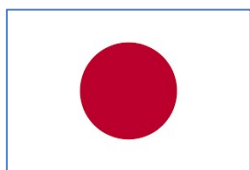


FF Shelby NC OB
October 10-15, 2024
Pat Headley
Ambassador Coord

WAIT LIST ONLY

2026 Journey Matches

All dates are tentative



FF Saitama & FF
Kōriyama OB

April

We are excited to share this journey with our friends in FF MN-Twin Cities. It will be a 2-week journey with half of the ambassadors coming from each club.

Both of our clubs were honored to host FF Saitama ambassadors last fall. They were a gracious and generous group.

We look forward to meeting new friends in Kōriyama.



FF New Mexico
(Albuquerque) OB

May

Albuquerque sits in the high desert and is the largest city in New Mexico. Its Old Town dates to the city's 1706 founding as a Spanish colony.

Old Town is filled with historic adobe buildings, museums, and shops selling Native American handicrafts. Nearby, The Indian Pueblo Cultural Center traces the area's tribal history.



Quilting Special IB

June

This is a Special Journey that will be open to all FFI members with a love of quilting or quilts.

FF Cedar Rapids-Iowa City is the lead club.

The journey will include a few days with FFCR-IC, travel to Hamilton, Missouri (aka Quilt City), and conclude with a few days with our club. Activities in Des Moines will likely include a trip to Madison County.



FF Southern Oregon IB

July

Twelve of our members visited FFSO last June and experienced a journey with giant Sequoias, rushing rivers, beautiful waterfalls, and new friends. How do we top that?



Activities



Despite a bad weather forecast, adventurous members ventured to Marla's house for "Game Night – The Luck of the Irish" on March 14.

The group, that enjoyed playing old standbys and learning a couple of new games, had such a good time we're considering making Game Night a regular occurrence.

Gail Sheridan Luchts has volunteered to coordinate the club and suggests it be scheduled for the third Friday of the month, 6:30-8:30pm, place to be determined. If you are interested, contact Gail at gail.lucht@gmail.com.



On April 27, members gathered at Luther Memorial Church to hear guest speaker Mary Frances Evans. Mary is the Executive Director of IRIS (Iowa Radio Reading Info Service). She shared that IRIS is a free radio reading service that reads print information aloud to over 11,000 print-disabled listeners throughout the state.



Access to IRIS programming is through livestream or podcast pages to listen on-demand. IRIS receivers come in the form of several different devices, including radio, digital receiver, or smart speaker. IRIS sends the devices for free to qualified individuals.

Our club made a donation to IRIS on behalf of the members. Thank you to the members who gave personal donations as well. You can learn more or volunteer to be a reader at <https://iowaradioreading.org>.

Mary Frances and Nancy



Members brought sweets and savories to share while they caught up with club news, checked out the new club polo shirts, learned about FFGDM's 2026 Journeys, and enjoyed each other's company. Nancy brought beautiful spring table decorations that she gave to members with birthdays in April and May. We always appreciate her decorating skills.

Thank you to Nancy Lundstrom and Pat Westphall who coordinated the event.





All-Iowa Friendship Force Gathering

Saturday, June 28

11:30 am Social

Noon – Welcome

Lunch

Program

Machine Shed Restaurant

11151 Hickman Rd, Urbandale, IA 50322

\$20.00 per person

Cost includes buffet, beverage, tax, tip, and all program costs.

In honor of the Des Moines Art Festival, we are asking artistic and crafty members of Iowa FF Clubs to offer an item for the silent auction. All proceeds will benefit The Food Bank of Iowa.

Please bring cash or your checkbook.



For more information about the Des Moines Arts Festival go to

<https://www.desmoinesartsfestival.org/> or

<https://www.facebook.com/DesMoinesArtsFestival/>

Food & Location Questions? Contact Ginny at rendaginny@gmail.com / 515-778-8506 call or text

Art Auction Questions? Contact Shelley at bainshelley@gmail.com

All-Iowa Friendship Force Gathering Reservation

Paid reservations due Friday, June 20

Make checks payable to FFGDM and mail to
Ginny Renda, 2821 Wolcott Ave, Des Moines, IA 50321



Name(s)			
Club			
Email		Phone	
Number of tickets <input type="text"/> @ \$20 = Total amount enclosed <input type="text"/>			

Special Interest Groups

Game Night Friends – *Our newest club?*

The St Patrick's Day Game Night was so much fun that there appears to be enough interest to make Game Night monthly. Gail Sheridan Luchts has volunteered to coordinate the club and suggests it be scheduled for the third Friday of the month, 6:30-8:30pm, place to be determined. If you are interested, contact Gail at gail.lucht@gmail.com.



Mahjong Club Mahjong Club is a welcome challenge; we learn new tips or hints every time we play. We're lucky to have Sally Merritt, new member Nan Stubbs, and no longer a newbie, Charlotte Buttin, as our 'experts' during the games. The Mahjong Club meets twice a month on Friday at 1:00 pm, usually at Sally's clubhouse. If you are interested in learning this intriguing game or joining the club, contact Sally at 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 six members attend each performance they are invited to. In March and April, members attended the plays Grand Horizons by Iowa Stage, Legally Blonde at Drake, Witness for the Prosecution by the Ankeny Theatre, and The Emerald Earring at Tallgrass Theatre. They also enjoyed The Magic Flute at Drake Opera, and the Aizuri Quartet & Ballet Des Moines. If you are interested in joining the club and inviting members to activities you wish to attend, contact Pat at WestphalP@central.edu.

