



friendship force
WISCONSIN - MADISON

ffwis.org

August 2025

A NOTE FROM THE CO-RESIDENTS

In a recent memo to all members, **Jeremi Snook**, President & CEO of Friendship Force International, expressed his “gratitude for the incredibly positive impact that FFI has made on the world” by connecting “hearts, minds, and cultures across the globe.” He also discussed the importance of FFI’s future and said: “**FFI must evolve from being primarily a socially conscious travel organization to a movement that inspires global connections, learning, and peace-building.**” At its February meeting, the FFI board, “formalized our path forward with a clear vision: *A worldwide movement of inspired people building bridges for a more friendly world.*”

FFI’s “mission remains unchanged – promoting world peace and understanding by creating friendships across the barriers that separate people. This transformation is built on three foundational pillars: (1) **Strengthening intercultural connection and friendship** through journeys, events, and meaningful exchanges that include day hosting, meal sharing, and themed experiences. (2) **Education and training on becoming better global citizens** through courses, conferences, and learning opportunities that empower us all to be bridge-builders. (3) **Inspiring community and organizational partnerships** that amplify our impact through collaborations with universities, cultural organizations, and corporate sponsors.”

FFW-M has been taking concrete steps to build these foundational pillars with its ad hoc committees on marketing and outreach; on developing mission-focused travel to help us become better global citizens; and on attracting diverse membership. The marketing committee created a new brochure and an “elevator speech” for distribution.. In February our club held a workshop for all members on mission-focused travel, and the Journeys to Brazil and Birmingham prioritized the goal of becoming better global citizens. The diversity committee met recently to discuss ways to diversify our membership and collaborate with like-minded organizations, and to suggest activities for our annual family-friendly picnic.

At the July FF Midwest Regional meeting, club representatives from our region discussed activities that their clubs have initiated to meet FFI goals. In one club, FF members offer a small group of people (3 to 6) from another culture who live in their area to an informal, “get



to know one another,” home-hosted meal. Another club sets up informal “getting to know you” activities (e.g., panel discussions, visits to festivals and other cultural events) with people in the community of diverse religious and cultural backgrounds (e.g., Buddhist, Hindi, and Muslim; refugees; families of international students/scholars). And another club holds a quarterly speaker program that focuses on an FFI goal. It is held at a public venue, and community members are invited to attend. If you are interested in adding any of these activities to our club’s repertoire, or have other ideas to share, please let us know.

Our family-friendly picnic on August 20th at McKee Farms Park is a perfect way to celebrate “**intercultural connections and friendship.**” A presentation on the highlights of the recent Brazilian journey will be given by the ambassadors. Please feel free to invite family members, neighbors, and friends to join in the fun.

We look forward to renewing friendships and celebrating with you on August 20th.

Diane and Larry



**Experience different views.
Discover common ground.**



Club Activities Calendar

BOARD meets VIRTUALLY the second Thursday of the month at 4:00 PM

| | |
|---------------|---|
| August 6 | Dining on the 6 th , Canceled |
| August 17 | Reservation Deadline -Annual Club Potluck Picnic |
| August 18 | Book Club, Canceled |
| August 20 | Annual Club Potluck Picnic 5:00-7:00 PM |
| August 27 | Second Harvest 12:30-3:30 PM |
| September 13 | Book Club |
| October 19-24 | Birmingham, AL Outbound Journey |
| 2026 | |
| April/May | Sacramento, CA Outbound Journey |
| April 24-27 | North American Regional Conference, Memphis, TN |
| July | Wairarapa, NZ Inbound Journey |
| August | Seferehisar, Türkiye Outbound Journey |
| September | Lower Columbia, Inbound Journey |



Remember to check Wisconsin-Madison website (ffiwis.org) for any additions, updates or corrections to event schedules during the month, and keep an eye out for email updates as well. We don't want you to miss anything!



