



Friendship Force

Wisconsin — Madison

ffwis.org

July/Aug 2024

A NOTE FROM THE Co-PRESIDENTS

We are both honored and humbled to assume the role of Co-Presidents for FF Wisconsin-Madison. Because we are relatively new to Friendship Force, the support and assistance of the Board and of veteran members has been very helpful in preparing us for our new role. We greatly appreciate their insights and mentorship. We welcome the newly elected officers and look forward to working with the standing committees and to engaging with all club members.

One of our major goals is to move the Club's strategic plan forward. During the May 21 strategic planning meeting, the Board and other members identified four priorities for the Club to focus on over the coming years. An ad hoc committee was created for each priority: the Diversify Membership Committee, the Marketing Committee, the Mission-Focused Travel and Education Committee, and the Partnership Committee. Each ad hoc committee will create an action plan with 2-3 achievable goals during the coming months to guide future directions for the club.

Sixteen club members plan to attend the FFI North American Regional Conference in Milwaukee in October. Sessions at the conference may provide innovative ideas for planning and goal setting. In addition, attendees will have opportunities to connect with delegates

from other Friendship Force clubs and learn about their work in the areas of marketing, connecting with other organizations, developing cultural experiences, and attracting a more diverse membership.

—Diane and Larry



HIGHLIGHTS

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***August 9-11 events p8

Check them out TODAY!!

*Summer Picnic p3

RSVP by Sept 4

*Program Survey p2

We need your input!

*MILW Conference p4

Workshops & Tours

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July 15:	Dining on the 6th	p7
July 20:	Move & Groove bike ride	p6
July 31:	Second Harvest service day	p8
Aug 1-15:	Outbound - Ghana, Africa	May
Aug 6:	Book Club (in person!)	p7
Aug 8-11:	McPike Park: Int'l music	p8
Aug 9:	Palestine: dinner/panel	p8
Aug 26:	Sign up for Second Harvest	
Aug 28:	Second Harvest service day	p8
Sept 4:	Summer Picnic RSVP due	
Sept 7:	Summer Picnic	p3
Sept 13:	Adopt-A-Highway	p6
Sept 15:	Newsletter Deadline	
Sept 16:	Book Club (via zoom)	p7
Sept 23:	Sign up for Second Harvest	
Sept 25:	Second Harvest service day	
Sept 26:	Board Meeting (rescheduled)	
Oct ?:	Outbound- Birmingham, AL	May
Oct 6:	Dining on the 6th	
Oct 7-10:	Regional Conf: Milwaukee	p4

*May = May/June 2024 Newsletter

Monthly Events:

Social:	Dining on the 6th	
Board Mtg:	2nd Thursday	
Book Club:	3rd Monday	
Foodbank:	Last Wed of each month	

Calendar updates will be emailed to you directly and/or posted on our website: ffwis.org

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**CARDS WELCOME!**

Founding member Kay Babcock recently moved to the Agrace health care campus in Madison.

Kay, her husband Steve, and their children went on the very first Madison exchange to Zurich, Switzerland, in 1978. We were pleased to present Kay and Steve with honorary Life Memberships at our 2023 Annual Meeting.

There is a video on our website (*Members Only* section) that was taped by Fitchburg Public Television. In the video, Kay, Bernie Long and Joan Calkins talk about the early days and the founding of our Madison Club.

Cards would be much appreciated! The address is 5395 E Cheryl Parkway, Madison, WI 53711.

PROGRAM SURVEY

Our Program Committee makes arrangements for speakers from various countries to share information about their culture with you, via ZOOM. We are evaluating our programs and would like your input.

Please click on the link below to take our survey:

[2024 Program Survey](#)

We appreciate your input and suggestions!

David Blado & Mike Lambert
Program Committee



Summer Picnic!



3

Summer Picnic!



*You are invited to attend
the Friendship Force of Wisconsin-Madison*

Annual Summer Potluck Picnic

Let's Get Together for Fellowship and Fun!

Saturday, September 7, 2024

Marshall Park	5:00 Social time
2101 Allen Blvd	5:15 Picnic potluck buffet
Madison	7:21 Sunset

Grilled **hamburgers and brats** will be prepared by grill master John Baldwin. We will have buns and condiments to dress them up.



Please provide a **dish to share** for the potluck such as potato salad, vegetable salad or platter, baked beans, hot dish, meat dish, hors d'oeuvres, chips and dip, fruit tray, variety of desserts, or your favorite picnic food.



