




friendship force
SARASOTA

a world of friends is a world of peace



friendship force
international

1. The **Birmingham Inbound Journey** was fantastic. The ambassadors enjoyed every minute of the agenda. Thanks to the many volunteers (over 30) and Joan Emrich as the Host Coordinator for creating a fun experience for our members as well as the ambassadors.
2. **Wed, March 5, 5:30 pm, The World Friendship Day International Potluck Dinner** at the Unitarian Congregation at 3975 Fruitville Rd. **It's not too late-open to all.** If you haven't already RSVPd, reply to this email <mailto:ffsrq@outlook.com>. Bring an appetizer, salad, side, dessert or main dish. If this is a favorite from your heritage or someplace you've traveled, all the better. **Dinner starts at 5:30.** Those who are helping with setting up, you'll receive a separate email. We have quite a crowd and from experience, the food will be outstanding. If you don't cook, local grocers have lots of options. If you prefer something other than wine, prosecco, sangria or water, then bring BYOB. **Wear your name badge.** If you have clothing items that are reminiscent of your trips, please wear, from hats to t-shirts.
3. **Kayaking update:** open to all members, friends and visitors. **PLEASE** call Dorothy Flynn **407-747-5251** or Bonnie Barton **404-423-9854** so we know you're coming. All details are on the club calendar at www.ffi-sarasota.org All paddles leave at meeting place at 9 am and following the paddle, optional, we go to someplace local for lunch.
 - a. **Tues, Mar 25 Ted Sperling Park** 190 Taft Dr, Sarasota, we will go along Lido Key North, around St. Armands under the John Ringling Causeway & back to Ted Sperling Park. Time permitting, we will check out the homes of the rich and famous on Bird Key. **Kayak Rentals for the Ted Sperling Park launch site are:** 1. **Sarasota Paddleboard Company:** call Bob McFarland 941-650-2241. You can also go to their website sarasotapaddleboardcompany.com. 2. **Kayaking SRQ** represents 2 companies. To make reservations call or text 941-799-1863 or 941-275-2971. You can book online kayakingsrq.com.
 - b. **Thur, Apr 10 Robinson Preserve- 1704 99th St NW, Bradenton, FL 34209.** If you need to rent a kayak call [Jack's Kayaks, 941-538-1448](tel:941-538-1448). Jack will be at the Robinson

Preserve launch site on the right as you turn onto property. After launching, we will paddle to the Manatee River turn southwest on the Manatee following along the shoreline to a trail which will take us back into the Reserve & to the original launch site.

- c. **Tues, May 27, Lido Mangrove-** Meet at **Ted Sperling Park, 190 Taft Dr on Lido Key.** (If you are renting your kayak, get there early to pick it up.) We will paddle to Little Grassy Lagoon over to Big Grassy Lagoon where we will pick up our first of 5 Mangrove tunnels. As you paddle through the tunnels don't just watch for low hanging limbs for there is a variety of natural life to see. You might even come up on a Great Blue Heron checking out food sources in the tunnels. After cruising the tunnels, we will return to Ted Sperling, how about lunch? Kayak rental same as 2a.
- d. **Fri, June 27, Urban Paddle-Ride & Paddle at the Bay, 1055 Boulevard of the Arts, Sarasota.** This paddle explores the city of Sarasota from The Bay. We will launch from the kayak launch site off Van Wezel Way which is on the east side of "The Bay" where you will also find parking. The Bay Ride & Paddle company, <https://rideandpaddle.com/sarasotabaykayaking/> provides onsite kayaks & life vests. Call 941-346-1797 ahead of time to reserve.

4. **Travel Opportunities-you must login to the Member Portal to see all travel**

opportunities. <https://my.friendshipforce.org/?locale=en> Additionally, there are many independent journeys where you're invited by an individual to visit their city/country: NZ, Brazil, CT, MI, Tanzania, OH, TX, CAN, Quebec, Germany, Japan, Switzerland, Mexico. For all journeys, you must be a member of any club and/or FFI, have travel insurance and sign a mobility waiver.

- a. Discover the Amazon and the Pantanal, *August 21 - September 4, 2025*, [LEARN MORE >](#)
- b. Discover The History and Culture of Vietnam, *August 22 - 30, 2025* [LEARN MORE >](#)
- c. Discover the Wonders of Armenia & Georgia, *September 13 - 30, 2025*, [LEARN MORE >](#)
- d. The Splendors of Tunisia, *October 1 - 11, 2025* [LEARN MORE >](#)
- e. Friendship Force's, Festival on the Mekong River Cruise, *October 6 - 13, 2025* [LEARN MORE>](#)
- f. Portugal and Spain's Cultural Gems, *October 25 - November 2, 2025* [LEARN MORE>](#)

5. **New Here? What is Friendship Force?** Founded in 1977 by visionary Wayne Smith and supported by the late President Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter, Friendship Force International is a non-profit cultural organization focused on promoting understanding, cultural education, and citizen diplomacy through homestay journeys and personal friendships. Through these exciting personal encounters, strangers become friends – and

we know that by experiencing different views, you can discover common ground. We'll be celebrating our 50th anniversary in 2027

6. **Welcome new members Stacy White and Kathy Moore, both will be at the Intl Potluck. Please say hi.**

7. **Upcoming Meetings and Events:**

Mon, Mar 17, 10 am, Book Club, New College on the water.
Tues, Mar 25, 9 am, Kayaking
Fri, Mar 28, 1 pm, Film Talk
Wed, Apr 2, 2025, 6:00 pm (room open at 5:00 for socializing)— General meeting at the Fruitville Library; Share journey to Brazil with JoEllen Lane and team
Thurs, April 10, 9 am Kayaking
Mon, April 21, 10 am Book club, New College on the water.
Fri, April 25, Film Talk
April 23 – May 10, 2025, Outbound to FF Mount Barker, South Australia and FF Manawatu/Whanganui, New Zealand. Abe Lederman is Ambassador Coordinator.
Wed, May 7, 2025, 6:00 pm (room open at 5:00 for socializing)— General meeting at the Fruitville Library
Mon, May 19 10 am, Book Club, New College on the water.
Tues, May 27, Kayaking
Fri, May 30, 1 pm, Film Talk
Wed, June 4, 2025, 6:00 pm (room open at 5:00 for socializing)— General meeting at the Fruitville Library

Birmingham Farewell and photos



