



PASSPORT

A Publication of the Friendship Force of Lincoln
www.fflincoln.org

Number 179

Lincoln, Nebraska

February 2025

Malang and Yogyakarta, Indonesia will host Lincoln Friendship in June

By Maxine Moul, Journey Coordinator

It is just five months until our Lincoln Club has its first international Journey since COVID. We have a new host city! Malang, Indonesia, substituting for Bogor, will be our second host, after Yogyakarta. Both are on the Island of Java, Indonesia, with the Journey from June 25 to July 7, 2025.

I need to have a firm indication of your interest in being an Ambassador with your submission of the application to Friendship Force International with a copy to me. The application can be found at [2025 Ambassador Application](#). To complete it online as a fillable pdf, click on this link: [2025 Ambassador Application and Agreement fillable](#).



Mosque Masjid Agung Malang at Malang Java

FFL Things to Know — February, 2025

Birthday Acknowledgements

JoEllen Polzien sends electronic birthday greetings to those who have volunteered to give their birthdates. She can be contacted at H: 402-483-1112 C: 402-202-6924 or at jwpolz1@gmail.com

Board Minutes

The FFL Board will make the Agenda and the Board minutes available via email every month. The minutes will also be posted and can be accessed through the website, www.fflincoln.org > About FF Lincoln > Board Minutes.

Courtesy Committee

When an FFL member achieves something noteworthy, is ill, experiences the death of a loved one, etc., let Gayle Bayer, FFL Courtesy Chair, know so she can send a card. bayergayle@gmail.com, cell 531-207-6042.

(continued on page 5)

From the FFL President, February 2025

By Arlene Rea, President

Thank you for your membership in the Friendship Force of Lincoln. You are strong, active, engaged, caring, and motivated to meet new people and learn about their culture, religion, families, etc. You do this by participating in outbound and inbound Journeys, in addition to the club-sponsored activities. Some of you are members because you believe in the cause of Friendship Force’s mission: **a world of friends is a world of peace**. At whatever activity level you have chosen to participate in, the FFL Board of Directors and I acknowledge your contribution. Also, thank you for giving me the honor to serve as your president for another year. I have enjoyed working with you.



At the December and January board of directors meetings, the directors discussed plans for the upcoming year. To encourage membership and participation, the board of directors re-established two grants and created a new grant. The two grants the board has brought back with some adjustments are the Need-Based Travel and the Diversity and Community Service Grants. Briefly, the travel grant will help a member, financially, with up to \$2,000 to participate in an outbound journey. The Diversity and Community Service Grant is for a member to use/oversee the grant, up to \$500, to support humanitarian, peace, and cultural activities associated with community programs.

The new grant is the Need-based Dues Grant. We have encountered potential members who agreed with the goals of Friendship Force but did not feel they could afford the dues. This grant is available to anyone who will share their talents with FFL. This commitment might include being a day host for an inbound Journey or serving or leading a committee. The grantee will discuss the possibilities in their application and with the Scholarship Committee. See how to access the criteria and applications for the grants on page 9.

The board members also recommended that the agenda and minutes of the board meetings be made available to all members. Members are encouraged to attend the board meetings held the second Monday of every month, except July, at Bess Dodson Walt Branch Library, 6701 S 14th Street. The agenda for the upcoming meeting and the minutes from the previous month's meeting will be sent to members via e-mail.

Lastly, the board authorized a survey to be sent to all members to determine their level of involvement. At this printing over half of the membership has responded. The results aid the committee leaders in developing plans for the Inbound and Outbound Journeys, Open World, and various activities. Thank you for participating.

Sometime in February, the new membership directory will be available by e-mail. Please contact me with corrections at arlenerea14@gmail.com.

In friendship,
President, Arlene Rea

Happy Birthday to our Friendship Force Members

Larry Harnisch	6-Feb	Jane Kinsey	10-Mar	Bridget Disney	9-May
Thomas Higley	7-Feb	Dianna Schimek	21-Mar	Larry Scott	10-May
Arlene Rea	9-Feb	<u>Prudence Cocco-</u>		Wendy Horacek	17-May
Nikki Scott	11-Feb	<u>drilli</u>	23-Apr	Linda Kistler	18-May
Lois Katt	26-Feb	John Comer	27-Apr	Vickie	
Kay Rockwell	28-Feb	Jacque Scholz	5-May	McDonald	26-May
Ann Quinlan	4-Mar				

New Officers Share Their Thoughts on Accepting Their Office

Arlene Rea, President I accepted the second term because I felt there was more to be done to continue the vibrancy of Friendship Force Lincoln. The Executive Board and the Board of Directors are outstanding members who care about and are not afraid to ensure that FFL stands by the motto of “a world of peace is a world of friends.” The board and the members motivate me.

