

A Publication of The Friendship Force of Lincoln www.friendshipforcelincoln.org

Number 137 Lincoln, Nebraska February 2015

Goats, Desks, & the Chuluni Preschool



Jan Sibal, Brian Ridenour, Le Etta Sprackling, Lindsey Palmer and Kay Rockwell each laid a foundation stone as construction began.

Greetings from the President



by Larry Kluck

appy New Year! This is another active year for the Friendship Force of Lincoln. You will find the 2015 calendar later on in this publication. We have three opportunities to host foreign visitors starting with an Open World Program in February. Please contact Gloria Van Ackeren if you can help. The global exchange "Taming America's Great Plains" which Lincoln is hosting in conjunction with the Oklahoma, Kansas and Omaha clubs is filling up quickly and we will need hosts for their May 1-5 stay in Lincoln. Please contact Linda Kistler to volunteer. We will be hosting Napier, New Zealand in August. Please contact Diane Conley for this exchange. Consider hosting, day hosting or hosting a small group dinner for one of the three incoming groups. Home hosting is what makes Friendship Force so unique and gives us the ability to make international friendships right in our own living rooms.

Our outgoing exchange to Taiwan in April still has

spots available. Please contact Carolyn Kitterer for more information. Lincoln members also can take part in the Taming America's Great Plains exchange, April 22-May 9. Five of us from the Lincoln Club took part in a similar exchange in 2013. It was wonderful to visit Oklahoma, Kansas and Omaha, seeing the sights that tied into the theme. I had driven through these states and cities before, but never stopped to see what the 2013 exchange provided. Information regarding this exchange can be found on the FFI website or contact Geneva Hancock, genhand@ swbell.net. We will have a domestic exchange to both the Columbia Cascade and Seattle clubs, September 14-27. Please contact Barb Ridder for more information. Our second international outgoing exchange will be to Germany October 1 -11, followed by an optional trip down the Danube to Budapest October 11-18. Contact Marilyn Armagost or Erna Rethmeier for information.

Take a look at the 2015 calendar of local activities. We encourage you to become involved with all our social activities such as membership meetings, LEO's (Lets Eat Out) and monthly breakfasts. We have a great club so please make being involved one of your New Year's resolutions. With the great time you will have, this will be one resolution you will find easy to keep.

World Friendship Force Day All Member Meeting – March 1

by De Tonack

he first 2015 FFL All Member meeting will be Sunday, March 1, which is World Friendship Force Day. It will be held from 2 to 4 at NET (1800 North 33rd Street, Lincoln). The program will be "Humanitarian Efforts: Goats, Desks, and the Chuluni Preschool" presented by Kay Rockwell. See the photo on page 1.

Humanitarian Project – Karen Community

by Larry Kluck

he Friendship Force of Lincoln's humanitarian project over the last year has been working with new Karen immigrants to the United States. Kathy Mueller has taken the lead in working with this group. Some of you attended the all member meeting where they shared their native dances with our club members. On January 4th, the public was invited to the Karen New Year Celebration. I was pleased to attend their celebration. They provided a wonderful program before we were treated to a delicious

Karen lunch. We learned some immigrants came to Lincoln, but others live in Omaha, Norfolk and Wichita. All four groups were in Lincoln to celebrate the 2754 Karen New Year.

Their calendar started when the Karen people arrived in Kaw La (now known as Burma) in 739 BC. Unfortunately, as sometimes happens, small groups are discriminated against in portions of the world. This happened in Burma and Lincoln became one of the host refugee cities for them. One American man spoke at the event saying he and his wife were on the plane which brought some of the Karen people to Lincoln.

He commented in spite of the long flight from SE Asia, the people were all smiling because they were coming to America. I hope we will be able to help them celebrate in future years.