Please bring **your own beverage**, alcohol is permissible in this park; park rules prohibit glass containers. Paper plates, utensils, napkins, and cups will be provided.

The program following our potluck will be a big "welcome back" to our Ghanian Ambassadors-- Coordinators Larry Neuman and Maureen Kind; Dorothy Baldwin, David Blado, Ariel Ford, Margaret Harrigan, Audrey Liimatainen, Magdi Sebestyen, and Diane Mertens.

Those who are present will briefly tell about their hosts, share a memorable experience, and possibly show a souvenir.

Information about Marshall Park:

There are eight electrical outlets. Restrooms are in a separate building located just down the hill from the shelter. A fountain and spigot are located here. Since we are on Lake Mendota, it may be breezy so that a sweater or jacket would make you comfortable.

Easy directions to the Park:

From University Avenue at Imperial Garden, turn north onto Allen Boulevard. At the bottom of the hill, turn right into the right-side parking lot, and walk up the incline past the playground to the shelter. If needed, drive up the small driveway to the shelter for drop-off and then return your car to the parking lot.

Reservations due by Wednesday, September 4, so that serving supplies, tables and supplemental food can be prepared.

Please indicate your potluck contribution and your meat choice

when you make your reservation:

Gail Holmes
(608) 249-1846
glholmes@wisc.edu

Please wear your name tag!



**PROGRAM OPTIONS FOR
MILWAUKEE
CONFERENCE ATTENDEES**

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FFI North American Conference  
Milwaukee, WI, October 7-10, 2024

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**SIGN UP FOR WORKSHOPS**

On **Tuesday, October 8**, FFI is running a series of member workshops on the following topics. Attendees may choose four from the list:

- ~ **Be a Better Global Citizen**
- ~ **Social Media - Get into the Game**
- ~ **Q&A with the FFI Board of Directors**
- ~ **Diversity Locally: The Globe at your Doorstep**
- ~ **Climate Change:**
  - Why It Matters to Friendship Force**
- ~ **Trending to the Future:**
  - Six Things to Know about FFI's Evolution**

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**FREE TIME TO EXPLORE!**

Optional Activities for Your  
\*Free\* Afternoon on **Wed, Oct 9th**:

- ~ **Milwaukee Art Museum**
- ~ **Hike along the Lakefront**
- ~ **City Tour on an Electric Buggy**
- ~ **Walking Tour - Explore the Riverwalk**
- ~ **Giving Back: Volunteer at Hope Closet + Pantry**
- ~ **Walking Tour - The German Heritage of Milw**
- ~ **Discover the History of the Menomonee Valley on e-Scooters!**

Link to Conference info & registration:

[\*\*Milwaukee, here we come!\*\*](#)



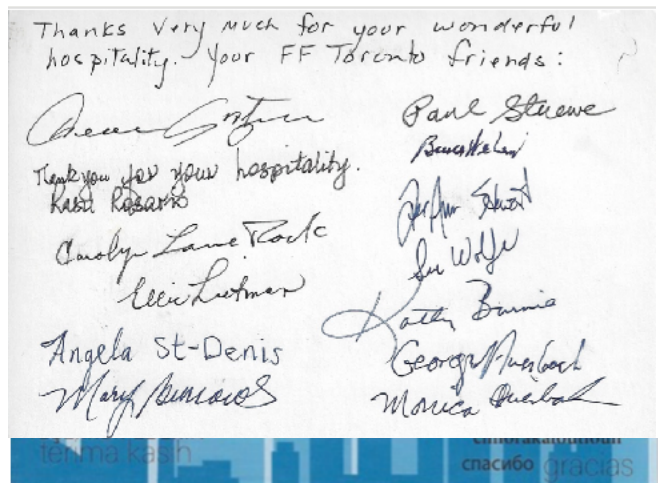
**2024 JOURNEYS**

**Recent Inbound: Toronto — June 6-13, 2024**

At their farewell dinner on June 12, the Ambassadors from Toronto presented us with a card and five crisp \$20 bills for us to donate as we wish!

A copy of the card is attached.

—Doug



**2024 JOURNEYS****Recent Inbound: Toronto (cont)*****Many Thanks!***

Our Madison Friendship Force Board extends a special message of gratitude to the Committee members that planned the recent Toronto Inbound Journey!