My favorite parts of FFL and FFI are the different ways that members can be involved. Members have opportunities either by traveling on outbound journeys across the world, hosting members of the world community here in Lincoln, or learning from the members of our own community who have settled here from across the world.

Midge Dublinske, Vice President

I first accepted the vice president position because the nominations committee member told me Arlene would agree to be president again if she had a good vice president. I was a brand-new FFL member and was surprised by the request. I could not say “no” to the nomination because I am long-time friends with Jim and Arlene. I also saw it as a front-row seat to learn about FFL/FFI. The first year was a steep learning curve, but being of service to the club was extremely rewarding and an opportunity for personal growth.

I accepted the vice president position for a second term because I felt I could continue to make a contribution to our FFL club. I rarely join an activity or club without participating in the mission and function of the club. I'm happy to serve, experience new opportunities and enjoy the company of club members.

Ann Quinlan, Secretary I was honored to accept the position of secretary of FFL because it is a way for me to contribute to the continuity of the club. As secretary, I learn about each committee's work every month. I follow the progress of each committee's work and plans, and I always learn something positive about club members' involvement and ideas.

My favorite parts of Friendship Force International are the journey opportunities, which I have experienced as both an Outbound and Inbound participant. When international travel was curtailed during the COVID pandemic, I made a new pen friend in England through FFI's letter exchange program. I especially enjoyed the opportunity to work with the ALEX high school student program. Meeting young people from other countries gives me hope that a world of friends is a world of peace

Milt Bayer, Treasurer .This is my ninth year as Treasurer. Why did I accept this position? I am a retired Accountant. I figured the position should be well within my capabilities. I certainly didn't want to be president or many other club positions, which are well beyond my capabilities. I am always in awe of the other members of our club who take on projects and are good at it. My favorite aspects of Friendship Force are the journeys. Meeting new people and living with them or living with us is the best part. Seeing and experiencing their corner of the world is also a definite plus. We have yet to have a negative experience. We have been to parts of the world that we had never thought of going to before.



FFL Board and Committee Chairs are, front row, Ann Quinlan, Milt Bayer, Arlene Rea, Midge Dublinske, Maxine Moul. Back row, Vickie McDonald, Pat Novak, Phyllis Arth, Gayle Bayer, Janet Walters, Julie Splichal, Marilyn Watson, and Julie Albrecht.

Diversity Committee Connects with ECHO Collective

By Janet Walters, Co-chair, For the Committee

In Lincoln, ECHO Collective connects and empowers refugee and immigrant women by providing opportunities for personal growth and building cross-cultural relationships in a nurturing environment.

Following the Friendship Force-Lincoln (FFL) Board meeting in January, two individuals from ECHO Collective presented information about their organization. Jessica Gebers shared information on the history and goals of ECHO Collective and Bia Espinoza shared about her journey, her experience in classes, and her success as a small business owner.

Housed within ECHO Collective are The Refinery, which is an entrepreneurship program that offers coaching and a series of business classes, and Refined & Co., which is a gift shop where participants' products are advertised and sold. Bia was working in the shop on the afternoon that Janet Walters visited them. Her cakes looked so delicious that it seemed like a good idea to bring one to an FFL Board meeting to introduce her product to possible new customers and to introduce the board to ECHO Collective, The Refinery, and Refined & Co., Check out the website to learn more about the organization and their graduates' products and businesses. <https://echocollectivene.org/>



Bia Espinoza and Jessica Gebers

Calendar February 2025 to May 2025

Members are invited and encouraged to participate in any of the following events, including the monthly board meetings.

February

- **3-February** FFL Board Meeting, 2 pm Walt Library, 6701 S. 14th
- **8-February** Breakfast & Conversation, 8:30 am, Stauffer's Cafe and Pie Shoppe, 5600 S. 48th

March

- **3-March** FFL Board Meeting, 2 pm, Walt Library, 6701 S. 14th
- **8-March** Breakfast & Conversation, 8:30 am at Stauffer's Café, 5600 S. 48th
- **March** LEO TBD

April

- **7-April** FFL Board Meeting, 2 p.m. Walt Library, 6701 S. 14th
- **11-April** Articles for May Passport due
- **12-April** Breakfast & Conversation, 8:30 am at Stauffer's Café, 5600 S. 48th

May

- **5-May** FFL Board Meeting, 2 pm at Walt Library, 6701 S. 14th
- **10-May** Breakfast & Conversation

Things to Know (Continued from Page 1)

Day Trips

If you have ideas for a day trip where members of Friendship Force of Lincoln can learn and enjoy the company of those with like interests, contact Judy Keetle, at jkeetle2@gmail.com or cell at 402-432-0830.

Member Directory

The 2025 Member Directory will be distributed via your e-mail in February. For your convenience, you can print it in landscape form. The 2024 Member Directory can be accessed at <https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:US:434dfc77-e365-4e94-9a6d-17fc2fc167a4>

Friendship Force International – Individual Journeys

FFI has started a new program. Individuals can contact FF members who have volunteered to host individuals or families visiting their town. FFI maintains the list of interested FF members offering to host. This aids FF members who cannot participate in scheduled club-to-club journeys. The host and the traveler(s) decide how the journey will be structured.

Grants

The need-based Dues Grant application can be accessed through the website, www.fflincoln.org> About FF Lincoln > Club Resources > Need-based Dues Grant Application. A current member or potential member may apply for this grant to help them pay the dues for the current year.

The need-based Travel Grant can be accessed through the website, www.fflincoln.org> About FF Lincoln > Club Resources > Need-based Travel Grant Application. A current member who wishes to participate in a journey but cannot pay the full cost may apply for this grant.

Diversity and Community Service Grant can be accessed through the website, www.fflincoln.org> About FF Lincoln > Club Resources > Diversity and Community Service Grant Application. An FFL member may apply for a grant to help fund a project in the community.

Membership

If you know someone interested in learning about Friendship Force, contact Arlene Rea, at arlenerea14@gmail.com or 402-432-4425. The membership form can be accessed at www.fflincoln.org> About FF Lincoln > Club Resources > Membership Application and on Page 9 of this Issue.

Friendship Force of Lincoln's website: www.fflincoln.org

It is being updated regularly. You will find the listing of the Board of Directors, important upcoming dates, ambassadors, membership and dues, travel, and service grant applications, a list of Friendship Force International clubs, and more. Contact Arlene Rea, at arlenerea14@gmail.com

Member-only Website.

To receive notices of journeys, book clubs, pen pals, etc. from Friendship Force International (FFI), log on to the members-only website. Follow these steps to become informed: *Go to www.my.friendshipforce.org *Enter your name and e-mail address. *Then click on SIGN-UP. *Follow the steps.

Speakers Bureau

If you know of a group that would like a short program about Friendship Force, contact Midge Dublinske at midge.dublinske@gmail.com or 402-560-2884

2025 Journeys Match FFL with Columbia Cascade, Sarasota

By Pat Novak, Journey Resource Chair

On September 23-30, 2025, Friendship Force of Lincoln will host the Columbia Cascade Friendship Force (CCFF). It is a bit early in the game, but we must gather resources to give them a great trip to Lincoln. A preliminary itinerary has already been planned (subject to revision as needed), contact has been made with the CCFF and they are already generating interest in this exchange. We will need a coordinator for this exchange to oversee the event with needed home hosts, day hosts, and small dinner hosts. Check your calendars to see if you can help with this exchange and contact Pat Novak (mutanu123@yahoo.com) ASAP so we can move forward.

We are anticipating 10-15 visiting ambassadors so we need your help for a success. An outbound exchange is planned with the Sarasota, FL club November 4-9. I have not yet received any specific dates for this journey. We will need a journey coordinator to facilitate and organize this adventure. If you are interested in serving as a leader, or just going as an ambassador and enjoying Florida in the winter, let Pat Novak (mutanu123@yahoo.com) know ASAP.

FFL Members Participate in Open World's 25th Anniversary

FFL members Vickie McDonald and Larry Harnish spoke about the experiences they had hosting several investigative journalists from the country of Georgia. Vickie and Larry were hosted in return by their new friends in Georgia. McDonald said this relationship has impacted their lives and built a bond that will last a lifetime.

The mission of (COIL) is to inspire Congressional and citizen diplomacy with global civic and political leaders. COIL achieves this through the Open World program, which connects delegates with their peers in U.S. communities to exchange best practices and strengthen mutual understanding.

