

FRIENDSHIP FORCE

"encouraging all people to share in international friendships and global understanding"



Upcoming Events

May 21 @ 6:00 p.m. (please note this date change)

General Membership meeting

Northern Hills United
Methodist Church (6700
Winton Rd, Cincinnati, OH
45224)

- Presentation on the
Saitama, Japan journey

October 6 - 13

Hosting of ambassadors from
Lower Columbia,
Washington

Journey News

[Journey Catalog 2022-23 Link](#)

From Our Co-Presidents

Friendship Force of Greater Cincinnati Blooms in Spring

As we enter the lovely month of May, it finally feels safe to say:

"Spring has Sprung!" in

Greater Cincinnati. After some fits and starts, more reliably warm weather has arrived to welcome flowering trees, sweet-smelling lilac shrubs – and, soon – Ruby-throated hummingbirds and butterflies to public parks and our own outdoor spaces.

The joy of blossoming also seems a fitting metaphor for the current season in FFGC. As we celebrate the return of our Ambassadors from their journey to Saitama, Japan (and beyond), we learned from Friendship Force International that we have been matched with the Simcoe Lake club in Ontario, Canada, for an outbound journey in July 2024. The next step is to select a Journey Coordinator; more about this opportunity also will be shared at our May 21, 2023 Membership Meeting, where we'll also be treated to a program focusing club members' recent Japan journey.

In the meantime, we are looking forward to rolling out some of our legendary Greater Cincinnati hospitality when we host the Lower Columbia, Washington Club October 6-13. Connie Taggart is the Coordinator for this experience and is still in need of home hosts. Please contact her at ctaggart2000@yahoo.com.

In the midst of this optimism and anticipation, we are, perhaps inevitably given the nature of organizational and personal life, experiencing some unexpected turns. Currently, our plans to host



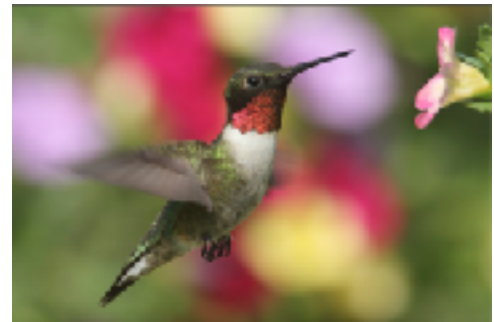
a group of journalists from North Macedonia in September are on hold due to financial uncertainties at the federal level.

Beyond journeys and hosting, we continue efforts to boost engagement with current members and recruit new ones. Elsewhere in this newsletter, you can read about a fun gathering that Beth Duff has planned for Friday evening, June 23, at the Florence Y'All minor league baseball park. In the fall, Ray Sinclair will launch a discussion group centered on global issues as framed by the Great Decisions curriculum from the Foreign Policy Association.

Small Meet and Greet opportunities will continue to be hosted this month by club members to introduce potential new members to the benefits of Friendship Force.

Kudos to Katie Campbell for organizing these sessions and to the hosts and facilitators involved. Please tell friends about these meetings and also invite them to upcoming Membership Meetings.

Finally, in a more poignant note, we will take a few minutes at the May 21 meeting to honor the wonderful life of longtime FFGC member Bob Derge, who contributed so much to our club.



In Friendship,

Pat Lehman (lehmanpatb@gmail.com, 513-305-2117)

Janet Walsh (janetlynettewalsh@gmail.com, 513-708-7505)

Highlights of Our Upcoming May 21 Membership Meeting

- The meeting – rescheduled from our original calendar to avoid a conflict with Mother’s Day – will be held from 6-8 p.m. at Northern Hills United Methodist Church, 6700 Winton Woods Road.
- Our famous potluck, always a big hit, is not to be missed. FYI, we are expecting a few more guests than usual at this meeting.
- Our agenda will include a program crafted by our Ambassadors to Saitama, Japan, which we know will be fascinating!
- We will conclude with a reminiscences of longtime member Bob Derge, who passed away in late March.

Florence Y’All Baseball Game Outing

Our next Friendship Force Outing will be Friday evening, June 23 at 7:00 pm when we gather to cheer on the Florence Y’Alls (who play the Evansville Otters that night). We have a block of reserved seating tickets at the group rate of \$8 each. Besides the excitement of the game and the



many other attractions of this baseball minor league ballpark, Friday night is FIREWORKS NIGHT! Plan to bring yourselves, your kids, your grandkids, and your friends.

We will gather at 5:15pm at a nearby restaurant for a casual dinner before the game. This is optional. If you prefer ballpark food go for it!

To reserve your spot(s) contact Beth Duff by email (bethduff@fuse.net) or phone/text (513)382-1317). Checks should be made out to and mailed to Beth Duff (1285 Paddock Hills Ave., Cincinnati OH 45229) or given to Beth at the May 21 General Meeting. The deadline is June 12.



Details on how to get your ticket(s) from Beth and the exact restaurant we will go to for dinner will be announced to those who have signed up around the June 12 deadline.

Update on Recruitment - Keeping our Club Strong!

Bring a Friend to a Meet and Greet!