Family Friendly Summer Potluck Picnic

Wednesday, August 20, 2025

**McKee Farms Park Shelter
2930 Chapel Valley Road
Fitchburg**

**5:00 PM Social Time
5:30 PM Picnic Potluck Buffet**

**Program by
Brazil Ambassadors**

RESERVATIONS DEADLINE, SUNDAY, AUGUST 17

Meat for our meal prepared by John and Dorothy Baldwin is shredded chicken and pulled port sandwiches.

Please provide a dish to share for the potluck such as potato salad, pasta 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.

Strawberry lemonade drink and cans of flavored water will be provided or you may bring your own beverage. No glass containers are allowed in the park.

Paper plates, utensils, napkins, and cups will be provided.

Email Gail Holmes, glholmes@wisc.edu, or phone 608-249-1846. Please indicate your potluck contribution and your meat choice of chicken or pork when making the reservation.

**The Picnic Committee
Dorothy Baldwin, Gail Holmes, Maureen Kind, Diane Mertens and Donna Ulteig**



Sacramento, CA Outbound Journey
April or May 2026

Ambassadors Wanted for Sacramento Journey

The Friendship Force Sacramento Outbound Journey is tentatively scheduled for April or May 2026. In our initial discussion with their Journey Coordinators, Rick and Elaine Armstrong, they told us about some of the many things they'd like to have us experience in their community in addition to the homestays. Visit the State Capitol of California, see historic Old Town Sacramento, learn about the former gold mining sites, see giant sequoias, tour the UC Davis campus, and enjoy the pleasant spring weather. In addition, there are several museums in the area including a railroad and car museum. Pre or post trips could include nearby San Francisco, Lake Tahoe, Reno, Carson City, or Yosemite National Park.

The Sacramento Club is very active with over 100 members.

Please indicate your non-binding interest in this journey by contacting the Co-Journey Managers by August 20. We are attending the annual club picnic and will answer your questions to the best of our abilities.

Inbound Journey Coordinators Needed

We are seeking Journey Coordinators for the inbound journey from Wairarapa New Zealand. This journey is tentatively scheduled for mid-July 2026. Currently, we expect 8-15 Ambassadors will enjoy our hospitality. Coordinator duties include forming a committee to assist in the planning and execution of the journey. The Journey Managers provide training and support where needed.

Journey Coordinators are also needed for the inbound journey from Lower Columbia Washington. In our initial call, the president of the club indicated 8-10 Ambassadors are expected to make the journey to our club that is tentatively scheduled for September 2026.

To volunteer please call or email Kathey (608-557-4885), kspeckemeny@gmail.com or Tom (608-334-3327), tfmillerphoto@sbcglobal.net to volunteer. They can answer questions and provide support for the journeys.

Dining on the 6th ALERT!

Dining on the 6th will not be held in August as we are having our annual summer potluck picnic. Watch for the September Dining on the 6th announcement.



Volunteers are needed.

*2802 Dairy Drive, Madison,
Wednesday, August 27, 2025*

Friendship Force is one of many volunteer organizations that help in the preparation and distribution of the donated food. We have committed five volunteers every last Monday of every month from 12:30-3:30 PM to help in this effort. We started with 10 and now we are down to barely making five each month. Let's have a robust response in August

We are also looking for someone to be the contact for taking the names of the people who sign up to volunteer each month, Until we have someone volunteer, please call the Activities Chair, Gail Holmes, 608-249-1846 or email glholmes@wis.edu by Monday, August 25.

ACTIVITIES

Book Club

July and August On Hiatus

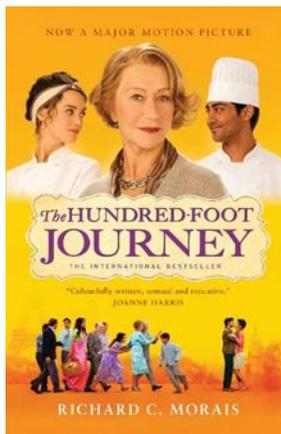
The Book Club is on hiatus for the months of July and August, and there is nothing new to report currently. Many of our members belong to several book clubs, and I am sure



everyone is finding plenty to read and lots to learn as we each travel in our various circles and locales. During this break so far I enjoyed reading The Wisdom of Sheep by Rosamund Young, taking me to an organic farm in the Cotswolds in England with Young's lyrical observations. Now I am spending time with an English gentleman residing in the hill country of India, through the imagination of Carys Davies in her novel The Mission House. Enjoy summer travels, in person or through reading!

