



2026 April FFWM newsletter

From FFWM <FFwesternmichigan@88357545.mailchimpapp.com>

Date Tue 3/31/2026 10:50 PM

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

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friendship force

WESTERN MICHIGAN

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

April 2026



President's Message

Happy Spring FFWM,

I am pleased to report that we have 27 FFI members and 8 FFWM members. We are off to a great start. I'm glad that so many still want to support the mission of Friendship Force. If you are still undecided, it's not too late to join. We have a great journey coming up in October to Oklahoma. Check out some of the details below. You will need to join FFI to participate in this journey. If you just want to stay involved at the local level, you have the option to join FFWM at only \$10. Please consider one of these options.

Our inbound journey is coming up in May and we still need volunteers for this. Please consider being a day host or dinner host. Come to the welcome or farewell dinners or any of the other activities listed below! FFI has encouraged us to get the word out about Friendship Force. You can do this by handing out flyers or cards to friends who might be interested. Ask at the LEO'S and we can give you some. Also, if you enjoy public speaking, let us know. Presenters are always in demand.

Finally, our LEO for April will be hosted by some of our members. Let Lyn Hargreave know if you are interested. These small group gatherings are a great way to get to know each other better. Hope to see you soon!
Nancy Draayer

2026 Journeys

Journey Assignments

Inbound: May 4-10. FF Tallahassee FL. JC: Pam Sackett (tulilikivi@msn.com). Activities will include the Chihuly exhibit at Meijer Gardens and a performance at the Gilmore Festival!

Outbound: Mid October. FF Oklahoma City. JCs: Loie Dye-Gustafson and Marcia Ellis.

Friendship Force Oklahoma is looking forward to hosting your club from Michigan. Plans are underway to share not only our city of the present but to take a peek at our past. Oklahoma's celebration of 100 year old US Route 66 is on the agenda and a tour of the renovated state capitol with its exhibit of Oklahoma art will be included in this journey to Oklahoma City. The culture of the ole' west and our rich and beautiful Native American heritage will be explored at the Cowboy and Western heritage Museum. A trip to the National Weather Service will show how those important tornado warnings are developed. Top this with a sampling of good Oklahoma food. Come join us!!!! FF Oklahoma

Accepting ambassador applications now. Download the [Ambassador Application](#) here. Please email your application to Loie at wordpictures@gmail.com.

Outbound: July 11-Aug 7. Iringa, Tanzania JCs: Louise Potratz (LPL4@hotmail.com), Nancy Draayer, Lisa Fisher. Waiting list only.

Journey forms can be downloaded from our website [HERE](#).

Itinerary for FF Tallahassee Inbound Journey

- May 4 Welcome potluck at Walden Woods at 5pm
- May 5 Meyer May House at 9:50am
Meijer Gardens incl Chihuly exhibits at 11:45am
Lunch on your own
Dinner at Sheshco at 6:15pm
- May 6 Tulips at Window on the Waterfront Park on 6th St at 9:45am
Lunch at Holland State Park at 12:15pm
After lunch: quilt show, dance performance, shopping
Dinner at Root Cafe, Fennville at 6pm
- May 7 Lady's Library at 9:55am
Gilmore Jazz vocalist performance at Civic Theater at 11:50am
Lunch at Walnut & Park Cafe at 1:30pm
Kalamazoo Institute of Art at 2:30pm
Dinner with dinner hosts
- May 8 Kalamazoo Valley Gleaners at 8:25am
Amish lunch at Martha's in Centreville at 11:45am
Silver Star Leather for demo at 2:15pm
MenoHoff Museum, E&S shopping optional
Guests take hosts to dinner OR
- May 9 Guests take hosts to brunch or lunch. Free day.
Farewell party at Friendship Village at 5pm.
Cello & piano selections by Catherine Henze.

All members are encouraged to attend all events...especially the welcome and farewell parties!
RSVP to Pam Sackett (tulikivi@msn.com).

Next LEO



FFWM, READ ON!

It's time for our next small group LEO!

We will again meet in the home of a member who will provide an entree and ask you to bring a "go-with".

For this reason it is IMPORTANT that we know who is coming by next weekend at the latest (Friday April 3 - Good Friday). This will enable us time to assign you to a host and the host to get in touch with you regarding directions and what you can contribute to the meal.

The date for the gathering is: **Sunday, April 12, mid day.**

Your host will inform you of the exact time to arrive.

These small group meals were popular with those who participated in January so we hope you will join in.

Please reply to this invite ASAP either Yay or Nay.
lynhargreave@gmail.com



March 12th LEO

March 12 LEO took place at McGonigle's in Kalamazoo. Twenty members attended. Sorry folks....no photos were taken!!!

FFI News

In February 2025, Friendship Force's Board of Directors announced a shift in brand focus to position the organization as a global movement for peace through friendship, emphasizing its role in citizen diplomacy and the everyday impact of its members.

The change also reflects a need for stronger outreach—especially to donors—to ensure long-term sustainability and growth. As part of this effort, FFI conducted a brand review to better communicate its mission and modernize its image.

The update includes new branding elements, but emphasizes that the true identity of Friendship Force lies in its mission and actions, not visual design. Clubs are not required to adopt the new brand and may continue using existing materials, though optional tools and resources are available for those who wish to update.

Additional support includes a new Club Marketing Kit and ongoing resources to help with recruitment, retention, and outreach, while still preserving each club's individuality.

Board Meeting

The next board meeting will be April 15, 2026 at 7pm. Typically board meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month. We will announce the dates and times through this newsletter. Any member interested in attending please notify Louise Potratz at LpL4@hotmail.com. You will receive an invitation to the meeting which is held via Zoom. You don't even have to leave your house!

See Who Is Traveling

Lisa and Nancy went to India.





Travel Opportunities

Click the links 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!

Go [HERE](#) to see all group journeys. (You must be signed in to myFFI).



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.



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