One of the things the Karen group would like help with is learning about gardening. They have worked hard and some now own their own homes and would like to learn about gardening in Nebraska: what plants to plant, how to plant them and when to plant them. If you are available this spring and willing to help them, please contact Kathy Mueller at kathymueller@windstream.net or 402-525-3357



2015 Exchanges for the Friendship Force of Lincoln

April 8-22, 2015

Outgoing to Taipei, Taiwan - Exchange Director: Carolyn Kitterer, ckitterer@gmail.com

May 1-5, 2015

Incoming "Taming America's Great Plains" joint exchange, Kansas, Oklahoma and Omaha - Exchange Director: Linda Kistler, ljkistler@hotmail.com

August 15-21, 2015

Incoming from Napier, New Zealand - Exchange Director: Diane Conley, dconworks4@gmail.com

September 14-27, 2015

Outgoing to Seattle and Columbia Cascade (Oregon) Exchange Director: Barb Ridder, bridder@neb.rr.com

October 1-18, 2015

Outgoing to Bavaria-Nuernberg Erlengen, Germany Exchange Directors: Marilyn Armagost marmagost@earthlink.net and Erna Rethmeier, erethme@yahoo.com

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Breakfast and Conversation Discussion

by De Tonack

n January 10, there were many common responses to the Saturday morning question, "What was your snowiest winter experience?"

The famous Nebraska early blizzard of October 1997 was a commonly remembered time. Mary Bryant recalled leading a Friendship Force group to Australia & New Zealand the day after the storm. She tried to fax a message to Tasmania to begin the event but many electrical and phone lines were down. She just read the message once they got to Tasmania. Mary also brought a painting from "The Cat's Meow" that portrayed that wintery event. Carolyn Harp was featured in the Lincoln paper after the storm because a large tree, heavy-laden with snow, toppled onto her house. Marilyn Watson was not living in Nebraska at the time but got caught anyway while visiting in Fremont. A similar visit to Fremont trapped Marilyn in a Nebraska blizzard in 2009 as well. Monica and Pat Pribil remembered how the 1997 snow affected their children who had no school for a week and their household that had no electricity for four days.

Many recalled their school days. Ginny Burstein remembered being out of school from a storm in the 1960s and Linda Ashelford remembered walking to school through snow with those flannel-lined jeans underneath the required skirts or dresses of the time. Mary Lou Reeves felt that being a "town kid" made you go to school on most snowy days in Minnesota while the country kids sometimes got a day off of school. Once, however, for the first time in 25 years, those in town got a free day, too. Bob Reeves grew up in Kansas City, which more often got ice than snow, but he got caught up in that Minnesota weather while visiting Mary Lou before they were married. Gayle Bayer also remembered growing up in Minnesota where there were homes in town where country students could go if snow became too deep. Amy Birky remembered being in a school district where each principal made the decision whether to dismiss school or not.

"Deepness" made an impression on many. Bob Reeves talked about looking across the street while in Minnesota and seeing only a sheet of snow over to the roof across the street. Gloria VanAckeren remembered standing next to the top of an Rural Electric pole covered with snow; Linda Ashelford remembered snow up to the top of the garage; Jim Caruso recalled a time in Iowa when the snow was level with the gutters of the house.

Inconvenience and ingenuity were often the byprod-

ucts of a storm. Larry Kluck tried to get in his house with thirty guests after his wedding but the door lock was frozen. A neighbor became the unexpected but welcoming host for the group. Pat Pribil remembered a storm from 1968 or 1969 when there was no mail for a week in the northeast, rural part of Nebraska. Gloria VanAckeren remembered her parents bringing in young calves to keep warm around the oil stove. De Tonack recalled her father transporting 400 baby chicks from a brooder house without electrical heat, to the back of a new station wagon and then on to the house basement under the oil furnace after the car ran out of gas. Milt Bayer remembered how his father and other neighbors would come together to clear the roads in a part of Stanton County where the county could not plow for a while. Group effort with a plow hooked to the front of a tractor did wonders.

Whatever the Nebraskans could recall, Lois Katt reminded us what a winter in Anchorage, Alaska, was like---long, deep and bright white under the dark sky.