We are all ambassadors when it comes to promoting the benefits of Friendship Force of Greater Cincinnati. Sometimes the best way to showcase what our club is all about is person to person, with small-group conversations in friendly, hospitable settings.

That’s the idea behind the Meet and Greets that have been hosted and facilitated by members beginning in April. Organized by Katie Campbell, the sessions have been well-received by potential members and member participants alike.

Please consider bringing a friend to one of these remaining small meet-and-greet membership recruitment meetings. Remaining dates are listed below. Please note changes in red. RSVP to Katie Campbell katie725campbell@gmail.com.

Date	Time	Hosts	Location	Facilitator	capacity
May 16	10:30 am	Katie Campbell	6536 Lisa Lane Kenwood	Pat Dworkin	12
May 17	7 pm	Marci and Warren Taylor	215 Richie Ave. Wyoming	Pat Lehman	10
May 20	3 pm	Mark Bowers and Nick Sakelos	6930 Shawnee Run Road Madeira	Ann Bowers	6
May 24	4:30 pm	Chalet Jules	1538 Winford Ct. Forest Park	Judy Hornsby	15

Journey Updates

Japan Journey #23110 March 26 – April 8, 2023 Saitama Japan & Extension

We had ten Friendship Force travelers depart from Greater Cincinnati International Airport the morning of March 25, 2023. (Mimi Bailey, Beth Duff, Joe & Rella Hadley, Judy Hornsby, Susan Richardson, Connie Taggart, Marilyn Kaiser, and Jessica Kueper & Deborah Wallace from the Dayton club.) We arrived in Tokyo's Haneda Airport on March 26 at 4 pm. After going through Immigration, Customs, and the Covid Immunization areas we finally emerged to meet a group of smiling faces holding a Friendship Force banner. Six of our members had flown from Minneapolis, (Katie Campbell & Ray Sinclair, Mimi Gingold & Al Gerhardstein, and new members Janet & Tom Scott from St Paul) were already there. There were three women from other FF clubs (Jackie Agdern from Long Island NY, Karen Sherrets from Largo FL, and Bobbye Underwood from Brunswick GA) who arrived on later flights and were part of our group. Some hosts met us at the airport and others of us were taken by bus to meet our hosts in Saitama and driven to their homes.

The Saitama FF had a full program of activities scheduled for us. Monday, we met at the Bonsai Art Museum, and walked to a nearby restaurant for a traditional Japanese lunch. Followed by a walking tour of Kita-in Temple, Senba-Tosyogu Shrine, Kawagoe Festival Museum and Warehouses Street. Al said, "We walked about 4.5 miles that day. The eyes were treated all day long while the legs did all the hard work. All worth it."

Tuesday was the Welcome Party where we were treated to Tradition Japanese Culture Experiences. We did Japanese Calligraphy, Ikebana (flower arrangement). There was a lovely lunch followed by everyone being dressed in Kimonos and Samurai outfits and a photo session in our outfits. We presented their club with a Sharing Board from Rookwood Pottery. We had Buckeye candies for everyone, and Mimi Gingold explained why Ohioans are called "Buckeyes".

Wednesday was a free day with our hosts and we all had different experiences.

Thursday they took us to Nikko on a Bus Tour where we saw the Tamozawa Imperial Villa, had lunch and visited the Toshogu Shrine.

Friday was a tour of Tokyo. Most went to Chidorigafuchi, had lunch a Yamatoken Restaurant, walked around the Imperial Palace, had a coffee break at Wadakuramon, went to KITTE and Tokyo Station area for shopping and sightseeing.

Saturday was another free day with the hosts. Some of us were taken to the Hot Springs Spa to experience a Japanese bath. Men and Women are in separate areas.

On Sunday of the second week, we met our guide, Mike, from Samurai Tours at 1 pm at the train station for the Extension we had planned. We traveled by Shinkansen (Bullet Train) to Kanazawa, walked to the hotel and checked in. We met at 6 pm and walked to a shopping area that had about 20 restaurants where we were able to choose many kinds of food.

The next day we toured Kanazawa Castle, Kenrokuen Gardens, Prefectural Handicrafts Museum, and took the loop bus to a restaurant for lunch. Afterward we took the bus to the Higashi Chaya district, one of the active geisha districts in Kanazawa. Bused back to Kanazawa station and walked to the hotel.

Tuesday, we traveled by express train to Kyoto, then by Shinkansen to Hiroshima to drop luggage at the hotel, lunch on our own in an area with many restaurants. Taxi to the Hiroshima Peace Museum for a tour. Walked through the Peace Park, including the Cenotaph, Children's Memorial, Peace Memorial Bell, A-Bomb Dome and Epicenter.

Wednesday, we traveled by Shinkansen to Kyoto. Dropped off luggage, had lunch in an area with about 25 restaurants and many shops. Followed by a visit to Sanjusangendo Shrine. Returned to the hotel to check in and walk to dinner.

Thursday, we visited Nijo Castle, Kinkaku-ji Temple, had lunch at a Japanese Restaurant and went to Nishiki-koji Market. Rella's Pacer App said we walked 36,373 steps.

