



friendship force
MINNESOTA - TWIN CITIES

LOOK WHAT RICK STEVES HAS TO SAY ABOUT US!!



Travel expert and author, Rick Steves

Well-known American travel author and expert, Rick Steves, wrote [a blog post](#) on March 15 listing organizations he recommends that provide educational tours and experiences to travelers – and Friendship Force made his short list!

As Rick writes,

After taking several trips with organizations offering “educational” or “reality” tours, I’ve learned that getting the most out of a trip to a complicated corner of our world is easier with a guide and in the care of an organization that’s well-connected locally...The new edition of my *Travel as a Political Act* book will contain a list of organizations offering educational tour experiences to the broader traveling public.

Please check out my list and let me know if you have any experience with these groups, or if there are others you’d recommend. Thank you!

According to his post, we will be listed along with other organizations promoting educational, locally-based travel experiences in the upcoming second edition to his popular [Travel As a Political Act](#) book, set to be published in early 2018. Rick captured the heart of our organization and mission, describing us as follows:

Friendship Force International, a nonprofit organization, focuses on person-to-person exchanges, with locals welcoming travelers into their homes and introducing their visitors to their cultures. In each destination, a “Friendship Force” club led by volunteers offers homestays and social activities, giving visitors the chance to get intimately acquainted with their hosts. Each one- to three-week program includes cultural experiences, such as learning to make traditional *lavash* bread in Armenia, visiting historic Brazilian fishing villages, or tobogganing on sand hills in Australia’s Hunter Valley.

Be sure to [view Rick’s blog post on the topic](#) as well to share your experiences with Friendship Force! Also check out a photo from Rick’s 2015 visit to Atlanta, Georgia’s local PBS station, where FFI Director of Marketing and Communications, Kaitlyn Ranney, chatted with him about Friendship Force!

Excerpted from Friendship Force International website



WORDS FROM OUR PRESIDENT

By Rita Mays

Honoring Our Friendships and Relationships

Friendship Force International and our Friendship Force of Minnesota - Twin Cities have been around for 40 years. There is a lot of history to celebrate for both. As we reflect on each organization, consider what contributed to the successes of each.

In my opinion, both organizations have built a foundation based on personal friendships and relationships. Relationships give our lives purpose and meaning. They give us a sense of connection to a larger world. They make us feel alive!

Take this to a personal level:

What relationships have you created through Friendship Force?
How have these friendships impacted your life and your own life views?
What have you learned about yourself and how you relate to others?
How has your involvement in Friendship Force deepened your understanding of yourself and others?

By being involved - attending activities, serving on the board, participating in journey planning or hosting ambassadors, we build connection with others!

I invite you to nurture all your relationships within Friendship Force and celebrate making a difference in the world – one person at a time!

Rita Mays, President

Mitakuye Oyasin (Lakota prayer meaning “All My Relations”, reflecting a world view of interconnectedness and sacredness of all life.)

**DEADLINE FOR OCTOBER,
NOVEMBER, DECEMBER
ISSUE:**

SEPTEMBER 20TH

BOARD MEMBERS/CONTACTS

President: Rita Mays

Vice-President: Open

Treasurer: Ken Scherber

Secretary: Anne Shea

Past President:

Louise Anderson

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Activities Co-Chairs:

Cindy Cauble

Sheryl Grover

Journey Coordinator

Barb Emer

Member at Large

Ben Szyplinski

Membership:

Greg McAndrews

Webmaster:

Marge Runnacko

Newsletter Editor

Barb Emer

Ambassador Coordinators:

Gene Selchow and Rosie

Foreman outgoing to West

Alajuela, Costa Rica

See Website to Contact
friendshipforcetwincities.org

OUTGOING LETHBRIDGE JOURNEY



A TREE GROWS IN LETHBRIDGE....

In late May, Marge Runnakko, Journey Ambassador Coordinator, led 13 ambassadors from the Twin Cities club on an outgoing journey to Lethbridge, Canada. They were joined with nine ambassadors from the Great Falls, Montana club. During the seven-day stay, the Lethbridge club planned numerous exciting events starting with the welcome event at City Hall, followed by bus tours, a steak BBQ, UNESCO sites as well as many other

areas of interest. In addition to the home-stay, eleven club members enjoyed a tour to Lake Louise and the Columbia Ice Fields on a three-day post trip to the Baniff area.

To symbolize the establishment of new friendships forged, a tree was planted at Henderson Park's Friendship Force Grove. This is a tradition that the Lethbridge club carries out to honor Friendship Force clubs they host.

Many thanks to Anne Shea and Vickie Palmer for promoting this journey at our holiday party this past December. This was my first experience as an Ambassador Coordinator and it was an excellent and exciting experience! *Submitted by Marge Runnakko*



Carol and Max Harris



Carol Kimball (L) Montana, Herman Gom, Lethbridge Coordinator, Marge Runnakko, Twin Cities Coordinator



Heather Halen & Canadian Mounty



OUTGOING JOURNEY TO WEST ALAJUELA, COSTA RICA

West Alajuela, Costa Rica (just northwest of San Jose) has offered to host members of our club in January 2018. Details are being confirmed for twenty ambassadors to travel from approximately January 10th to the 17th. Applications will be reviewed soon and accepted applicants will be notified. We are also seeking additional people to be considered for a waiting list. As we all know, “life happens,” and openings may become available later

with short notice. We want to recruit the best ambassadors to fulfill the mission of Friendship Force. This means we’ll be following the new guidelines set by the national office by following up on references and confirming that participants have the physical stamina for this venture.