Meet Newer Members of The Friendship Force of Lincoln

by Lois Poppe

argaret Foster loves water aerobics. That is where she learned about Friendship Force from Kathryn Neyens. Margaret joined the Friendship Force New Zealand exchange last March. (Kathryn served as E.D. on this exchange.) A lifelong Lincolnite, Margaret used her photography skills to record her New Zealand travels. She enjoys enlarging her world through travel. Mission trips to Austria, Germany, Honduras, Ecuador, and Mexico provided her with new experiences. Margaret and her husband enjoy their three children and three grandchildren who all live in Lincoln. She worked part time with a Parents Day Out group and also with Westminster Presbyterian Preschool. Margaret plans to assist with Friendship Force committees and would enjoy joining exchanges to Australia or Iceland as well as those in the United States. Welcome Margaret Foster!

uth McDonald found out about Friendship Force through our local newspaper. She loves to

travel and meet new people so Friendship Force sounded like a good fit. Ruth previously lived in Lincoln, then moved to Grand Island where she taught English as a Second Language. Ruth returned to Lincoln when she retired eighteen months ago. Ruth enjoys gardening, photography, and walks with Sophia, her dog. She also has a cat, Riley. She feels lucky to have her family nearby – four children and four grandchildren. (One of her four children lives in Denver.) Ruth joined the Lincoln Women's Welcome Club through which she volunteers at Matt Talbot. Ruth volunteered to help with the Friendship Force social committee and co-hosted one of the small-group dinners for the Charlotte, N.C. / Los Angeles exchange. Ruth would enjoy traveling through the Panama Canal, also to Peru and Europe. Europe is actually at the top of her travel list right now. Welcome Ruth McDonald to Friendship Force when you see her!

auline Osentowski has traveled worldwide – Liberia, West Africa (1960s) and the Philippines (2005-2007) both with the Peace Corps. She has also traveled with OLLI (China last May.) Loving history, Pauline enjoyed a Civil War trip with OLLI. Pauline exercises at Madonna ProActive five days a week and volunteers to help some handicapped friends. She previously volunteered in the Teammates Program. Pauline adopted two cats for companionship. She enjoys playing the piano and reading and is looking forward to attending her son's wedding in February. Pauline learned about Friendship Force through her friend, Kathryn Neyens. She enjoyed home hosting an ambassador with the Los Angeles / North Carolina exchange. She would love to be a Friendship Force ambassador for an exchange to New Zealand and Australia. Cambodia would also be of interest. Pauline is enthusiastic about Friendship Force. She feels it is a "great organization with great people." Pauline states, "It may be Lincoln's best kept secret." She hopes we can get the word out to more people. Welcome, Pauline!



Charlotte, North Carolina & Southwest Florida Exchange

By Pat Novak, Exchange Director

n November 17 members of the Friendship Force of Lincoln travelled to Charlotte, N.C. and S.W. Florida to escape the start of winter in Nebraska. Mother Nature had a surprise for us as it was the start of winter there as well. In spite of the cold temperatures, and often times, strong winds we had a great time exploring and meeting new friends. After an early morning start we landed at the Charlotte airport to be greeting by our hosts from the FF of Charlotte. We had a leisurely day with our hosts which was good, as the following days were jammed packed with activities. Everything in the Charlotte area required a one hour drive but it provided a good opportunity to see what the area was like. Day one was spent at the WCNC Television Station (an ABC affiliate) where we viewed the live morning show. We even got on camera and the president of FF-Charlotte had the opportunity to talk briefly about FF and what the organization is all about. I wonder how many new members they got after that exposure. Lunch at a landmark restaurant, Pressley's (known for its downhome cooking) was followed by a tour of the Carolinas Aviation Museum. The museum houses the "Miracle on the Hudson Plane" where an



excellent docent relayed the history of the 2009 flight 1549 from NYC to Charlotte. We then had the opportunity to meet other members of their club at the Welcome Dinner. Day 3 consisted of a walking tour of UPTOWN Charlotte where a guide told us that an average of 73 new people are moving to the Charlotte area DAILY. It is a major financial center for the US and it looks like the average age of the workers downtown is about 40! Lunch at King's Kitchen was an event unto itself. The owner hires and trains the homeless to work in his restaurant. It is truly a success story. After lunch, we viewed the Levine Museum of the New South. The Levine family (Dollar General Stores) is a major contributor to the Charlotte community. The next day included a tour of JAARS,

an organization that focuses on translating the New Testament into unwritten languages and in the process increases literacy in those remote areas. A tour of the Alphabet Museum followed. After a free day, our final day was spent at the Aquarium followed by the going away party.