Friday, we traveled by Shinkansen to Osaka, took two subways to Osaka Castle. It was a long walk in the rain. After touring the Castle, we took two more subways and walked to a okonomiyaki restaurant for lunch. Afterward we toured Dotombori-dori a shopping area, then took the subway back to the train and returned to Kyoto.

Saturday morning, we departed at various times by taxi to meet the bus to take us to the Osaka airport for a Japanese Airline flight to Tokyo and back to our home airports.

To read more about our Journey and see pictures, click on this link:

[Saitama Japan Journey Report](#)

Rella Hadley, Journey Coordinator – Japan #23110

The Decision on Great Decisions: Let's Give it a Try

A question on our February Member Survey explored the possibility of offering an FFGC Great Decisions discussion group. Ray Sinclair took the lead in investigating this program and has agreed to coordinate the group if there's sufficient interest. He also witnessed a discussion in action. In his own words, here's what Ray found:

One of the many great things about Friendship Force for me is the conversations with people from other countries that the journeys make possible. But I often feel inadequate to the task because I'm woefully ignorant about the many problems we face together as citizens of the world. I relish learning about local customs and sharing the ones I cherish at home, but when it comes to talking about the state of our shared world, I'm often not up to the task. So I was interested recently to experience a "Great Decisions Discussion Groups" session conducted by the St. Paul, MN FF club.

GDDG is a project of the Foreign Policy Association, a non-profit founded in 1918 that is dedicated to inspiring the American public to learn more about the world. Every year, they publish a small book of summaries of different topics of global import. Some of this year's topics:

Energy Geopolitics

War Crimes

China and the U.S.

Politics in Latin America

Those summaries include discussion questions and resources for further reading. There's also short (20-minute) videos on each topic. The object is to get people to organize discussion groups to learn together – and to enter into real, respectful debate about the kind of future we seek to shape.

The meeting I attended in St. Paul was attended by 14 club members in the home of Janet and Tom Scott. (Some of you may remember them from our Japan journey.) After a little socializing in the kitchen and some talk of an upcoming "Inbound," they got down to business in the living room. The topic for the evening was economic warfare. Tom played the FPA video for the topic. It reviewed three different trends in world economics that have occurred since WWI and summarized the perils that face the world as the economic systems of the U.S., China, Russia, and other countries collide in an increasingly nationalistic atmosphere. A lively discussion ensued, and I was impressed by how much people were able to add, among other things, from observations they made about their FF journeys and other foreign travels. Altogether an enjoyable evening.

We're thinking of trying out Great Decisions Discussion Groups for our club. The program booklets are about \$35, and the videos (all on one DVD) cost something too, but in my estimation, this is a high-quality product, and sharing copies of the booklet is certainly possible. The Saint Paul club meets about every month, passing the moderator duty around and taking the summer off. Their meetings are open so that members can bring friends. There were a couple of those.

I'm in for a Cincinnati trial of this activity. Anyone interested? Please send me a line (rsinclair6536@gmail.com). If there's enough interest, we might get organized this summer and start a trial run this fall.

Birthday News!

Happy Birthday to our members who have birthdays in May and June. Remember, don't just celebrate the day, celebrate the entire month!



May	
Marilyn Kaiser	12
Ann Benoit	27
June	
Beth Duff	4
Pat Lehman	5
Sonia Derge	12
Emily Hodges	13
Chuck Schneider	14
Judy Moermond	16
Susan Richardson	21
Marianne Mundy	23
Sally Larson	24

Any Year, Another Flying Pig Marathon

Congratulations to several of our members (Chalet Jules, Janet Walsh, Beth Duff, Pat Lehmann, Brenda Russell, Judy Moermond) who recently completed a race in the Flying Pig Marathon weekend. Between everyone, they walked over 100 miles.



Chalet and Janet celebrating after the Flying Pig Marathon

Your 2023 FFGC Board Members and Committee Chairs

Position	Name(s)	Contact Information
Co-Presidents	Patricia Lehman Janet Walsh	lehmanpatb@gmail.com janetlynettewalsh@gmail.com
Co-Vice Presidents	Beth Duff Alice Schneider	Bethduff83@gmail.com alices@fuse.net
Treasurer	Molly Hunter	Mahunter123@gmail.com
Secretary	Chalet Jules	chaletjules@gmail.com
Communications Co-Chairs	Judy Moermond Susan Schmidt	jmoermond@me.com ffcincinnati@gmail.com
Membership Co-Chairs	Mimi Gingold Pat Dworkin	mimigingold@gmail.com patdworkin@gmail.com
Program Chair	Jim Millar	emillar75@gmail.com
Hospitality Chair	Nada Huron	nadahuron@fuse.net
Journey Advisors	Rella Hadley Judy Hornsby	rella.hadley@gmail.com judyorson21@gmail.com
Saitama, Japan Journey Ambassador Coordinator	Rella Hadley	rella.hadley@gmail.com
Lower Columbia (WA) Journey Hosting Coordinator (2023)	Connie Taggart	Ctaggart2000@yahoo.com
Open World Program Coordinators	Katie Campbell Mimi Gingold	Katie725campbell@gmail.com mimigingold@gmail.com