

Friendship Force of Sarasota Guidelines for all Journey Roles

Friendship Force Sarasota has a long tradition of successful, interesting and innovative journeys and we are a sought-after destination (especially when it's cold elsewhere). We rely on our club members to volunteer. We've had amazing participation. There are mentors available for every position, just ask. Feel free to share new ideas, be innovative. We want each journey to be as much fun for our club as it is for the ambassadors. Being a coordinator is a great responsibility as you are the face of our club. There are many roles for new members, and we can have co-coordinators as well. All coordinators are expected to be able to open Microsoft Word, Excel and PDF files and to use email. (If a copy of Microsoft Office is needed, contact Terri Holsinger and a very inexpensive copy can be acquired for download to your Mac or PC.)

A meeting of all involved in the journey will take place a few weeks before the arrival/departure date to review the program details, handout materials and answer questions.

Please submit any updates to this document to the Club Journey Coordinator (currently Judi Stratton) or send to ffsrq@outlook.com.

Club Journey Coordinator (JC)

The Journeys Coordinator (JC) is a voting board member, appointed by the club president and:

1. is the contact person between FFI, our club and the ambassador or host club before a coordinator is appointed
2. locates and assigns coordinator to journeys
3. organizes coordinator training sessions
4. appoints mentors to new coordinators as needed
5. assists the coordinator in appointing journey committee members and attend planning meetings as needed
6. maintains a record of mutual or reciprocal journey plans for future years and maintain contact with those clubs
7. conducts an annual survey of all club members regarding outbound journey destination preferences and assists the board in selecting/prioritizing outbound requests
8. assists the board in decisions about policy changes for journeys

Outbound Ambassador Coordinator (AC)

The AC will receive dates for our assigned outbound and start communicating with the host club. The AC will have a sign-up sheet available through newsletter, email and at meetings for interested members to sign up to be ambassadors. It is AC responsibility to receive ambassador applications, review and contact references. There is also a treasurer for each journey. The AC and treasurer will attempt to forecast what the expenses are and share with the accepted ambassadors. The AC or assignee may also work to create a side trip in conjunction with the one-week home stay.

1. Review the FFI guidelines for outbound journey [2024-25 Policies and Guidelines for Journeys](#).
2. Journey documents are on the member portal-search in help center at https://my.friendshipforce.org/en/users/sign_in.
3. [The 2024 FFI Handbook is at this link](#).

Currently, if the journey has all ambassador slots filled, the FFI fee for the AC is forgiven (\$25/day). Depending on the budget agreed on, the cost of AC cell phone and parking may be paid out of FF SRQ general fund from the \$25 required club fee.

Inbound Host Coordinator (HC)

The HC will receive the dates of inbound journeys from the Club Journey Coordinator (JC). The HC is then responsible for building a journey committee. This committee consists of coordinators for each element of the inbound journey including home host, day host, dinner host, photographer, program book, treasurer, activities, welcome/farewell events and gift bag coordinators. The HC will communicate regularly with the committee and share the relevant documents (ambassador host matching document) they receive from the inbound FF club. The HC is responsible for communicating the cost of the journey to the visiting club and sharing a tentative agenda. The HC relies on each committee member to follow through on their responsibilities with as little micromanaging as possible. Each coordinator may have committee volunteers to help spread the responsibility, especially for the activities.

The treasurer and HC will work closely to ensure we are tracking participants and dollars from every participant (including ambassadors) for every activity. The HC's participation fees for welcome/farewell dinner and activities is covered by the journey budget. The Board of Directors at the May 23, 2018 meeting approved an inbound club fee increase to \$250 to cover the HC welcome/farewell meals and activity costs. We budgeted \$225 per ambassador for Perth inbound as meals and venues increased in price. If there are additional activities that inbound club requests such as kayaking or going to a play for instance, these costs would be in addition to the club fee. The HC is responsible for all communication between the two clubs, attends board meetings in the months prior to inbound to give status reports and submits status to newsletter editor each month. At the end of the journey, the HC submits a summary report to the board on expenses and overall journey experience.

Communication with FFI Regional Support Manager (It's a Match!)

1. Ambassador Coordinator (AC) name is sent to FFI by our club Journey Coordinator and FFI will send an email with FFI regional support manager's (RSM) name and contact info; for example, Allison Lindsey, RSM, Journey #13223.
2. The RSM can help with issues such as transferring funds or how ambassadors pay fees to SRQ club through the FFI web site. This is especially helpful when ambassadors are not from the US.