After a short flight we were at the Ft. Myers Airport for our stay with the Friendship Force of SW Florida. The club members here live within a 100 mile radius, so once more there was ample time to see the country as we travelled to the various events. Our first day was spent at the Edison-Ford Winter Estates. Our welcome lunch was on the banks of the river where many famous guests have been entertained over the years. Our trip to the Everglades took the entire next day. It

Charlotte, NC & Southwest Florida Exchange continued

included a tour of Everglades City, a carnival level airboat ride, a swamp buggy ride and an alligator show. Some of us actually held a 3' alligator! A tour of the Ding Darling National Preserve on Sanibel Island provided the bird watchers quite a treat. In spite of the cool weather, many walked the beaches on Sanibel and collecting the seashells for which the area is famous. The next day we gathered at the Linehan's (the local EDs, originally from Nebraska) for lunch and a boat ride thru the canals of Punta Gorda. A walking excursion of downtown Punta Gorda, which included the Christmas tree lighting and holiday parade were part of the evening festivities. After a free day and the farewell dinner we prepared for our early morning flight back to Nebraska. It was a great time, great to see those from Charlotte that have been to Lincoln and to meet new friends.

My First Taste of Travel with FFL - Charlotte, NC and Southwest Florida

by Carolyn Harp

raveling has always interested me, but circumstances through the years have made the possibilities rather slim. That changed late this fall, when I joined the Friendship Force of Lincoln on our domestic exchange to Charlotte, NC and Southwest Florida, my first time traveling since joining the club about a year and a half ago. I chose this domestic exchange as a "dipping the toe in the water", and the experience was great. I had never been to Charlotte or Ft Myers, and I enjoyed the trip very much. Our Exchange Director, Pat Novak, did a terrific job of connecting with the Exchange Directors in our two venues. As far as I was concerned, the program for those days was varied and interesting. Encountering the sights and places of interest in both locales, arranged by people who were proud of what their clubs could show us, was enjoyable, although the weather wasn't always our friend. I particularly enjoyed

being able to have a "roomie", Joanna Rogers, for this first exchange, and I think it added a lot to my comfort level, to be with an experienced Friendship Force member in homes where we stayed.

From touring the down-town area of Charlotte, being on TV at the station we visited there, to air boating in the Everglades and visiting the beaches and bird sanctuaries in Florida, the days were packed with new experiences for me. At the end of each day, our home hosts did their best to make us feel comfortable in our "home away from home".

Would I recommend traveling with FFL? You bet. I hope to do it again – probably another domestic exchange. The stories I hear from other FFL members, about the great trips to other countries, make me think that I'd like to put an international trip on my "bucket list" soon. Perhaps I'll see you on the next trip. How about it?





Membership News

by Mary Bryant

e would like to extend a warm welcome to our newest members: Linda Paul, Ginny Burstein, Jim Caruso, plus Monica and Patrick Pribil. We want to say "thank you" to the following members who are responsible for referring our new members: Erna Rethmeier, Amy Birky, Carolyn Harp, Jim Caruso, and Robert Pribil. We follow up with each referral we receive through phone calls, emails, and mailed information.

As of mid-January we have received paid 2015 FFL memberships from 89 individuals and 38 families that represent 163 members. I'm looking forward to hearing from the rest of you. The following individuals are unable, or have decided not to renew: Joanne Allen (passed away 6/23/14), Nancy Bradley, Imogene Bruce (moved to Ogden, Utah), Jean Ford, Beth Hemmer, Margie Mertens, R.K. Spencer, Kathy Stastny, Anoush Stoddart, Earl & Doris Visser, Taylor Wilberger, Stephen Allen, Cinde Westmiller (moved to Alabama), Lou Mittan, Norma Miller, Marcia Prasch, Thelma Simpson, Penny Lyons, and Patricia Ann (Holle) Novak. Each of you will be missed.

Summary of FFL Membership Year 2014:

We began 2014 with 156 paid Memberships: 109 Individual and 47 Family representing 203 paid members. We ended the official 2014 membership year with 213 members that included 117 Individual and 48 Family for 165 memberships.

It should be noted that the FFL 2014 membership consisted of the following: 17 Individual Male Memberships or 8% of Total Members 100 Individual Female Memberships or 47% of Total Members 48 Family Memberships or 45% of Total Members

Amy Birky and Gayle Bayer continue to follow up with prospective members. The number of prospective members was 19 at the end of December 2014.

