

Getting involved in an incoming Friendship Force Journey

The key to enjoying your Friendship Force experience, as is the case in any organization, is getting involved and participating in the organization's activities. As a new member of Friendship Force, one of the best ways to become involved is to participate in an incoming "Journey", when several member (usually about 8-15) "Ambassadors" (as our visitors are called) from domestic or international clubs visits our Raleigh club. Here are several ways that you can consider helping out when the Ambassadors visit Raleigh:

Home Hosting

The responsibilities of a "home host" are pretty much what you would expect. The key difference between Friendship Force and other travel organizations is that we host our visitors in our homes. The home host may host one person or perhaps two people, either a couple or two people who are travelling as "singles" (though married, the person may be traveling on this trip alone).

As home host, you provide them a place to sleep, a good breakfast and, unless alternative arrangements are made, accompany them on the day's activities. If you cannot provide transportation for the day, you may arrange for a "day host" to do so (more on that later).

Your principal responsibility is to make the person feel at home, to share your interests with them, and enjoy each other's company. Once the planned day's activities are finished, you are free to discuss with your guest Ambassador what they would like to do and suggest activities to enjoy during the "off hours". You may be familiar with a Raleigh "gem" that you would like to have them experience. They may just enjoy watching TV or a movie or just relaxing or reading or maybe playing a game... or just retiring early, whatever you mutually decide.

Day Hosting

As mentioned above, as a home host you may have other things that you need to attend to during a particular day (though, as a "home host" you should be willing to spend a considerable amount of time with your Ambassador). Home hosts can call upon other volunteers to host their Ambassador for a day's activities. If you can't home host, this may be an opportunity for you to become involved in one (or several) of the Journey's days.

You can place your name on a list of "Day Hosts" that is provided to the home hosts. It is the responsibility of the home host to contact the day host and make arrangements to get the Ambassador to an arranged place where the day host will take over for the day's itinerary. The Day Host will then drive the Ambassador and accompany them on the day's activities. After the planned itinerary for that day, the day host will take the Ambassador back to either an arranged meeting place or back to the host home as is mutually agreed upon.

Regional Dinner Host

In the course of an incoming Journey, during one of the evenings, several of the hosts and Ambassadors will get together for a dinner. We try to cluster the attendance at these events within a reasonable

distance of the host's home, so these events we call "Regional Dinners". Typically there are six to ten people at each of the three to four regional dinners.

As a regional dinner host, you plan the meal, extend the invitation to the people assigned to attend the dinner and provide the main course. Invited guests may be asked to bring a side dish or a salad, an appetizer or a desert. It is often customary to bring a bottle of wine, but the host decides who will contribute to the evening meal.

Journey Host Coordinator

This is the most complex and demanding of the responsibilities during an incoming Journey. It typically is handled by an experienced individual who has participated in at least one outgoing or incoming Journey so they understand the importance of their role and its many responsibilities. It is also helpful to have first assisted by planning a day's itinerary or an event (see below) or perhaps acting as a co-coordinator for a Journey.

The Journey host coordinator is in charge of planning and scheduling the entire Journey itinerary, coordinating with Friendship Force International (FFI), preparing a Journey budget, collecting the money from the Ambassadors and ensuring that the Ambassadors are assigned a host for their stay. It is important to communicate with home hosts any special requirements that may be needed by the Ambassadors such as no pets, no smoking home, dietary requirements/allergies, etc.

For a typical domestic Journey, there is usually a four or five day period planned for. An international Journey is usually scheduled for an entire week.

A helpful document produced by Friendship Force International is the Policies and Guidelines for Clubs and Programs which can be found here:

<https://www.thefriendshipforce.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Policies-and-Guidelines-for-Clubs-and-Programs-April-2019-Update.pdf>

Day or event planner/coordinator

The Journey Host Coordinator may call on several volunteers to assist him/her with the duties of planning a day's activity or a particular event.

A "Day" planning process involves planning the itinerary for one of the day's events, scheduling the venues/restaurants, and coordinating this with the Journey Host Coordinator.

Examples of an event would be a welcome reception or a farewell dinner or another planned activity.

The purpose of this brief paper is to acquaint you with how our Friendship Force Club executes an incoming "Journey" and how you might choose to help out with such a visit by club members from other parts of the U.S. (a "Domestic Incoming Journey") or other parts of the world (an "International Incoming Journey"). It will also give you an idea of and an appreciation for the commitment involved in hosting should you decide to make an outgoing Journey. We hope this document has been helpful to you as a new member of the Friendship Force of Raleigh.