



# Friendship Force Questions and Answers



## **What Is The Friendship Force?**

The Friendship Force is a nationwide, not-for-profit organization, dedicated to promoting worldwide understanding through the "force of friendship." On March 1, 1977, President Jimmy Carter announced the creation of Friendship Force at a formal White House dinner following a national Governor's conference, President Carter said, in part ... "I want to see the ties of our country with other countries -- large and small, weak and powerful, very friendly and not so friendly -- strengthened. I think it will be an exciting thing." This is the type of involvement that each of us can do that is a little above and beyond government.

On March 17, 1977, the Friendship Force was chartered. Since that time, a national/international organization has been structured and is growing daily. Since our inception, over 1,000,000 Americans and their international counterparts have exchanged cities, homes, wonderful experiences, and lasting friendships.

## **Since The Organization Of The Friendship Force, Is It A Government Program?**

No. There are no public funds involved at the state or federal level.

## **If This Is Not A Government Program, How Does Friendship Force Get Its Money?**

At the local level, Friendship Force is operated strictly by volunteers and thus its operating expenses are kept to a minimum. A small fee from each Friendship Force exchange is dispersed to the local committees and to the national office to sustain current and future operations. Beyond this, the local and national offices depend on private donations and corporate contributions to ensure their viability.

## **Is The Friendship Force A Travel Club?**

No. In spite of the fact that many ambassadors may use their vacation period for exchanges, Friendship Force is not a travel club per se. We want to promote worldwide friendship and understanding at a local and individual level while at the same time enjoying the experience of traveling to an exciting destination.

## **How Does A Typical Friendship Force Exchange Take Place?**

Once or twice a year a flight will be conducted from the greater Louisville area to a city in another nation. The group will live in the homes of private citizens for five to seven days, become part of the family, learn about their hosts' jobs, and the community itself. Friendships will be formed. A second week of home hosting at a different location may be planned or the group or individuals may travel on their own.

## **How Are Ambassadors And Hosts Matched?**

Ambassadors are matched with their host families according to their backgrounds. This means simply that a teacher would ideally be lined up with a host family in the foreign exchange city that has a similar background. The same is true with a policeman and so on. Of course, sometimes these ideal matches are not possible, but an effort is made by both local communities to maximize mutuality of interests.

## **What About Travel Costs?**

The cost of each flight varies with the destination. For instance, if we were to exchange with the Canadian city of Montreal, the cost would be substantially lower than if we were to visit Tokyo, Japan. With rising fuel prices, costs are increasing ... as with any travel experience today. The Friendship Force charges a fee for the home hosting. We are responsible for our own travel arrangements. The local FFLK Chapter assigns an Exchange Director. The ED works with a travel agent to arrange airline and local transportation needs. If you were to compare the cost of an exchange to the cost of a comparable vacation, I am sure you would find the latter to be substantially more expensive.

## **How Do I Become An Ambassador?**

Each prospective ambassador must fill out an application with their local Friendship Force organization. Each individual/family is interviewed by a local Friendship Force representative to see if they really understand the Friendship Force itself and the program at hand. Since each exchange accommodates approximately 20-25 ambassadors, not every applicant will be accepted.

### **I Want To Be A Host. What Qualifications Do I Need?**

To host a foreign ambassador, you must simply have a desire to meet people from other cultures and, of course, a place for them to sleep. Hosting is not necessarily the same as being a travel guide for four or more days. On the contrary, we encourage host families to bring ambassadors to their places of work and to share the responsibility with other host families in showing them our city and our culture. The local Friendship Force hosting committee will assist host families who are tied to jobs during the daytime to find help in caring for their ambassadors. We do not expect host families to lavish their guests with expensive parties and dinners, but prefer that the traveling ambassador see the family in a "normal setting." During the hosting experience, there will be several group gatherings which hosts and their guests are expected to attend. Otherwise, families, or other small groups of hosts, can plan the activities themselves.

### **What if I Don't Speak The Language Of Those With Whom We Exchange. Can I Still Participate?**

Of course. Prior to the exchange itself, workshops will be held for both hosts and ambassadors which will acquaint you with the language, customs, and other information in order to make your experience as fulfilling as possible. You will be surprised that a few words in a foreign language combined with sign language, if necessary, will be sufficient building blocks to start meaningful communication. Luckily, many foreign visitors have a more workable knowledge of English than we do of other languages.

### **Can People Of All Backgrounds Be A Part Of The Friendship Force?**

It is the goal of every Friendship Force community to encourage participation in all facets of that community.

### **Does The Friendship Force Encourage Donations?**

Tax deductible donations are very welcome. In order to make the program a success, we are dependent on generous contributions from individuals and business.

### **Who Do We Contact For Applications And For More Information?**

Visit The Friendship Force of Louisville, KY website at <http://fflk.home.insightbb.com>

Log on to FF International at <http://www.thefriendshipforce.org>

or email [fflk@insightbb.com](mailto:fflk@insightbb.com)

## **The Friendship Force of Louisville, Kentucky**

### **Mission Statement:**

Establish personal friendships across national / international barriers, develop an understanding of other cultures, and foster goodwill through home exchanges.

### **Overview of Member Activities:**

Your Friendship Force of Louisville, Kentucky, membership includes for all members in good standing, participation in all activities. It entitles you to access to The Friendship Force of Louisville, Kentucky newsletter and the Friendship online magazine produced by our Atlanta headquarters. Attending general meetings, held five times a year with potluck dinners. Consideration for all outbound and inbound exchanges and participation in other FF related activities.

### **Membership:**

Individual membership is \$33.00; family membership is \$52.00. This covers a calendar year January through December. Each member is to have and wear a Friendship Force of Louisville, Kentucky, name badge. The cost is \$7.00 per badge. Members participating in events/exchanges are requested to have and wear at designated occasions the approved shirt that bears our organizations logo.