Two coffees were held for new and prospective members at Forest Lake Clubhouse: April 13 – 38 invited (15 new members & 23 prospective members) 4 new members attended + 1 prospective member). October 19 – 48 invited (27 new members & 21 prospective members); 7 attended (6 prospective + 1 new member). Four of the prospective members joined at the meeting.

Dues: increased for 2015 to offset the increase established by Friendship Force International. Individual Membership increased from \$30 to \$35 while Family Membership increased from \$40 to \$48. We'd appreciate it if you

would continue to send us the names of individuals who have expressed interest in learning more about FFL.

Taming America's Great Plains Themed Exchange

By Linda Kistler, Exchange Director

ur incoming global exchange, Taming America's Great Plains, is filling up. Based on the very successful exchange of two years ago, 17 ambassadors have paid their deposit with several others showing interest. It is expected we will have at least 20 ambassadors - up to 30 if the exchange fills completely.

As this is a themed exchange we will share our knowledge of the pioneers at such places as Spring Creek Prairie, Homestead National Monument in Beatrice and our magnificent Capitol. We will say goodbye to our new friends at a memorable farewell dinner Monday night, May 4.

We are looking for home hosts, day hosts and hosts for small group dinners. If you have any questions or are ready to "hit the trail" by volunteering, please contact me. Newer members - this is a wonderful way to learn how Friendship Force works and to make new friends! Linda Kistler, 402-489-3712 or ljkistler@hotmail. com

Open World Celebrates 15th Anniversary

By Gloria Van Ackeren

he Open World Leadership Center celebrated its Fifteenth Anniversary on December 4, 2014, at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC. Julie Albrecht and Gloria Van Ackeren of Lincoln's Friendship Force attended the celebration, hosted by Walter Scott of Omaha and Susan Lehrman of Washington. Special tribute was paid to the leadership of Dr. James Billington, Librarian of Congress and Founding Chairman of the Open World Center. Over 450 guests from the United States and across the globe attended the dinner, program, and special performances.

Nebraska has been well represented in the Open World Center. Walter Scott of Omaha serves as Chairman of the Board. Current and former members of the Board include Nebraska Congressman Jeff Fortenberry, former Nebraska Senator Ben Nelson, and Michael Yanney of Omaha. Executive Director Ambassador John OKeefe has been an FFL guest on several occasions to celebrate Open World.

Established in 1999 by Dr. Billington with the support of the U.S. Congress, Open World promotes understanding among the people of Russia and post-Soviet Eurasia. Since then, Open World has brought more than 23,000 emerging young leaders to the United States to broaden both their and our experiences in politics, business, and social culture. FFL has hosted Open World delegations since the program began in 1999.

On February 13, FFL will welcome an Open World delegation of six young Ukrainian leaders to learn about the role of the legislature in education. A welcome dinner and a luncheon at the Nebraska governor's residence are open to all FFL club members and their guests. Any club member who would like to learn more and/or participate in the week-long program should contact Gloria Van Ackeren at 402-202-7469 or gloriavana@gmail.com.

CHANGING THE WAY YOU SEE 岩WORLD

Be more than a tourist. Travel for good.

hether you're planting a community garden in Jamaica, practicing Spanish in Colombia, or cycling with locals in Germany, every personal friendship you create when you travel plays a small part in building a more peaceful world.

Multiply that effect by 18,000 – that's the number of people around the world already committed to peace through friendship. They are the Friendship Force.

With volunteers on the ground in 70 countries, our programs bring these diverse people together, into one another's cultures and even homes, to share one-of-a-kind experiences not available to regular tourists.

Through these exciting personal encounters, strangers become friends – and if we can build a world of friends, we can build a world of peace.

Our members are ordinary people just like you, who travel or host in the name of global friendship.

- Explore your world.
- Understand its people.
- Serve the cause of peace.

Become an ambassador of the Friendship Force today.

Welcome Ukrainians!

ix young Ukrainian leaders will arrive in Lincoln for a week of Open World Leadership activities. From February 13-21 they will be our guests as they learn about the role of the legislature in education. Their formal activities will include the capitol, the University, and related agencies. Their informal experience will include home hosting, parties, and other social events. We hope you will join us during their stay.

