

2023 FFWM September Newsletter

FFWM

Fri 9/1/2023 6:29 AM

To: Marcia Ann Ellis <marcia.ellis@wmich.edu>

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friendship force

WESTERN MICHIGAN

<https://www.friendshipforcewmich.org/>

Presidents' Message

We have great news! We have now been assigned 2 inbound and 2 outbound journeys for 2024. The outbounds are to North Carolina and Australia/New Zealand. The inbounds are Limburg, Belgium and Xalapa, Mexico. For these journeys to be successful, we will need journey coordinators. Please consider volunteering! See more details below.

Nancy Draayer

Journeys

2024 Journeys

International Outbound:

Wairarapa, New Zealand and Newcastle, Australia with FF Cheyenne, WY

Journey is still in process of negotiations. A journey coordinator is needed.

Domestic Outbound:

Western North Carolina

Shirley Wiersma has offered to be co-coordinator. We are looking for someone to volunteer to work with Shirley. No experience is necessary! This journey will take place in April.

International Inbound:

1. **FF of Limburg, Belgium** with FF Sarasota, FL

A journey coordinator is needed for this journey.

2. **FF Xalapa, Mexico** with FF Northern Illinois.

A journey coordinator is needed for this journey.

Please consider volunteering to be a journey coordinator!! Our goal is to have 2 coordinators for each journey. You don't need to have experience as a coordinator. We will have you work with someone experienced. This is a great way to get involved!

About a Journey

Although I have been a member of FF for several years, due to my work schedule and limited vacation time, I was unable to participate in a journey until this past year. The journey to Azerbaijan and Turkey had been well researched and planned by Louise and Marci and looked like the perfect first trip for my husband and myself. A few

months before the trip my husband as well as Louise were unable to go so the home stay hosts were switched and I ended up sharing a



room with Marci for a portion of the trip. I soon learned the trip was going to give me far more than people to travel with. It would be easy to go on about all the beautiful scenery, ancient buildings, the rich culinary experience, and the culture of both countries but they took a backseat to the

people. For it was the people, from our club, the SW Florida club, the host clubs and those that we met along the way, our guides and bus drivers, and most of all our delightful home hosts that made the trip far more than what a travel agent could arrange for you.



It was in the off hours, the space between planned activities that relationships deepened. It was moments of kindness when my host brought me medicine and touched my forehead for a fever, the communication between myself and my host as we shared using Google Translator for communicating our experiences as young widows raising children. The laughter

on the bus and camp songs in the forest, the sharing between small groups in the evening, and let's not forget one more photo from Stan



to mark the existence of the experience. Take the journey, develop intercultural relations and new friendships. The goodbyes will be painful but the cherished memories will sooth your soul and make you want to go to the next country with Friendship Force. My hope is we will share

one together.

Loie Dye-Gustafson



LEO

Twenty of us gathered at a LEO for Korean food at Namsen Korean BBQ in Kalamazoo.



Next LEO

September 6 at 6:00pm
Let's all meet at Casa Real!
232 W. Allegan St., Otsego

SEE YOU THERE!!!

Get To Know Our Members



I was raised on the Southside of Chicago and moved with my husband to Michigan in 1980. We raised a son who lives in Ann Arbor with grandsons 6 and 8 and a daughter who is married and lives in LA. Unfortunately my husband passed away 8 years ago. I retired after 43 years as a clinical social worker, a wonderful career for me. I am very active in various organizations, and love to hike, swim, read, attend plays and concerts. I have hosted several times for other organizations and FF Greater Orlando was my first time with

Friendship Force.
Shirley Wise

Contribute to the Newsletter

Would you like to contribute something or share a travel experience in this newsletter? If you are willing to share your adventures, a photo, or anything related to travel, cultures, places you've visited, please email your article to Marcia Ellis at ellism@wmich.edu.

My FFI

The members-only portal, my.friendshipforce.org, is the go-to place for news, journey opportunities, payments, virtual experiences and all other member-relevant information. If you have not yet signed up, click [Word](#) or [PDF](#) for detailed instructions.

Travel Opportunities

Click the link below to review a catalog of Special Journeys that are currently being offered by other FFI clubs. Perhaps there is a journey that interests you!

[2023 Journey Catalog](#)

[2023 Club to Club Journeys](#)

FFWM Newsletter

Contact us: FFwesternmichigan@gmail.com

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