Communication with inbound AC

1. Sarasota HC will email the inbound AC as soon as possible to introduce themselves and welcome them to Sarasota. Share something about our club and area, could include web sites.
2. Explain our policy on Florida tourist attractions such as Busch Gardens and Disney World. These are pre- or post-trip options but are not part of our local club itinerary. We do not arrange for transportation but can point them to appropriate shuttle service so the inbound club can make arrangements.

Communication with area clubs

- If the inbound club is being hosted by other clubs before or after their Sarasota journey, do communicate with those clubs, especially if it is one of the Florida clubs. This is to help avoid duplication of activities and to discuss how the ambassadors will get from point A to point B.

HC responsibilities

1. These are guidelines. The jobs can be delegated. There is always room for new ideas.
2. Meet with the committee chairs several times to ensure continuity, sharing basic ideas be each other's support system. Plan and discuss your expectations and budget with your team of chairs. Confirm that emails are being sent by the chairs to their team members and various hosts to keep them informed. Ask to be cc'd on the email if you like but don't micromanage.
3. HC must know the budget and communicate frequently with the treasurer. Venue costs are increasing in price and discussion must happen early and often with the treasurer and board. Once the club fee is advertised it cannot be changed without board approval. If there is an activity the ambassadors would like to do, such as renting kayaks, outside the regular agenda, that would be an additional fee. HC & AC jointly agree upon in early planning discussions.
4. Keep the board informed. The AC & HC will **attend monthly board meetings** until the journey is completed to report on how things are going and what help you need including recruiting volunteers or requesting help on funding or other ideas.
5. Update the newsletter editor with news of the journey and what roles are still needed. Include the sign-up sheet for dinners and activities in the newsletter.
6. Organize a meeting about a week before the journey for all volunteers: home, day and dinner hosts and committee members or anyone else supporting the journey. This is especially important for first timers as they are very insecure and usually have many questions.
7. Any prior HC/AC will be happy to discuss their experiences. A mentor will be assigned to you if you are a first-time AC/HC by the Club Journey Coordinator (currently Judi Stratton)
8. Write up and email a final evaluation, accompanied by the financial report to the board. Include what went well or didn't with recommendations of how to improve. Summarize your experiences. We are always looking for new venues and ways to make our guests feel more welcome and enjoy their time in the Sarasota area.

Inbound journey committees - This is a team project. Post sign-up sheets at the meetings and in the newsletter requesting volunteers for these positions. If you don't get the volunteers, you may need to make phone calls and engage the board or your mentor. You will need the following committees:

Home Host Coordinator

The Home Host Coordinator receives a matching form from the Host Coordinator filled out by the inbound club Ambassador Coordinator that includes all details about each ambassador including contact info, allergies, smoking, pets, interests, activity levels and more. The HC should have sign-up sheets plus articles in the newsletter asking for volunteers for the various committees. The Home Host coordinator will review the home host volunteers plus the matching form information received and begin matching ambassadors and hosts.

Here are some helpful suggestions:

1. Pay particular attention to age and activity level so that both hosts and ambassadors can enjoy comparable activities.
2. Thoroughly review the list of ambassadors. Check interests, hobbies, occupations, age and gender to match with a host.
3. Pay special attention to ambassadors who smoke, have pet issues or allergies, special food needs or disabilities. It is important that prospective hosts are aware of any special requirements and are able to accommodate them.

4. Check the number of bedrooms and type of bed in each host home. Both will influence the matching process. Look over the paperwork to see if certain ambassadors want to be hosted in the same household. We do not put 2 singles in the same bed; each would need a twin or larger bed, ideally in separate rooms but same room if that's what is available. The ambassador should be aware early if same room is used for 2 people.
5. Find out early which home hosts require a day host because of work or other commitments so an adequate number can be recruited.
6. It is a good idea to have hosts in reserve in case of an emergency.
7. Provide each host (both home and day) the name, address, phone and email address of their ambassador as early as possible to allow for an email of welcome and a chance for both guest and host to develop an acquaintance. Pass this information on to program book editor.
8. Day hosts should make arrangements regarding the ambassadors directly with the home hosts.
9. Explain to hosts that the ambassadors should invite them out or cook for them one evening meal during the week. Confirm this tradition with the Ambassador Coordinator.
10. Advise the hosts to discreetly bring problems which may arise, to your attention. Early identification of a problem can result in early resolution.

Journey Treasurer

Both inbound and outbound treasurers are responsible for creating a budget for the journey and receiving funds from ambassadors/members and paying bills and depositing funds on a timely basis. We have templates for the budgets and mentors who are ready to help.