Heart To Heart Welcome Celebration:

eet the Ukrainians Sunday, February 15 at our Welcome Dinner at 4:30 p.m. at Holmes Park Golf Course Clubhouse. It is open to all FFL members and their guests. It will be a catered dinner buffet complete with tea/coffee and dessert for \$13 per person. There will be a full cash bar including wine to go with Holmes's beautiful view of the city. Social time is 4:30 to 5 with dinner at 5 p.m.

You'll have an opportunity to meet and mingle with the Open World delegates. They will introduce themselves and then will answer questions. We will have the sound system up and running this year.

The clubhouse address is 3701 South 70th Street. From 70th Street take Holmes South Shore Road just south of the lake. Drive west one half mile to a fork in the road, turn left, and continue to the clubhouse. To make your reservation, please complete the form below. If you have questions, you may call Joanna at 402-484-8678 or e-mail her at rkrohn@neb.rr.com.

Luncheon At The Governor's Residence

oin the Ukrainian Open World group for luncheon at the Governor's Residence on Thursday, February 19 at 11:30 a.m. Bring your friends and guests to meet the delegates. The menu is roasted chicken salad on a flaky croissant served with soup du jour and dinner salad, iced tea and/ or coffee.. The cost is \$15 per person. To make your reservation, please complete the form below. If you have questions, you may call Joanna at 402-484-8678 or e-mail her at rkrohn@neb.rr.com.

Sunday, Feb. 15, Heart-to-Heart Welcome Party \$13 x 4:30 p.m. Holmes Park Club House, 3701 South 70th.

guests = total \$

Thursday, Feb. 19, Governor's Residence Luncheon \$15 x 11:30 a.m. 1425 H Street

guests = total \$

TOTAL AMOUNT \$

Name(s)

Phone

Email

Street Address

City

State

Please write your check to Friendship Force of Lincoln and send with this completed form to

Joanna Rogers at 5550 South 80th Street, Lincoln NE 68516 by FEBRUARY 7. If you have questions, please call Joanna at 402-484-8678 or email rkrohn@neb.rr.com.

2015 Calendar of Events

Breakfast and Conversation events are the second Saturday of each month

January 17 Let's Eat Out - LEO (noon) continue with ethnic restaurants
February 13-21 Open World Program incoming group
February 15 Open World Welcome Party and Program (Social for entire club)
March 1 All Member meeting – World Friendship Force Day
April 8-22 Outgoing exchange to Taipei, Taiwan
April 28 LEO (evening)
May 1-5 Taming America's Great Plains incoming exchange
June 14 (tentative) Social Activity
June 24 All member meeting (Charlotte and SW Florida exchange presentation)
July 16 LEO (evening)
August 9 Annual Meeting –(Taiwan exchange presentation)
August 15-21 New Zealand incoming exchange – club dinner meeting date TBA
August 28-31 FFI meeting in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
September 8 LEO (evening)
September 14-27 Outgoing exchange to Seattle, Washington & Columbia Cascade (Oregon)
October 1-18 Outgoing exchange to Bavaria-Nuernberg Erlengen, Germany

December 6

November 15

Holiday Party

All Member Meeting (Columbia Cascade & Seattle exchange presentation)

2015 Dues Notice - The Friendship Force of Lincoln

ues for the 2015 calendar year are \$35 for an Individual Membership and \$48 for a Family Membership. Dues are for the calendar year from January 1st through December 31st and are not prorated. Prompt payment of dues ensures that you will continue to receive mailings from The Friendship Force of Lincoln.

Mail to: Friendship Force, PO Box 30334, Lincoln, NE 68503. Make check payable to: "The Friendship Force of Lincoln."

Date New Renewal Name Badge \$9.00/\$11.00

Name(s)

Name Badge Name(s)

Street Address

City State Zip

Home Phone Number

E-mail

CATEGORY: Individual-\$35 Family-\$48 NOTE: New members each receive a complimentary name badge; Replacement Name Badge \$9.00 each for a pin-on type \$11.00 for magnetic style

Total Amount Enclosed: