



# PASSPORT

A Publication of the Friendship Force of Lincoln  
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October 2025

## Lincoln Hosts Columbia Cascade Friendship Force Club

Eleven members from Columbia Cascade Friendship Force in Washington State and Oregon were hosted by Friendship Force of Lincoln (FFL) in September.

A brief history of Lincoln, presented by historian Jim McKee, provided a background for what the visitors might see and experience. The visitors toured Innovation Campus and had a meeting with the Veterans in Recovery Program that offered the opportunity to purchase some of the great pens these veterans have made.

East Campus included a tour of the International Quilt Museum, a treat at the UNL Dairy Store and visit to the Larsen Tractor Museum. Glenn Johnson, retired Lower Platte South Natural Resources District leader, provided a history of the Antelope Valley Project in Lincoln.

The visitors toured the Governor's Mansion after a lunch there. Al Davis, retired state senator, explained Nebraska's unique unicameral system of government.

A trip to Beatrice included the Homestead National Monument, a lunch of Runzas and a tour of the Ratigan-Schottler Pew Factory, giving the visitors a taste of Nebraska.

A day trip to the Henry Doorly Zoo in Omaha was followed by a tour of the Museum of American Speed in Lincoln and a farewell dinner with their home hosts and guests. The visitors were treated to overnight stays in the homes of FFL members.

Upcoming travel for the Friendship Force of Lincoln members includes a November trip to Sarasota, FL.

Adventures for 2026 include hosting a Sandhills Crane excursion in March. Members will be joining the Cheyenne Friendship Force for a trip to Manitoba and Niagara, Canada next June.



**A Columbia Cascade member screen prints the Journey logo on a shirt.**

## From the FFL President, October 2025

### By Arlene Rea, President

Happy Fall! We have had some very nice fall weather, along with some hot days and rain. Of course, we can always talk about the weather in Nebraska!

I want to thank Midge Dublinske for her great leadership this past year as I dealt with my husband's illness and death, plus my own fractures of my hip and wrist, with hospitalization in a rehabilitation center, followed by the death of my sister. It has been a difficult year! Midge took over the presidency with ease, even when she was very new to Friendship Force.

Midge commended the FFL board for their supportiveness, assistance, and guidance. Thank you, Midge and the FFL Board!!

FFL has had a busy two months. Julie Albrecht and Judy Keetle coordinated the COIL Open World group from Romania to learn about city government. The week was so well-received that a group from Hungary will study the same topic in 2026.

On September 30, after spending a week in Lincoln and southeast Nebraska, 11 Columbia Cascade Friendship Force members declared that they were glad to have spent the week. Before they came to Lincoln, their local friends were wondering what the attraction would be in Lincoln. By the end of the week, we had made great friends, and they learned that Nebraska was more than a flyover state. Pat Novak, with expertise in organization, led the week-long activities.

The Diversity and Community Service Group led by Janet Walters and Phyllis Arth and LEO (Let's Eat Out) led by Bruce and Carlene Keim are steadily working throughout the year to bring a culture of understanding between FFL and ethnic groups in Lincoln. This endeavor, along with the Open World and Columbia Cascade Journey, shows the importance of friendships as we strive to understand our world today.

Congratulations to the 2026 officers who were elected at the September 21 Annual Meeting: Judy Keetle, President; Ann Quinlan, Vice President; Carol Johnstone-Hornig, Secretary; Milt Bayer, Treasurer.

Enjoy the last few months of 2025. Keep making friends! A world of friends is a world of peace.

**In friendship,**

**Arlene Rea**



Arlene Rea

## Birthday Celebrations for Friendship Force Members

Cherrie Beam/ Richard Callaway	1-Oct	Milt Bayer	31-Oct	Barbara Ridder	22-Dec
Bruce Kiem	17-Oct	Brian Ridenour	2-Nov	Mary Jo Shibata	25-Dec
Julie Splichal	27-Oct	Ted Larson	14-Nov	JoEllen Polzien	26-Dec
Larry Scott	29-Oct	Joann Brown	15-Dec		

## Let's Eat Out Visits Louisiana, Afghan and Italian Restaurants

### By Bruce and Carlene Keim

The July LEO was held at Taste of Louisiana on July 24 with 14 members and two guests present. Pokey Black, the owner, has served Cajan and Creole combination for about three years. All of his foods are made from scratch and mostly his own recipes.

Some of the foods we tried were the Jambalaya, Catfish Po- Boys, and the special that night which was Brisket and Mac and Cheese. I had the Smothered Pork Chops served over rice. The side I chose was Collard Greens which were excellent with just a small amount of spices for some heat, a little vinegar and sausage slices mixed in. Most of the orders included Pokey's moist and smooth mix of cornbread that is probably the best cornbread I have ever tasted.