Upcoming meetings:

Saturday, September 13, 3:00 – IN PERSON at the home of Maureen Kind, 5901 Mayhill Dr, Madiso



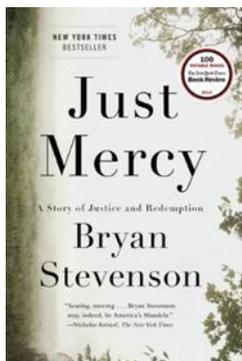
The Hundred-Foot Journey - Richard C. Morais (2008), 245 pp. 10 copies currently available through the library system.

If you can't read the book, then try to see the 2014 movie - or do both! Book and DVD are both available from the library.

"A New York Times Bestseller; now a major motion picture starring Helen Mirren and Om Puri. Born above his grandfather's modest restaurant in Mumbai,

Hassan Haji first experienced life through intoxicating whiffs of spicy fish curry, trips to the local markets, and gourmet outings with his mother. Then tragedy pushes the family out of India, they eat their way around the world before settling in a small village in the French Alps. There they open an inexpensive Indian restaurant opposite the esteemed French *relais* of chef Madame Mallory."

Saturday, October 4 - time, location TBD



Coemporary insight into our justice system, from a brilliant lawyer who works to make it a better one.

Just Mercy: a story of justice and redemption, Bryan Stevenson (2014), 336 pp. 53 of 60 copies are available.

"Bryan Stevenson was a young lawyer when he founded the Equal Justice Initiative, a legal practice dedicated to defending those most desperate and in

need: the poor, the wrongly condemned, and women and children trapped in the farthest reaches of our criminal justice system. One of his first cases was that of Walter McMillian, a young man who was sentenced to die for a notorious murder

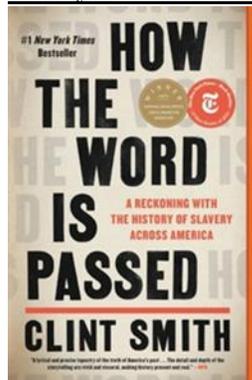
ACTIVITIES cont.

he insisted he didn't commit. The case drew Bryan into a tangle of conspiracy, political machination, and legal brinkmanship and transformed his understanding of mercy and justice forever.

Just Mercy is at once an unforgettable account of an idealistic, gifted young lawyer's coming of age, a moving window into the lives of those he has defended, and an inspiring argument for compassion in the pursuit of true justice."

Additionally, and especially for those who did not happen to read this with the club in September 2023, we add it for October. Each chapter stands alone, as the author visits important sites in a human rights assessment of some historical monuments. This was the UW Big Read for 2022-23.

How the Word is Passed: a reckoning with the history of slavery across America - Clint Smith (2021), 336 pp. 74 of 82 copies available.



"Clintt Smith's revealing, contemporary portrait of America as a slave owning nation. Beginning in his own hometown of New Orleans, Smith leads the reader through an unforgettable tour of monuments and landmarks - those that are honest about the past and those that are not - that offer an intergenerational story of how slavery has been central in shaping our nation's collective

history, and ourselves."

There is much to be gleaned from each of these books – read one or both for the October meeting, and especially interesting as our ambassadors journey to Birmingham later in October.

And please watch for changes to the calendar that could occur as we approach September. We would love to hold some more in-person meetings. Let us know if you would like to host. Meeting date and time can be adjusted to the host's preference.

Marjie Marion (midsi@aol.com) and Marian Ehrenberg (marianeh2014@gmail.com)

"Reading is a means of thinking with another person's mind; it forces you to stretch your own." Lionel Trilling



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Second Harvest Foodbank

Vacant

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