A lot of “behind-the-scenes” effort goes into planning our journeys, so we’d like to especially acknowledge those who played a key part in planning this successful journey:

***Journey Co-Coordinator:*** Donna Hussin and Carla Di Iorio.

***Committee Members:*** Vicki and Ken Warren, Donna and Tom Miller, Pat Watson, Vivian Norton, Lise Skofronik and Stephanie Sorensen, treasurer.

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Without our hosts, Journeys would be much like a standard tour package. Friendship Force is unique – our hosts provide the personal contact and sharing of their everyday lives that builds meaningful friendships. Many thanks to all our Toronto hosts!

***Home Hosts:*** Dorothy and John Baldwin, Jan Barbone, Maureen Kind, Donna and Tom Miller, Donna Hussin, Lise Skofronik, Kathy Speck and Gabor Kemeny, Donna Ulteig and Hal Wissink, Pat Watson, Sandi and George Wysock.

***Dinner Hosts:*** Vicki and Ken Warren, Patrick Fleming and Margaret Amundson, Vivian Norton, Diane Mertens and Larry Neuman, Doug and Kathy Johnson, Carla and Mike Di Iorio.

***Day Hosts:*** Kristen Matthews, Doug Johnson, Carla and Mike Di Iorio, Vivian Norton.

**2024 JOURNEYS****Recent Inbound: Toronto (cont)**

We heard many positive comments from ambassadors (and our own members) about everyone enjoying one another and the variety of activities. Quite a few ambassadors mentioned that they were very impressed, and even a bit surprised by all that the Madison area has to offer. These Journeys are a community effort, and your enthusiasm and support beautifully reflects our Friendship Force mission! Thank you all!



*From our Co-Journey Managers:*

***Help Wanted for Future Journeys!***

Our Club recently hosted a very successful inbound journey from Toronto. Currently, nine of our members are busy with their journey to Ghana in August. Next year, we have been assigned outbound journeys to Brazil (date unknown), Birmingham, AL (October 2025), and a domestic inbound from Olympia, Washington.

To be successful, all journeys need a Coordinator, a Co-Coördinator, and a Treasurer. As newly appointed Journey Managers, we are recruiting to fill these positions for 2025 and 2026 (destinations unknown for 2026).

To that end, we invite any club members interested in serving in one or more of these roles in the next couple of years to contact us. We will set up a Zoom meeting in August to review the expectations for each of these positions and answer any questions you might have.

Please contact either Kathy Speck Kemeny at [kspeckemeny@gmail.com](mailto:kspeckemeny@gmail.com), or Tom Miller at [tmillerphoto@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tmillerphoto@sbcglobal.net).



ACTIVITIES*Adopt-A-Highway*

We had a successful Adopt-a-Highway Clean-Up Sunday evening, July 7. The weather was mild and the garbage was light! The grass hadn't been mowed in a while so it was tall, although that made for beautiful wildflowers.

—Stephanie Vanden Bush  
Activity Leader



**L-R:** Evelyn Vanden Bush, Marjie Marion, Kathleen Martinson, Gabor Kemeny, and Pete Martinson. Not pictured are Stephanie, Dean and Hazel Vanden Bush.

—photo courtesy of S&D Vanden Bush

***Come “hit the road” with us this fall!***

Please join us for our next highway cleanup event. Our community appreciates your effort to make our roadsides look clean and beautiful!

**Friday, Sept 13 at 10am**

Please meet at the Middleton Park and Ride off Hwy 12, exit 249. Contact Stephanie Vanden Bush at [sljacobs2@gmail.com](mailto:sljacobs2@gmail.com) or (920) 676-1441 with questions and/or your RSVP.

ACTIVITIES*Bike/Run/Walk Fundraiser — July 20, 2024***UPDATE:**

Recently, our Club fielded a 6-rider team to participate in *Move 'n' Groove*, the annual fundraiser for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Dane County.

Our fearless Team Leader Larry Neuman put together what must be the most \*well-travelled\* group of cyclists in the event; and, as of press time, our team has raised...