Costa Rica is sincerely interested in conserving its natural resources and in fostering ecotourism. The Costa Ricans (or Ticos as they prefer to call themselves) will welcome us into their “pura vida” or “pure life,” an easy-going, relaxing approach to time and place. The country is a conservationist’s dream and we’ll get a peek at it—from birds to bugs, snakes to monkeys, waterfalls to rainforests and more. An optional week extension to our homestay will focus on visiting two or three nature preserve areas. Pack some mosquito spray, suntan lotion and good walking shoes and come join us!

Please note that journey details, as well as the optional tour, continue to be worked on as of press time.

For further information please contact Gene Selchow at g.m.selchow@unique-software.com or Rosie Foreman at rafroseus@yahoo.com

HELPFUL APPS FOR TRAVELERS:

Technology continues to become a bigger part of our lives, and there’s perhaps no bigger influence than our cellphones. Smartphones can provide a tremendous utility to users, especially as it relates to travel. Here are some favorite travel smartphone apps:

Google Translate

For international travelers, Google Translate is an incredibly simple resource for language translation. Just dictate your message, and Google translates for you. My favorite feature is the visual translation tool, which allows you to translate physical text and signage with the aid of your smartphone camera. The app supports more than 100 languages at various levels and is actually fun to play with, even if you have no plans to travel internationally.

XE Currency

Another app for international travelers, XE Currency is a free smartphone resource to access live exchange rates, view historical charts and calculate prices. Rates are regularly updated (you can determine how often you get updates), and the app stores the rate of currencies you’ve looked up so they’re available offline. If you plan to travel out of the country, this app is a must-have for your smartphone.

Stay tuned for more helpful travel apps. Excerpted from AAA. Thanks to Cindy Cauble.



OPPORTUNITIES!!

If you have ever traveled as an Ambassador, you realize the importance of everyone giving their time and talents to our club. It's also a great way to connect with other club members and learn about Friendship Force!

Although our election is held in December, the nominations committee is busy filling the slate of candidates now.

The following opportunities are available to get involved with in our club in 2018.

Consider volunteering for one of these positions:

- Vice President
- Secretary
- Activity /Social Team Chair
- Journey Coordinator/Mentor
- Host Coordinator or planning team for incoming journey from Rostov-on-Don, Russia (April-May 2018)

Contact Rita Mays, President, at ritamnffi@yahoo.com or Barbara Wallace, Nominations Chair, at barbaraw6@gmail.com for more information.

LOOKING AHEAD, WAY AHEAD

Save the date! On Saturday, September 15, 2018, our club will celebrate 40 years of friendship and memories. We know you long-



term members have marvelous stories to tell so start thinking about them as well as digging up old photos. Stories from "short-term" members

welcome too! Vicki Palmer is chair of the Committee. vapindale@hotmail.com

LOOKING TO THE IMMEDIATE....

Lord Fletchers – Monday, August 7th, noon

Come on out to one of the most beautiful lakes in Minnesota, Lake



Minnetonka, and enjoy a hamburger on the wharf. STILL \$5.00

LOOKING AHEAD

Monday, August 7th, noon: Lord Fletchers
August 24-28: FFI's International Conference, Manchester, UK

Saturday, September 30th, 1:00: Quarterly all-member meeting at Barbara and Don Wallace's party room at 6115 Lincoln Drive, Edina

Saturday, December 2nd, Holiday party

January, 2018: Outgoing journey to West Alajuela, Costa Rica

Spring, 2018: Incoming journey from Rostov-on-Don, Russia

We need a host coordinator for the incoming journey from Russia in the spring of 2018. It could be two members working together as co-coordinators. Contact Rita Mays for additional information. ritamnffi@yahoo.com

PARTIAL SOLAR ECLIPSE – MONDAY, AUG. 21st

Begins: 11:43 a.m.
Maximum: 1:06 p.m.
Ends: 2:29 p.m.

PROTECT YOUR EYES!

OUR ANNUAL SUMMER PICNIC

The club's annual picnic was held on July 15th at Oak Hill Park in St. Louis Park. It was a beautiful sunny day but the temperature topped out in the 90's. Luckily, the picnic shelter offered plenty of shade. Approximately 50 people attended including long time members, new members, and prospective members. Everyone enjoyed socializing before sharing in a potluck lunch. The club arranged for hamburgers, hot dogs and brats. Hats off to our barbecue masters!

Afterwards, there was a short meeting to update members. President Rita Mays started the meeting by reading the newly written Friendship Force International mission statement. Ken Scherber gave the treasurer's report. The activities committee announced the next get together on August 7th at Lord Fletchers for lunch at noon. (The time was adjusted to allow for the board meeting to precede lunch.) The membership committee gave a report and distributed a questionnaire to collect information. Members were given an opportunity to rate choices for the next outbound journey, as well as information on their talents and resources. The journey leaders for the 2018 outbound journey to Costa Rica were introduced and they explained some of the challenges in finalizing dates and itinerary details for this journey. All in all everyone had a good time and didn't go home hungry! *Submitted by Cindy Cauble*



YOU ARE INVITED!!!

The Friendship Force of Greater Des Moines

Would be Honored by Your Presence

at their

40th Year Birthday Bash

AND

FFI 40th Anniversary Celebration

Sunday, Oct. 29, 2017

4:00-7:00 P.M.

Des Moines Golf & Country Club

1600 Jordan Creek Pkwy.

W. Des Moines, IA-- EXIT 121 OFF I-80

(\$35. Inclusive)

Keynote Speaker: JEREMI SNOOK, President/CEO, FFI

*RSVP: Adrienne Moen
4800 Aspen Dr.
W. Des Moines, IA 50265
515-223-4129
adriennemoen@gmail.com*

*Please "x" any preference and submit \$35. To Adrienne
Oct. 29 home hosting? _____*

*Entrée: Hazelnut Crusted Chicken _____ Diet Restriction?
"Ethnic Attire Encouraged"*