If you could not make it that night I would suggest you make Pokey Black's Taste of Louisiana one of your next stops.

The June LEO was a day trip to the Omaha Benson area and a stop at Shaheen's Afghan Cuisine. We met at 1 pm with eight members and five guests present. Waheed, one of Shaheen's sons, told us about the family restaurant. Shaheen's family, which includes eight children, came to the US in 2015. Shaheen was an interpreter for the US army .



**Eloise Hiatt shows her meal from Taste of Louisiana.**



**Gayle and Milt Bayer enjoyed their Afghan food.**

Shaheen's has several traditional Afghan (prayer) rooms where meals may be enjoyed while sitting around a Dastarkhan (cloth on the floor). The rooms had colored Toshaks or floor cushions for seating. The practice of eating on the floor in a clean designated area with shoes removed is typical Afghan culture.

Mantu, an appetizer made from steamed dumplings that are filled with ground beef and topped with seasoned lentils and yogurt, was exceptionally good. Some ordered the Kabuli Pulao which was a lamb shank covered with rice, carrots and raisins. If you wanted a combination of items, the Mix Combo had chicken, lamb and a half of Shami Kebab which is ground lamb and spices. This also included rice, naan or a fresh salad. Desserts included items like Fermi (custard pudding), Shirbring (rice Pudding) and Afghan ice cream.

The October 7 Let's Eat Out meeting was at Villa Amore Italian Eatery and Wine Bar next to The Country Inn and Suites on north 27th Street. Twelve members of the Lincoln Friendship Force club attended.

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## Diversity Committee Meets with Asian Center staff, clients

By Janet Walters and Phyllis Arth, Co-chairs

The FFL Diversity and Community Service Committee (DCSC) is reaching out to the Asian Community and Cultural Center as we strive to get to know our Lincoln neighbors better. Lisa Guill, the Lincoln Welcoming Communities Coordinator who also works at the Asian Center, served as a liaison and connected our group with three Asian Center staff members, who, along with three of their clients, were guests at our first of four planned small group gatherings in the homes of DCSC members. A friend made during our outreach to the Muslim population last year and her guest attended. Food was shared and everyone enjoyed the conversations.



Diversity committee members are, from left, Eloise Hiatt., a guest, Phyllis Arth, Janet Walters

We learned that many cultural groups are represented at the Asian Center. Attending staff members were from Vietnam, Egypt, and the Sudan. We asked about ways that FFL might support individuals served by the Asian Center. One idea that seems to be well aligned with our mission of outreach and friendship offering is to explore creating gift bags of spices to be donated to and distributed at the Asian Center over the holidays. The committee will be exploring this idea and will get back to FFL with details a bit later. DCSC members are joining with interested folks we meet through our outreach to community groups to create an auxiliary group called Friends of Friendship Force. We plan to gather informally to have conversations and learn more about our Lincoln neighbors. At some point, these individuals may want to formally join FFL but initially the goal is to learn about our neighbors and build bridges within the Lincoln community.

## Calendar October 2025 to December 2025

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

- Breakfast and Conversation, second Saturday of each month at Stauffer's Restaurant, 8:30 a.m. Bring a guest.
- October 22, 2025, LEO, Tantor Indian, 3530 Village Driver #100, 5 p.m.
- November 10, FFL Board meeting at Walt Library from 2-4 p.m.
- November 4 – 9, 2025, Outbound Journey to Sarasota, Fl.
- December 1, 2025, FFL Board, at President's home
- December 6, 2025, Annual Christmas party at International Quilt Museum, 2 – 4 p.m.

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## A Canadian experience!

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The Friendship Force of Lincoln will be joining the Friendship Force of Cheyene for a great Canadian experience. From June 8-15 the two clubs will be hosted by the Manitoba Friendship Force. After a week of exploring the Winnipeg area a short flight will take you to Niagara for a great view of the Canadian Falls, Niagara on the Lake and exploration of a beautiful part of the country. The two destination trip is June 8-23.

If you are interested in participating in this adventure, please let me know by Nov. 30, 2025. The Canadian clubs are able to host up to 12 ambassadors. Currently, Cheyene has six interested parties so space is limited.