Open Word is funded by the U.S. Congress and administered by the Congressional Office for International Leadership. The Program is a 10-day professional exchange built on the foundational values of authentic communication and immersive cultural experiences. Starting in Washington, D.C., delegates explore the concepts of American federalism, culture, and leadership.

Delegates engage with Members of Congress and their staff to discuss common challenges and participate in unfiltered dialogue. Traveling to communities across the United States, delegates meet with their professional counterparts to share expertise and establish lasting partnerships. During the program, delegates stay with host families, giving them an intimate view of American life.

Today the Open World program has more than 30,000 alumni and a network of 8,300 U.S. host families. Friendship Force of Lincoln has participated in the Open World program providing program and home hosting since 1999.

Nebraska U.S. Senator Ben Nelson (2001 to 2013) serves as Chairman of COIL.



FFL member Vickie McDonald and Senator Ben Nelson

2024 Activities Highlighted in FFL Annual Report

A review of last year's standing committees activities has been provided to FFL Historian Phyllis Arth. The full report is on the web at www.fflincoln.org > FF Lincoln > FFL Annual Reports The standing committee highlights include:

Breakfast and Conversations Chair: Marilyn Watson. Monthly meetings are held on the second Saturday at Stauffer's Café. It is a social time with fun questions to start conversations.

COIL (Congressional Office of International Leadership) Leaders: Julie Albrecht and Judy Keetle. Five delegates and a facilitator from Mongolia arrived in November and participated in 8 days/32 hours of rigorous learning experiences. Julie and Judy also organized seven home hosts and several day hosts. Julie Splichal and the Social Committee arranged a traditionally delicious Thanksgiving dinner for delegates, home hosts and Club members.

Diversity and Community Service Committee (formerly the Diversity International Service Committee): Co-Chairs Janet Walters and Phyllis Arth. Vicki McDonald and Larry Harnisch hosted more than 20 Muslim friends and Club members for friendly visiting

Historian: Phyllis Arth compiled this Annual Report.

Journey Resource Chair: Pat Novak. The inbound journey from San Diego scheduled for the week of September 30, 2024 was cancelled due to their reduced number of ambassadors. An outbound journey to Sarasota, FL is scheduled for November 4-9, 2025. March 2026 will hopefully be a reincarnation of the 2018 Sandhill Crane experience. An **Inbound Special Journey** by Journey Coordinator Judy Keetle was to be from San Diego. The San Diego club canceled. However, this hard work will serve as a framework for the September 23-30, 2025 in-bound journey from the Columbia-Cascade Friendship Force (southern WA and northern OR). **Outgoing Journey** Leader: Maxine Moul. The Outbound Journey to Indonesia was originally scheduled for early June 2024. It has been postponed to June 2025. The hosts will be two cities on the Island of Java, Indonesia. An outbound journey to Sarasota, Florida will take place November 4-9, 2025.

LEO / Let's Eat Out Carlene and Bruce Keim continued as chairs. LEO highlighted ethnic restaurants, gathering about every other month. Dinners typically drew 10-20 participants.

Membership Chair: Marilyn Watson Eleven new members were welcomed! Vickie McDonald and Larry Harnisch cordially hosted the New Member Tea, in their home, February 2nd. Each new member received a New Member Orientation booklet. New members are Christine Buchholz, Prudence Coccodrilli, Midge Dublinske, Susan Grieger, Karen and Gary Heusel, Eloise Hiatt, Mahe Naseem, Pat Novak, Leslie Ryan, DiAnna Schimek, Marcia Wallen. Total 2024 membership: 68

New FFL members were welcomed at an event hosted by Vickie McDonald and Larry Harnisch. The new members at the event were (back row) Prudence Coccodrilli, Leslie Ryan, Midge Dublinske. Front row, Eloise Hiatt, DiAnna Schimek, and Susan Grieger.



2024 Annual Report (continued from page 7)

Passport: The Passport was emailed to members in February, April, June, August and November. One more issue than a quarterly report! Editors: Arlene Rea, Midge Dublinske, Judy Keetle. Feature Articles: Phyllis Arth and Pat King interviewed new members. Formatting: Maxine Moul. Photographers: Judy Keetle, Jo-Ellen Polzien.

Publicity/Marketing/Website:

Neighborhood Extra: Maxine Moul.

FaceBook Vicki McDonald, Arlene Rea.