Lunch Friends Lunch Friends is a social club where we meet at different restaurants around the Des Moines area to enjoy good food and conversation. We meet on the first Wednesday of every month at 11:30 AM. Recent lunches were at The Green Olive and Ankeny Café. If you'd like to get email invitations for future lunches, contact Christine at 1ordmco@gmail.com.

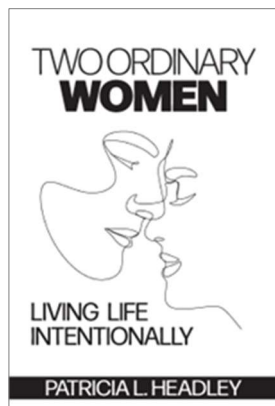
Table of Friends We meet the third Thursday of the month at 6:30 pm unless that date conflicts with other FF activities. So far this year we've dined at Big Steer, Heavenly Chinese, Christopher's, and Guesthouse Tavern + Oysters. Let Ginny know if you would like to join the group at rendaginny@gmail.com.

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 for more information.

Discussion DATE	MEMBER	TITLE	AUTHOR	SETTING
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

Member News

There are Authors Among Us



Our club is lucky to include many talented members. Two of those are Pat Headley and Christine McQuillan. If you enjoyed either of these books, one of the kindest ways to support the authors is by leaving a quick review on Amazon or Barnes & Noble. Leaving a star rating and a sentence or two makes a big difference and helps more readers discover the titles online.

Pat's first book, *Two Ordinary Women: Living Life Intentionally*, is a series of short stories about two ordinary women - Ruthanne and Pat - their courtship, adventures, and foibles; learning to live and play together; and living life despite adversity.

Pat, a mother of two, enrolls in community college as a nontraditional student after her divorce. Ruthanne - an environmentalist, skilled hiker, and lover of the arts - is her literature professor, fresh from her master's degree. While sitting in class watching the bright, witty Ruthanne impart knowledge to her students, Pat realized her years-long suspicions were true. The two women became friends and eventually life partners. Ruthanne enlightened, empowered, and inspired Pat whose life was changed forever.

Ruthanne developed MS in her thirties. But her constant fatigue and frustration at the disease's effect on her brain didn't stop her from living. The hardest lesson to learn was - There's always tomorrow-until there isn't.

Ruthanne passed from cancer at age sixty-two. But this book isn't about illness and dying; it's about making life as full and beautiful as you can, while you can.

Her second memoir, *Two Ordinary Women: Adventures, Grandchildren, Adversities*, will be available soon. Pat's books are available at Beaverdale Books, Amazon, or through Pat directly.



Christine has written *Princess Avalon Dreams Big: A Simple Princess Story to Inspire Little Ones to Achieve Big Things!*. The book inspires toddlers and preschoolers to consider the small steps they can take to achieve their dreams. It also demonstrates the value of teamwork and using our unique talents to complete a task.

Princess Avalon books focus on the key lessons that parents want their children to learn in a fun and accessible way. Through simple, practical princess books, these stories inspire little ones to dream big, support others, and aspire to achieve great things. On the final keepsake page, parents and children can discuss and draw the child's own big dream, write down the names of people in their lives who can help, and document their current favorite things.

Written by Christine McQuillan, who has a background in special education and learning development, these books are designed to be relatable and meaningful for all children. After all, you don't have to be a princess to be a strong, capable, and wonderful person - it's a special magic that everyone has inside!

This first book of the series is available through Barnes & Noble and Amazon. Look for *Princess Avalon Learns Something New* and *Princess Avalon Cares for Others* later this year.



Welcome New Members

Gary and Nan Stubbs
Gary - 7216gary@gmail.com
Nan - 7216nan@gmail.com



Our Sympathy

To Jane Flagler and the family of
Charlie Johnson

August 28, 1928 — March 19, 2025

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
Pat Headley
headleypatricia651@gmail.com
Karen Kilpatrick
karenkilpatrick@gmail.com

Alice Rasmussen
off4ever@aol.com
Ginny Renda
rendaginny@gmail.com

Task & Committee Leaders

Mike Davis – Journey Director
mjdavisconsulting@gmail.com
Marla Carr – Activities Co-Chair
marlakcarr@yahoo.com
Nancy Lundstrom – Activities Co-Chair
nancy.lundstrom@reesassociates.com;
open – FaceBook Coordinator

Social Clubs

Christine McQuillen – Lunch Friends
lordmco@gmail.com
Sally Merritt – Mahjong Club
merritt69_99@yahoo.com
Ginny Renda – Table of Friends
rendaginny@gmail.com
Gail Sheridan Luchts – Game Friends
gail.lucht@gmail.com
Pat Westphal – Friends of the Arts
WestphalP@central.edu
Connie Walters – Book Friends
yourfriendconnie@gmail.com

Where in the World. . .

Where in the World . . . are Ruthie, Jerri, Alice, Marla, and Pat? In Ocala (FL), Sedona (AZ), Greece, and Puerto Rico!



"Travel makes one modest. You see what a tiny place you occupy in the world." - Gustave Flaubert