The club treasurer will set up a bank meeting for journey treasurers to sign bank documents. The treasurer reports to the HC and AC with regular updated treasurer reports. The treasurer must be alert to funds vs budget. The treasurer will receive a debit card and check book to enable deposits and pay invoices and deposits.

Dinner Host Coordinator

Many years ago, we started planning one evening during the inbound Journey where ambassadors and their home hosts, were invited to another member's home. It has been an enjoyable evening. Dinners give the home host chef the evening off, and it also offers another opportunity for the ambassadors and hosts to meet other members of the group and a chance to socialize. The usual group consists of **6-8**. Besides ambassadors and home hosts, day hosts or other volunteers may also be invited. It's a wonderful way to meet club members.

The **dinner party coordinator** requests volunteers through sign-up sheets, email and newsletter and then matches dinner host volunteers to home hosts, taking into consideration several elements. These factors include language, gender, location and how many seats are available at the dinner host home. It's good to include a combination of men and women with no man by himself. If our ambassadors are non-English speakers, its relevant to include an interpreter. Language is becoming less of an issue as more ambassadors speak multiple languages. The date of the dinner is selected by the Journey Committee.

The **dinner party coordinator** is **responsible for emailing the dinner hosts with a complete list of the home hosts and their ambassadors with contact information.** The list is also needed by the journey program book

editor. Hosts are welcome to contact the Host Coordinator (HC) or Dinner Party Coordinator at any time for clarification and support.

Expectations of dinner party hosts:

1. When you sign-up to be dinner host, include the **number of seats** at your table (include yourself)
2. Please do not change the dinner date. The dinner party date is known at least a month or more in advance. Alert the coordinator ASAP if you have a conflict.
3. Once notified of matches, immediately **email or call** your **home host** to let them know you are their dinner host. Ask the home host to check with their guests for any food avoidance or **allergy issues** so you can plan your meal accordingly. Include the **time** you expect your guests and **directions** plus codes needed to access your community if needed. Check for food allergies or dietary restrictions.
4. The dinner host is responsible for the entire meal from salad to dessert.
5. If you have room for more guests than are assigned to you, feel free to invite others including day hosts or other members. This is a great thank you for volunteers.
6. The menu is up to the dinner host, festive but not extravagant.
7. The dinner host is not required to serve wine but it generally is appreciated. Non-alcoholic drinks are expected. Some home hosts like to bring wine as a gift or contribution to the dinner. Discuss alcohol with your home host.
8. Remember, the ambassadors have come to experience our culture, not to have what they have at home. Sometimes these are the same thing...but make them your way.
9. Give everyone time to socialize before and possibly find a fun game or trivia to play afterwards. There have been people with musical talents who play or sing. We've had storytelling, truth or lie games and enjoying the night sky with a marshmallow roast (as dessert). Be as creative as you like. Enjoy your guests!

Day Host Coordinator

Day Hosting is a partnership between the day and home host. There is a **day host coordinator** for every inbound Journey. Because of our amazing club members, we are lucky to generally have at least one day host for each home host. The **day host coordinator** will put out a sign-up sheet at meetings prior to journey. The coordinator will request availability schedules from day host volunteers and coordinate with home hosts. The home hosts will notify the day host coordinator if they need day hosts and for what days/times. The day host coordinator is responsible for finding day hosts if there are not enough volunteers. We send out requests for volunteers in email, but phone calls may need to be made. Day hosting is an excellent opportunity for new members to see how a journey works.

If you, as day host, have schedule conflicts with the activities, let the coordinator and home host know immediately so you can jointly work around each other's schedules. Each **day host is responsible for contacting their assigned home host** and introducing themselves. Our club is fortunate to have visiting members from other clubs who have been day hosts.

Day hosts share the responsibility of the ambassadors with the home hosts.

1. The home host could be busy on a given day or have a job to go to while the exchange is taking place. In this case they need someone to help them during the day or evening.
2. At other times, it is just nice for the ambassadors to meet another family, see the inside of another home, have more than one view of Sarasota to take home or make another new friend! We try to arrange a day host with each host family.

3. A day host is expected to know where the venues are and get directions or coordinate to get there if they are not familiar with the area.

What to expect and what is expected:

1. Call and email the home host you are matched to. You are there to be of assistance to them. When do they need you?
2. You may be needed for the entire day. This would include meals and transportation to activities if some are planned for that day. It is expected that the ambassadors will attend all planned activities.
3. You will pick up the ambassador at home host's home or a pre-arranged location. Bring ambassadors to your home if possible.
4. Sometimes you are needed for only part of a day, offer to do the whole day.
5. Perhaps you could invite the home host family and their guests for dinner one evening if there is a free evening.
6. Join the Welcome and Farewell gatherings.
7. You will need to pay for any of the activities that you attend that have a fee involved. The ambassadors' fees are already covered. Activity and welcome/farewell gathering sign-up sheets are posted at the FF SRQ meetings and in the newsletter.