**\$500!!!**

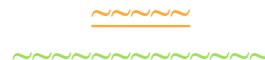
*And the very best part?*

*It's not too late to sponsor Our Team!*

**To Support Our Team**

(or even just to see who was on the team!),  
click on this link:

<https://move4bgc.rallybound.org/Team/View/192223/Friendship-Force-WISC-MSN>



ACTIVITIESBook Club

The Book Club took a break in June and we have now planned our second “annual” in-person meeting (since 2020 when we switched format from in-person to zoom). The meeting was set for Tuesday, **August 6**, at 10:30 am to discuss *Cutting for Stone* (2009) by Abraham Verghese.

Our meeting is taking place at the home of Kathy Speck. As always, everyone is welcome, whether you have finished reading the book or not.

This story offers much to discuss - family and relationships, medicine, migration, Ethiopia and Eritrea, Indian diaspora, revolution. In short, it is a fascinating fiction in a historical setting.



There is no “third-Monday” meeting in August – enjoy another holiday! Upcoming books will be announced after the August 6 meeting and in the next newsletter.

We have our eyes on *Forty Autumns*, a memoir by Nina Willner – a family’s story of courage and survival on both sides of the Berlin Wall – and *This is Happiness* by Dublin author Niall Williams – a novel centered on a small community in Ireland, and recently read by the FFI book club. However, the final decision for what to read for September and beyond will be made at our August 6 meeting.

We look forward to seeing you at our upcoming meetings!

Marjie Marion [midsi@aol.com](mailto:midsi@aol.com)  
Marian Ehrenberg [marianeh2014@gmail.com](mailto:marianeh2014@gmail.com)



**NOTE:** The date for the next meeting will be **Monday Sept 16 at 7:00 pm**, by zoom.

ACTIVITIESDining on the 6th

There was no Dining on the 6th in June due to the arrival of the Toronto ambassadors and my arranging for their home-hosted dinners that evening.

We had also planned to skip July since the holiday weekend includes the 6th. However, I came upon Holisac’s *Taste of Africa* restaurant in Sun Prairie, owned by a couple from Ghana, that opened in May.

To accommodate our ambassadors who are traveling on a journey to two clubs in Ghana in August, I arranged for a Special Edition of Dining on the 6th on Monday, **July 15**, for a dinner of Ghanaian food for all club members.

A review of that special dinner will be in the Sept/Oct Newsletter.

Gail Holmes  
Activity Leader

Outreach: Recent Int’l Festival

The Overture Center for the Arts International Festival was held **June 29 and 30**. I’m pleased to report that it was a great success! Many Friendship Force members volunteered for at least a two-hour shift.

About 50 festival attendees signed up for more information! They have all been contacted via email with an attachment including the May/June Newsletter and a New Membership Form.

Jan Barbone  
Outreach Committee

ACTIVITIESOutreach: Current Activities**Aug 9: Culinary Passport Series - Palestine**

The Catholic Multicultural Society (5256 Verona Rd) is sponsoring a unique opportunity to immerse yourself in the culture and flavors of Palestine. This event celebrates the vibrant traditions and flavors of Palestine while also acknowledging its complex and fraught history.

Participants will dine on a delicious Palestinian meal from *3DE Mediterranean Cuisine* and enjoy a lively panel discussion on the culture and history of Palestine using food as their guide. Local Palestinian residents will provide invaluable insights into the cultural significance of food and their personal experiences.

You can donate and/or check on the availability of tickets at:

<https://givebutter.com/CPSPal>

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**Aug 8-11: The 2024 Sessions at McPike Park**

This is an International Music Festival that takes place outdoors on the Near East side.

We are staffing a booth there in order to raise awareness of our club's presence in the Madison community, and of Friendship Force in general.

**We may still need volunteers!**

Please contact Jan Barbone to sign up.

You can reach her at 608) 219-7479 or  
[madcapjan@yahoo.com](mailto:madcapjan@yahoo.com)

<https://sessionsatmcpike.org/2024-schedule>

ACTIVITIESSecond Harvest Foodbank

Aahhhhh! The lazy, hazy days of summer! Picnics in the park! Relaxing at the beach!

But what if your summer is filled with worry and stress because you're not quite sure how you'll pay for the food for that picnic in the park? And you definitely don't have time to relax at the beach?

We are fortunate to have the **Second Harvest Food Bank** to supply a variety of meats, fruits, vegetables, and nonperishable foods to the many food pantries in Dane County and surrounding areas. They help those people living with food insecurities. However, Second Harvest relies on volunteers to pack the thousands of boxes of food that are distributed each week.