Pat Novack (Journey Coordinator Chair)  
402.613.6269 (text)  
[mutanu123@yahoo.com](mailto:mutanu123@yahoo.com)

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## Reuniting with Friends from Adelaide, Australia and Cedar Rapids- Iowa City

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by **Judy Keetle**

In 2023, Sharre Jahde and I traveled to Australia and New Zealand with the Friendship Force of Cedar Rapids-Iowa City. A delegation from FF Adelaide, Australia had a journey to Cedar Rapids, Iowa this August. Sharre's Adelaide home host Annette and my day host Zeta were with the group. The Cedar Rapids-Iowa City Friendship Force invited us to join them.

We traveled to Iowa, stopping in the Amana Colonies on the way to Iowa City where we met with the group for drinks. It was wonderful to see a panorama of the city and so many familiar faces. There were hugs all around. Later we had dinner as we walked around downtown Iowa City, tasting goodies from several restaurants.

The next day was 'Cedar Rapids Day'. We started at the Grant Woods Museum and Studio/Home, followed by information about Cedar Rapids as we stood on the island in the middle of the river. We then viewed the Grant Wood stained glass window in the Veterans Memorial Building. The Czech and Slovak Museum was the highlight of the afternoon. Jazz Under the Stars completed our day in Cedar Falls.

For our free day, our home host, Christine Allen, took us to Kolona, Iowa where many Amish and Mennonites live. We walked through the Friday sale barn where flowers, squash, pies, and other produce were auctioned off later in the day.

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## Reunion in Iowa (Continued from Page 5)

Most of the produce was delivered by horse and buggy. We then enjoyed delicious pastries at the Golden Delight Bakery. A bus tour of the area was informative and delightful. On our way to lunch we walked over many colorful, brick/quilt designs in the sidewalks of downtown. After a visit to the Stringtown Grocery we headed home to get ready for the Farewell Party where Christine had prepared a slide show of the events of the week. The meal was delicious and reminiscing with friends was great!

Saturday we bid farewell to Christine and headed back to Lincoln. Annette and her friend Milton came with us. We stopped in Omaha and walked on the Bob Kerry bridge. It was fun to take a photo of us with one foot in Nebraska and the other in Iowa. Sharre took Annette and Milton to western Nebraska and South Dakota the next week. Then the Australians were off to England for another FF journey.

Traveling with Friendship Force is not only fun and educational, but you get to make life-long friends. Annette and Milton were gone from home for two months by lining up back-to-back-to-back journeys in North America and England. Maybe something similar could be in your future.

## LEO Focuses on Ethnic Restaurants (Continued from Page 3)

The manager explained that the restaurant is family owned and also explained the menu options to us.

Florim Ramadani is the owner and has had several other Italian restaurants in Lincoln.

The white tablecloths make it seem more formal but the restaurant still has a casual feel to it which allowed for great fellowship and conversation.

The menu had many traditional Italian pasta dishes but also included steaks and specialty pizzas. The entrees are served with a choice of salad or soup and a fresh baked roll.

My selection was the meatballs sauteed in marinara sauce with angel hair pasta. I especially liked this dish with the smaller angel hair pasta. I had a beautiful garden salad. But I will say that the soup would have been an excellent choice.



**FFL members enjoy Villa Amore.**

## COIL Delegates from Romania Visit Lincoln

Five delegates from Romania and a facilitator and interpreter spent a week in August learning about Lincoln, Crete, Nebraska City and Syracuse and state and local governments. They were sponsored by Open World and the Congressional Office of International Leadership and hosted by Friendship Force of Lincoln.

The delegates are elected deputy mayors of their cities and counties in a country the size of Michigan and a neighbor to Ukraine. Their Nebraska experiences started with a tour of Crete with the mayor, city council and city officials. They were hosted at a welcome dinner with Friendship Force members where the Romanians presented videos, photos and information about their home cities. A special guest was the canine member of the Crete police department.

They experienced about 40 hours of educational meetings, including with the city, county and state government. They had a tour of the state capitol and a luncheon meeting with the local and state government reporters for the Lincoln Journal-Star. A trip to Syracuse also included meetings with the mayor, city council, and State Senator Bob Hallstrom.

They met with a Otoe county commissioner and other county officials and with Nebraska City officials.

The delegates said Romania is among the safest countries in Europe, but the Russian invasion of Ukraine has cut off traditional energy sources. They are grateful for solar panels provided by the European Union for houses and businesses.

Nebraska Congressman Don Bacon is co-chair of the Congressional Office for International Leadership and spoke on the House floor in July about the importance of assisting Romania's neighbor Ukraine with veterans' services and trauma care. Ben Nelson, former Nebraska Governor and Senator, serves as Chair of the COIL board.



**Romanian delegates visited Crete, NE as part of their week in the Lincoln area through the Congressional Office of International Leadership/Open World. Friendship Force of Lincoln members hosted them in their homes.**

**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**