Inbound Journey Photographer

The inbound journey photographer will email all home hosts, where and when the group and home host photos will be taken. These are generally taken at the welcome dinner or on the first day so there is time to edit, print and frame as gifts. Outdoor photos look the best. Interior shots tend to be dark and yellow from the lighting with too many shadows. Don't forget to RSVP for the event you plan to take photos at.

We take a group photo of the inbound ambassadors only plus a photo of each of the home hosts and their ambassadors. A 4x6 copy is printed of each photo for each ambassador and their home host. Couples get one photo and singles rooming together each get their own set. CVS does a super photo printing job in less than a day and generally for a very good per print price. All printing costs are covered by FF SRQ general funds. For 18 ambassadors, there might be 30 prints made, depending on the number of singles and couples. We present the photos to each ambassador at the farewell party.

Inbound Journey Program Book Editor

Our club presents a full-color program book in the ambassador gift bag plus a copy for every club participant for each inbound journey. This could be 40-50 books printed depending on the number of volunteers. Everyone involved in the journey, whether dinner, day or home hosts or ambassadors, gets a copy of the program book for reference throughout the journey week. The program book editor needs to have all details of the ambassadors plus photos of ambassadors and home hosts to include in the book. This book serves as a resource for all participants and a good memory of the journey. The full activity agenda is included plus the day and dinner hosts assigned to each home host.

We have a template available that is ready to copy and paste updated information. Email Terri Holsinger for the Microsoft Word template used for the program book. We currently use Community Media in Venice Beach for our printing. For a 12-page booklet, they charge us .90. It's a bargain. We email the finished book to them

and within a week they have the final product ready for pick up. FF SRQ general fund covers the cost of printing.

We would like to have the program book printed and ready to hand out to volunteers when the Host Coordinator has the final organizational meeting with all the volunteers. Everyone involved in the inbound journey should be at this meeting.

Gift Bag Coordinator

Our club presents a gift bag to each ambassador, couple or single. The bag includes our club pin, literature on the area from the Sarasota Visitors Center and the program book. There may be other items depending on the availability of interesting items. We have Trader Joe or Publix bags. We don't want to overdo literature as most ambassadors have space and weight limits. Please have gift bags ready to give to home hosts at the final organization meeting. The bags will then be at home host home when their ambassadors arrive.

Activities and Events Coordinator

This is a team effort and the more volunteers the better. Be as creative as you can be while keeping within the budget of the journey. If you know there are activities the ambassadors want to participate in, please give a heads up to the treasurer and Host Coordinator. If there are extra costs involved, these must be approved by the inbound club and the host journey committee.

This team is responsible for making agenda/itinerary, reservations, paying deposits and documenting all costs of every event. Work closely with the HC and treasurer prior to making commitments. The treasurer will share the journey budget. A member of this committee should be at each event to check-in attendees or hand out tickets and make final payments if necessary. If available, tickets may be given to home hosts. This team will include RSVP forms in the newsletter and at meetings. The treasurer will receive payments for event activities. The agenda will be shared with the program book editor to be included in the book.

Previous coordinators can mentor and share their contacts and phone numbers to venues we have previously attended. There are a couple 'must see' venues in Sarasota including The Ringling Museum of Art. Work with the HC to coordinate the calendar of events. Using prior programs books helps tremendously in working out the timing. Be sure to leave room for rest (open time), shopping, dinner parties, welcome and farewell meals. When taking ticket reservations, be sure to ask for venue members who have 'free' tickets to be used for our home and day hosts to reduce their costs.

Welcome and Farewell Party Coordinators

Volunteers come from sign-up sheets, email and newsletter requests. These activities are attended by a large majority of our club. We all enjoy good food. Think of unusual settings for the meals. Ask for club members who might have a clubhouse where we could host our welcome or farewell. Sometimes brunches/lunches are a less expensive alternative to evenings in expensive restaurants. Consider a beach picnic or a potluck at a clubhouse or beach. We hosted a Pig Roast at the beach that was very much enjoyed by the New Zealanders and our club members. We had a fun time on St Patrick's Day at Stottlemyers BBQ. We've successfully catered welcome brunches at condominium club houses. Average attendance is from 50-70 including ambassadors.

