



PASSPORT

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

NUMBER 126

LINCOLN, NEBRASKA

MAY 2012



A bus load of FFI members traveled to Pella, Iowa to experience a bit of Holland right here in the Heartland.

Greetings from the President

by Nancy Comer - President



It seems like only yesterday when Lincoln ambassadors to Costa Rica shared their exchange experiences with a crowd of 100 plus at Eastmont Towers. Jan Sibal prepared a powerpoint program of exquisite photos, good as any seen in National Geographic, which were wonderfully narrated by Barbara Ridder. Gaylord Becker, the Exchange Director, prepared the memory books. For those who have not traveled on a FF exchange, each ambassador is assigned a day and responsible for summarizing that day's activities. These summaries are compiled along with favorite photos in a memory book and given to each ambassador. The book allows each to relive memories over and over. Tonight as my husband and I looked back over the Costa Rica memory book, we laughed as we relived our experiences on the zip line on our last day in San Jose, and shed a tear over Gaylord's smiling broadly from under

his sun hat as we drifted down a winding jungle tributary. Sadly, in March, Gaylord died in a tragic accident. Happily, we have fond memories to cherish.

FFL has a number of activities underway that strengthen our ties with the international communities in Lincoln. In March, we began hosting small group diversity dinners. I had intended to host myself, but after explaining the idea of bringing people from different cultures together, Masha, and her husband Masoud, both graduate students at UNL from Iran, asked if they could prepare an authentic Persian dinner and serve it in their apartment. Our neighbors, the Castillo's, joined the gathering along with Marv Almy who works with refugee families through the Good Neighbor Community Center. As the evening came to an end, the Castillos invited us to their home for an authentic Mexican dinner. Since then, the event has expanded into a neighborhood progressive dinner with Greek and German dishes from other neighbors adding an international flair.

Getting into the spirit, Robert and Sara Friedman hosted friends from Afghanistan and Puerto Rico. Other members of FFL have agreed to host a diversity dinner, so

the idea is taking off. If this sounds like something you'd like to do, or if you know people from other racial, ethnic, religious backgrounds that might like to participate, let me know. We may after hosting 4-6 dinners, invite all of those who participated to meet for a potluck supper.

I understand quite a few of you participated in the Children of Abraham at Westminster Presbyterian March 29. This too was an opportunity to meet and get to know members of Lincoln's religious communities in a spirit of friendship and understanding.

Shifting gears, have you heard that the Russians are coming? Well get ready. Ten young leaders will be arriving in Lincoln in June as part of the Open World program. Julie Albrecht and Gloria Van Ackeren and their committees are working overtime to put together the program. Demonstrating our Midwestern hospitality, we need all of FFL to join in the welcome and farewell activities. Check out the registration information for details.

Finally, an update on the Midwest Leadership Conference that Betty Starr, Laurie Ann Scott and I attended April 26-28 in Ames, Iowa. Kathy Thomas, from FFI in Atlanta spoke about FFI's Expansion Plan to start 45 new clubs, thus expanding the number of clubs worldwide from 365

continued

clubs in 57 countries to over 400. Of these, three will be in the Midwest. Presentations encouraged us to “awaken our creative genius” as participants brainstormed ideas for themed exchanges and ways to better communicate with other nearby clubs when selecting countries for outbound exchanges and work together to support one another filling outbound and domestic exchanges. Attention Larry Kluck. Look for applications for the Northern Colorado exchange from those that attended as many expressed interest.

So until we meet again via this column or in person, be thinking of what activities you will participate in to build global understanding one friendship at a time.

2012 Social Activities

August 17th

Annual Meeting at St. Mark’s Church, 84th & Pioneers

October 19th

Hay Rack Ride with Niagara Falls, Canada Ambassadors

December 1st

Holiday Party West Gate Bank
6003 Old Cheney

Exchange Director Training



If you have ever thought about leading an exchange, please come to the exchange director training session at Gere Library on Thursday July 12 at 6:30 p.m. To be sure we have enough materials, please notify Larry Kluck at LarryKluck@hotmail.com that you are planning to attend.

We will cover planning and conducting a successful exchange.

The following are criteria for leading an exchange:

An International Exchange:

1. Are a current member of FFL and a member for the past two years.
2. Been an Ambassador on an International Exchange with FFL
3. Served on an Exchange Committee or been a member of the Board.
4. Attended a FFL ED Training Workshop within the last 3 years or agree to attend one scheduled prior to exchange planning.
5. Agree to work with the club VP as exchange coordinator.
6. Follow current exchange procedures as established by FFI and FFL.

A Domestic Exchange:

1. Are a current member of FFL and a member for the past two years.
2. Been an ambassador or a host on/for an Inter-Club or International Exchange.

An Incoming Exchange Director:

1. Are a current member of FFL and a member for the past two years.
2. Been an ambassador or host on/for an International Exchange with FFL.

What Made Ireland So Great?

by Laurie Ann Scott, Exchange Director



It was fantastic! Yes, the scenery was gorgeous, the jagged cliffs overlooking the ocean, amazing rock formations, castles nestled on the hillsides, historical sites, quaint villages, the Killarney St. Patrick's Day parade, and, of course, the 100 shades of green of an Irish spring. But there was more.

On or about March 13, twenty-six ambassadors boarded planes at various airports in the USA bound for Dublin. Most were strangers. Exiting customs, six shared a van to the hotel. Just enough time to get acquainted, the six ran into a few more. They would have walked on by except for the FF badges. Let's get caught up over coffee. "Sounds good." Some in the group decided to take the bus to the city center. Wait a minute, there's some more. "Hi! Where are you from?" And look over there, a gift shop. Surprise! More FF badges. You know Dublin may not be that big after all. On the bus back to the hotel, still more. Finally, the entire group got together in a nearby

pub. Additionally, all met Alan Wilkinson, the group's wonderful guide and bus-driver. By the end of the day, ambassadors from Washington State, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Kentucky, West Virginia, California, Texas, Illinois, Oregon, Colorado, and Nebraska made new friends. Later, they would call themselves the Fabulous Flexible Friendship Force Follies of 2012-ish. (The -ish being a reference to Irish time, that is not exact, precise or particularly demanding.)

Friendships begun that first day blossomed over the two-week exchange. Eating together, sitting on the bus together, and walking through towns and countryside together, friendships deepened. When a stomach bug began moving through the group and when someone took a fall, the concern and caring was evident. People shared cures and pills and icy-hot packs. Time flew by and suddenly we were enjoying our last night together. It seemed that we had the restaurant to ourselves. Flash cameras captured the moment. Ambassadors one at a time rose, offered thanks and appreciation for a wonderful exchange, and were greeted by applause and cheers. Even the guide's wife joined in, more applause, more cheers. Did I say hugs and smiles were plentiful.

Although we had no home stay, we did meet with the only Friendship Force in Ireland, the Causeway Coast Club. Two of their officers joined us for dinner one evening. Most of the club joined us for lunch the following day. The club also arranged a meeting with a member of the Northern Ireland Parliament who arranged a tour of the Stormont (equivalent to our Capitol). One ambassador invited an Irish friend and his wife to dinner. We huddled together as they shared stories of life in Belfast. As a cricket official, the gentleman took us through the finer points of the game, something like baseball but not quite. In effort to spark interest in the Friendship Force, ambassadors spread the word as locals wanted to know what was going on. In some places it is difficult for the Friendship Force idea to catch on. Two clubs in Ireland have disbanded. Where there are no FF clubs, ambassadors can be exposed to the beauty, culture and people of these regions through Discover Exchanges.

As we Discovered Ireland, we also discovered the beauty of The Friendship Force in action as a diverse group of people who didn't know each other united in Friendship. And THAT is what made Ireland so great!

“Taming the Frontier: What Makes the Great Plains Unique”

By Betty Starr, Exchange Director



This is the theme of FFL's exchange in 2013. The FF of Oklahoma (Oklahoma City) and FF of Kansas (Wichita) will join us. The exchange will feature programs and exhibits related to westward expansion and the Great Plains, past and present, FFL and our friends in Oklahoma and Kansas are enthusiastic and looking forward to working together on the exchange, inviting the world to visit us,

and sharing with it the history and culture of the region stretching across the heartland of the United States from Canada to New Mexico. The clubs will work jointly through the coming year putting together a three-week exchange that will feature a week with each club. The exchange committee will be asking YOU to help with home hosting, transportation, food and to participate in the planned activities.