Website Maintenance www.fflincoln.org. Arlene Rea, Pat King, Jim Ecklund. Jim Ecklund conducted training, via Zoom, in January. Arlene Rea became webmaster. Maintenance of <https://my.friendshipforce.org>, our members' only website, was done by Midge Dublinske and Arlene Rea.

Updating <https://fflincoln.org> was updated by Arlene, Rea, Midge Dublinske, Pat King, Judy Keetle, Jim Ecklund, Vicki McDonald and De Tonack. The last update had been done before COVID.

Day Trips: Chaired by Judy Keetle. This active committee scheduled two road trips. Five travelers attended the April Winnebago Pow Wow: the 158th Annual Homecoming Celebration at the Winnebago Veterans Memorial Park. In October, in Brownville, NE a docent from the Brownville Historical Society showed seven FFL members several buildings on Main Street. The entire town of Brownville is a National Register Historic District.

Nominations Committee: The members of the committee, appointed by the President: Julie Albrecht, Bruce Keim, Julie Splichal (chair), Betty Starr, Kathryn Neyens. The committee nominated and submitted to the membership: Arlene Rea for President; Midge Dublinske for Vice President; Ann Quinlan for Secretary and Milt Bayer for Treasurer.

Bylaws and Policies Committee: Chair: Midge Dublinske; Judy Keetle, Arlene Rea, Brian Ridenour, Ann Quinlan. The last review had been in 2018. Updates were approved at the Annual Meeting in September.

Speakers Bureau: Wendy Horacek, Judy Keetle, Arlene Rea. Arlene Rea spoke to a Kiwanis Club, the evening of January 23. She addressed the South Rotary Club, June 7.

Scholarship: Chair: Midge Dublinske; Milt Bayer. The application forms for Needs-based Dues, Travel, and Diversity and Community Service grants were clarified, developed and updated.

Social Chair: Julie Splichal, Special events included a new member reception. The Social Committee served assorted halal treats from Al-mustafa Market to 30 members at the Annual Meeting. A traditional Thanksgiving feast was catered to accompany the Mongolian ambassador's presentations. Forty-two people were served. Twenty-eight members enjoyed warm drinks on the Holiday Party Luxury Bus to view residential holiday light displays.

The screenshot shows the website for Friendship Force Lincoln. At the top right, there are links for "Lincoln Tourism" and "Visit Nebraska". The main header features the "friendship force LINCOLN" logo and a "Select Language" dropdown menu. Below the header is a blue navigation bar with links for "Home", "About FF Lincoln", "Newsletters", "Club Board Members", and "Calendar".

The main content area includes a large photo of a group of people sitting around a table in a meeting room. To the right of the photo is a "Upcoming Events" section listing:

- FF L Board Meeting: April 1, 2024 at 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm
- Bess Dronson Visit Branch Luncheon: 03/15/24 9:30 am - 1:00 pm
- Friendship Force Breakfast: April 13, 2024 at 8:30 am - 9:45 am
- Waulter's Cafe, 9600 South 48th Street
- LEO Haysa South (Asian), 1601 Pine Lake Rd: April 18, 2024 at 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm

 Below the photo is a "Welcome New Members to Friendship Force of Lincoln" section with a detailed text update about a Saturday, February 24, meeting where six new members were welcomed. It lists names like Prudence Coccodrilli, Leslie Ryan, and Midge Gibson. At the bottom of the page, there are links for "What is Friendship Force?", "A Brief History of FFI", "FFI Video", "Being an Ambassador", "Upcoming Journeys", and "Being a Host". The footer contains copyright information for 2024 and a note that the organization is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit.

The Friendship Force of Lincoln Membership Application
Friendship Force International and Friendship Force of Lincoln Dues
\$50 per person

Date: _____ New Member _____ Renewing Member _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Number: _____ Mobile Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Birthday: Month ___ Day ___ Would you like to receive an electronic birthday greeting? Y N

Does Friendship Force of Lincoln have your permission to use your photograph in brochures, media articles, website, Facebook, etc. to promote the Organization? Y N

New Members receive a complimentary name badge. Circle your choice: Pin Magnetic

Ways I can help: (Circle as many as you like)

Club supporter

Inbound Home Host

Activities Committee

Inbound Dinner Host

Open World (COIL) Committee

Journey Coordinator

Computer/Internet Skills

Officer Nominating Committee

Diversity & Community Service Committee

Passport Newsletter Formatting

Feature article writer for Passport or Neighborhood Extra

Speakers' Bureau

Social Committee

Future Officer

Other _____

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