This team is responsible for communicating with the Host and Activities Coordinators to make sure there are no conflicts with the dates and times of these meals. You must make the reservations, pay the deposits (with the treasurer) and confirm that all charges including tips, drinks and taxes are included in the final total. We can't afford surprises. Make sure there are options for most dietary restrictions including vegetarian, gluten-free (GF) and dairy free.

Submit the RSVP form to the newsletter editor and have printed copies at the meetings months prior to the journey. We have templates for these forms ready for copy and paste. All payments will be to the journey treasurer.

Home Hosting Guidelines

The purpose of being a host is to help bridge international barriers through friendship. One of the ways this is accomplished is by having guests in your home for a week in an organized journey. There are 10-15 ambassadors (guests) in a group. They could be from the same club or from combined clubs. A week of activities is planned by our activity committee and journey coordinator. Being a home host and sharing your home is at the core of the friendships to be made.

General Guidelines:

- **Room and Board**
 - To provide living quarters for your guests.
 - To provide breakfast and pack lunch if required. Normally ambassadors will invite their hosts out to dinner one night and hosts can arrange potluck dinners with other hosts. There is a hosted dinner party during the journey, so evenings are filled easily.
 - Dining out is fun but we cannot expect our guests to pay for several meals out unless it has been agreed upon before going out. They are our guests.
 - Remember they have come to learn our culture and ways, what we eat and how we prepare it.
- **Activities**
 - As a host, you will provide transportation to all official activities planned by the exchange committee. It is important that we remain positive about our activities and that we have our guests at **every activity** and on time. If you are not planning to attend the activity yourself, be sure you have coordinated with the **day host assigned** to your ambassador. **Do not just drop off your guest!**
 - It is encouraged and hoped that hosts and members will join the various activities. An activities sign-up sheet is included in our newsletter. Be sure to check off and pay for each activity you are attending. It is expected that Hosts will attend the Welcome and Farewell activities.
 - All ambassadors have paid an upfront fee to our club prior to arriving which includes tickets, entrance fees and welcome/farewell meals.
 - Sometimes there are days that are scheduled as '**free**' days. These are times to introduce your guests to activities you enjoy, meeting some of your family or friends and exploring what your guest might have in mind: beaches, shopping, quiet time. This is a good topic for your welcome email. Some hosts create **optional** activities, such as a meal, a beach walk or shopping trip; you can discuss with your guest. These are not required but can be fun to meet other hosts and their ambassadors.
 - We do not provide time or transportation to the large tourist attractions including Disney and Busch Gardens. The AC will suggest to the visiting AC that arrangements be made pre- or post-exchange.
 - It is customary that your guests will bring you some gifts from their country to express their appreciation and to share some of their own culture and homeland.

- In return, we suggest a gift for them that represents the uniqueness of Florida. This does not need to be expensive but rather a reminder of their visit here-tea towel, club coasters, cutting board with club logo.
- **Language**
 - If the guests speak English, there will be no problems.
 - If the guests speak some English, you will also find few problems.
 - If they do not speak English, there is a greater challenge, but it all works out. We have been able to find translators, use Google Translate and dictionaries and become very good at hand signals. Try to learn a few words in their language.
- **General Information**
 - There will be a meeting of all involved in the journey to discuss the programs and the details. Here you will meet your day host if you don't know each other. This meeting is a few weeks before the journey.
 - Once you have your ambassador's name and address send them a welcome email. Tell them about yourself, Sarasota and perhaps include a picture. If there are any questions talk to your JC.
- **When your ambassador arrives**
 - Show them around your home-how the faucets work in the bathroom and especially the shower. Show them where extra towels and light switches are, how to get water and ice and operate the TV and what the WIFI password is. Provide a water glass for the bedroom or bathroom they use.
 - Ask if they prefer to drink for breakfast, milk, tea, coffee
 - Each evening, discuss the plans for the following day-the time you'll expect them to be up for breakfast and ready to walk out the door for the activity of the day. You might build in some extra time as many countries take time very casually. Check if they have an alarm or should you wake them.
 - It is good to be in touch with your assigned day host prior to the day needed to make sure nothing has been forgotten. If the day calls for a planned picnic, confirm that your day host is preparing lunch for the ambassador and themselves. This will avoid embarrassing situations.
 - Have bottled water available for activities, possibly a small cooler to keep in your car.

These are general guidelines to give you an idea of what hosting is about. Always maintain a positive attitude. Be flexible and enjoy your ambassadors. It is sharing your home and selves with others for a week. It is about making new friends; remember the **Friendship Force goal: A World of Friends can truly become a World of Peace.**