To get you in the mood, on the 150 anniversary of the signing of the Homestead Act, NET during the month of May will offer several programs focusing on “Free Land”. Check them out.

Auction Items Needed

Do you have mementos from your travels abroad or items that you have collected from hosting friends from abroad that you would be willing to contribute to a fund-raiser for the Bajja Initiatives for Community Empowerment (BICE)? Started by Betty Mutsbi in Uganda, BICE teaches women in rural Africa how to read and write, avoid illness, feed their children, family plan, and much more. You will hear more about BICE at the Annual Meeting.

The Annual Meeting will feature a silent auction where the items you contribute will be auctioned off to raise money to aid BICE in its efforts. While the auction will feature mainly items from international exchanges, all items of value (above garage-sale grade) are welcome. Gift cards and monetary contributions are also welcome. No baked-goods please. Come prepared for a pleasant Friendship Force shopping experience.

Check out your closets, cupboards, and storage areas and contribute to this worthwhile cause. Contact Joanna Rogers at 402-484-8678 or rkrohn@neb.rr.com to arrange drop-off or pickup.

The Russians Are Coming! Join the Fun and Bring Your Friends

By Gloria Van Ackeren

Twelve young Russian leaders will arrive in Lincoln June 8 to learn about leadership in the United States. This eight-day exchange is sponsored by the Open World Leadership Program and hosted by FFL. Would you like to be part of this memorable experience?

To attend events, please complete this form and mail it with your check by May 26 to Gloria Van Ackeren, 7604 Phares Drive, Lincoln, NE 68516. Please write check to Friendship Force of Lincoln. Contact Gloria at glrvanack@windstream.net or (402) 420-5320 for questions.

Name(s) _____

Phone number _____ Email _____

Open World Events		Cost	Number	Total
Sunday, June 10 Social 5 PM Dinner 6 PM Music program	WELCOME PARTY Holmes Lake Apartments 7100 Holmes Lake Road BBQ brisket and beverages provided Please indicate the side dish you'll bring) Appetizer___Vegetable or Salad ___ Relish Tray ___ Fruit ___Dessert ___ I will help set up for the party ___ I will help clean up after the party ___	\$5 x _____	_____	_____
Wednesday, June 13 Social 5:30 PM Dinner 6 PM	BUFFET SOCIAL (pay at Val's) Valentino's Party Room 35th and Holdrege	\$12 per person		
Thursday, June 14 Social 11:15 AM Luncheon 11:30	BUFFET LUNCHEON Nebraska Governor's Residence 1425 H Street	\$13 x _____	_____	_____
Friday, June 15 Social 5:30 PM Dinner 6:15 PM Music Program	FRIENDSHIP & FAREWELL PARTY Hillcrest Country Club, 9401 O Street Please Select: Beef___Chicken___Fish___	\$21 x _____	_____	_____
		TOTAL ENCLOSED _____		

Membership News

By Mary Bryant

The March 19th wine and cheese gathering for prospective and new members was well attended. New members attending were Doris Carpenter, Jaci Hammer, Dave and Diane Spomer. Prospective members included Tita Hynes, Walt Hutchinson, Jan Nelson and Norma Miller. Jan and Norma joined that evening so please provide them with a warm FFL welcome when you see them. Hosts Gayle Bayer and Amy Birky and FF Vice President Larry Kluck welcomed the group, and members Barb Ridder, Erna Rethmeier and Hope Partridge shared their recent exchange experiences.

Please continue to refer friends and acquaintances. Send names, addresses, phone numbers and emails to Mary at ab62359@windstream.net



2012 Dues Notice - The Friendship Force of Lincoln

Dues for 2012 are \$30 for an Individual Membership and \$40 for a Family Membership. Dues are for the calendar year January 1st through December 31st and are not prorated. 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) *Please Print* _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone Number _____

E-mail _____

CATEGORY: Individual-\$30 Family-\$40

NOTE: New members each receive a complimentary name badge; replacement name badges cost \$9.00 each for a pin-on type or \$11.00 each for magnetic style.

Replacement Name Badge @\$9.00

Total Amount Enclosed: _____

PASSPORT



**The Friendship Force of Lincoln
PO Box 30334
Lincoln, Nebraska 68503**

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit No. 642
Lincoln, NE**