*This is where Friendship Force can help!*

You can **volunteer** the **last Wednesday** of each month from **12:30-3:30pm**. Join other FF members. Together you'll pack boxes of a variety of foods. No worries if you're concerned about the weight of those boxes. There are always other volunteers happy and willing to help out. It's a welcoming place of camaraderie and friendship!

Won't you join us? It's a great opportunity to get to know fellow FF members and help those in need at the same time.

To volunteer, please contact Judy Thorpe ([jthorpe12@charter.net](mailto:jthorpe12@charter.net) or 608-772-5438) by **July 29** or **Aug 26**. Thank you for your help!

*July - August times are:*

|                     |                     |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Wed, July 31</b> | <b>12:30-3:30pm</b> |
| <b>Wed, Aug 28</b>  | <b>12:30-3:30pm</b> |

**Second Harvest**  
2802 Dairy Drive  
Madison WI 53718



**IN MEMORIAM**

**Betty Fuller**  
**1936 - 2024**



**Jerry Fuller**  
**1935 - 2023**

Betty and Jerry Fuller were members from 1982 through 2023. Betty passed June 16, 2024; and Jerry passed on January 4th, 2023.

Betty and Jerry supported our Club in many different ways, including helping develop the manuals we still use today.

They also participated in many Journeys. Betty was Jerry's right hand in all the groups he led, so even when Jerry officially led the Journey, you could be sure Betty was assisting every step of the way!

They were Journey leaders for the following:

- 1998 - Zeeland, Netherlands
- 1999 - Cuba: Havana & Santa Clara
- 2000 - Inbound: Zeeland, Netherlands
- 2005 - Milwaukee Art Museum
- 2006 - Seoul, Korea
- 2011 - Urla of Greater Izmir, Turkey

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Full-length obituaries may be found at:

<https://www.ryanfuneralservice.com/obituaries/betty-fuller/>

<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/madison/name/gerald-fuller-obituary?id=38620616>

—Editor's note: Since the Newsletter was on hiatus in early 2023, Jerry's death notice is just now appearing.

**IN MEMORIAM**

**Ivan Gruetzmacher**



Long-time member Ivan Gruetzmacher passed on July 11, 2024, in New London, WI. He and his wife Jan were members from 1994 - 2019. They traveled to many places with the Friendship Force, not only with our club, but with many other Friendship Force clubs in the United States.

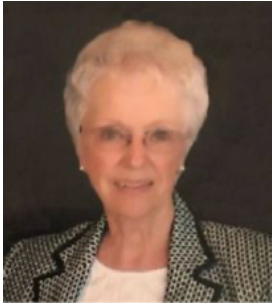
Ivan and Jan managed a seed company and a farm in New London, and traveled during the off-season, visiting over 80 countries during their 57 years of marriage!

Besides hosting and participating in our local activities, they also had the opportunity to host several foreign exchange students.

A full obituary may be found at:

<https://www.clinehansonfuneralhome.com/obituary/ivan-gruetzmacher>



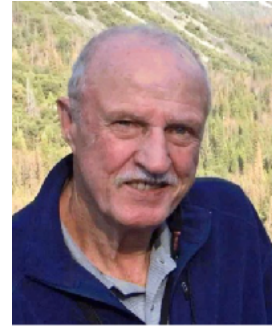
**IN MEMORIAM***Jane Kessenich*

Jane passed away on June 8th, 2024. Her last international travel with us was to Turkey, and prior to that she traveled to Azerbaijan.

Jane loved to hold dinners for international guests and frequently hosted elegant dinners for our Journeys and Open World programs, and for the International Institute of Wisconsin. She also served on the FFWIS-M board.

More information on her travels are included in her full obituary:

<https://www.ryanfuneralservice.com/obituaries/jane-piper-kessenich/>

**IN MEMORIAM***Marv Sherrill*

Marv Sherrill passed away May 13, 2024. He and his wife Rosanne were members from 1999 - 2014.

Both Marv and Rosanne were very active in Journeys and home hosting. Marv led a Journey in 2003 to British Columbia, and they both led a trip to the Chicago Field Museum to visit the Machu Picchu Exhibit in 2004.

Following is a link to his obituary:

<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/madison/name/marvin-sherrill-obituary?id=55303132>



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**Second Harvest Foodbank**

Judy Thorpe [jthorpe12@charter.net](mailto:jthorpe12@charter.net)

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