



# friendship force

## GREATER MILWAUKEE

*a world of friends is a world of peace*

JULY-AUGUST 2024

[www.friendshipforcemilwaukee.org](http://www.friendshipforcemilwaukee.org)

### president's message

One of the best ways to get the most out of membership in Friendship Force is, of course, to get involved! There are lots of ways to do that:

- Host a 5th @ 5, as new members Tommy Golding and Diane Stoiber of Grafton have offered to do in September
- Host travelers from Baton Rouge, LA, Aug. 10-17
- Prepare dinner for a few of our guest ambassadors and their hosts



Chris Vogel

- Be a day host (join activities on one or two days when evening hosts aren't available)
  - Put FFGM in touch with an ethnic group we could partner with for a meal or other activity
  - Share your talents and knowledge.

For example, two members recently volunteered to lead special programs: Dave Loosen will give us an in-depth zoo tour July 31, and Mary Wacker organized a June 12 picnic/outdoor theater outing at Lapham Peak State Park and will be presenting an AARP talk on decluttering July 10. (*See page 3.*)

Please let Activities Committee chairs Ann Line or Gayle Best know if you — like Dave, Mary and many others in the past — have a talent you'd like to share with us.

Another way to get involved and learn more about FFI is to attend the North American Conference in Milwaukee Oct. 7-10. The first 10 members who sign up to attend will be reimbursed \$50 of the \$250 conference fee. Please let both-Treasurer Dorothy Krupa and me know if you sign up. You'll be reimbursed after the conference. See Dave Kalan's article on p. 4 for more information about the conference.

Also, both new and long-time members can learn more about Friendship Force from Zoom sessions for new members. (*See page 8.*) You must register for the sessions at [my.friendshipforce.org](http://my.friendshipforce.org). If you haven't set up your account there yet and have questions about how to do that, please contact me.

## AN OLD-FASHIONED WISCONSIN COOK-OUT ANNUAL PICNIC AUG. 13

This year's Annual Picnic will be held at a new location. We will meet 4:30 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 13, at ProHealth Care Park at 2950 S. Sunnyslope Rd. in New Berlin, located between Cleveland and National Avenues. The large double shelter is right next to the parking lot.

Journey ambassadors from Baton Rouge will be here that week, so come and meet them and picnic together. We are going to show our Louisiana friends what an old-fashioned Wisconsin picnic is like.

On the menu are hamburgers, brats, hot dogs, potato salad, coleslaw, cookies, watermelon and much more. The price per person is \$20. Please make your reservation by Aug. 3 by emailing BOTH Dorothy Krupa and Ann Line. Dorothy will invoice you for the \$20, with payment options of e-check, check or credit card.

Come have fun with the Baton Rouge ambassadors and your FFGM friends. Be ready to play some games and win some prizes.



## at a glance

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**6/19** W.H.E.T. 1:30 p.m. at Pro-Health Care Park, 2950 S. Sunnyslope Rd., New Berlin. R.S.V.P. to Ann Line.

**6/27** Cedarburg Day. Cedarburg History Museum and Cedarburg Art Museum visits, 10:30 a.m. Lunch 2:45 p.m. at Dorsey's Cafe and Market. R.S.V.P. to Gayle Best.

**7/9** W.H.E.T. 1:30 p.m. Wirth Park, 2585 Pilgrim Rd., Brookfield. R.S.V.P. to Ann Line.

**7/10** Book Club. 1:30 p.m. via Zoom. *The Elephant Whisperer* (South Africa/Zululand) by Lawrence Anthony.

**7/10** "Decluttering and Downsizing; You Can't Take it With You," by Mary Wacker. 10:30 a.m. Immanuel Baptist Church, 4250 N. 137th St., Brookfield. R.S.V.P. by July 7 to Mary Wacker.

**7/31** Tour of the Milwaukee County Zoo with Dave Loosen. 1:30 p.m. R.S.V.P. to Ann Line.

**8/5** 6:30 p.m. FFGM Board meeting via Zoom.

**8/13** Annual Picnic, 4:30 - 8 p.m. ProHealth Care Park, 2950 W. Sunnyslope Rd., New Berlin. \$20. R.S.V.P. by Aug. 3 by emailing **BOTH** Dorothy Krupa at and Ann Line.

### 2024 Journeys

April 15-22 - Shelby, NC Outbound

July 16-23 - Quad Cities & Cedar Rapids/Iowa City Outbound

Aug. 10-17 - Baton Rouge, LA Inbound

November 1-15 - New Zealand

## SEPT. 5: fifth @ 5

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We're skipping July because of July 4 activities as well as August because that's Annual Picnic month. But Tommy Golding and Diane Stoiber will host the Sept. 5 Fifth @ 5 in the community room of their apartment complex in Grafton. Watch for details in emails and in the next newsletter.

Hosts are still needed in 2024. Please respond to Barbara Geck at [barbarafrancesgeck@gmail.com](mailto:barbarafrancesgeck@gmail.com) or 262.542.2960. Feel free to plan into 2025!

## JULY 10: book club

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Do you like to read? If so, come read with us! We meet the second Wednesday of odd-numbered months at 1:30 p.m., usually via Zoom. Books, either fiction or non-fiction, take place in another country or deal with a different culture. A facilitator guides the discussion.

Up next, on July 10, is *The Elephant Whisperer* (South Africa/Zululand) by Lawrence Anthony. Marisue Zillig will be the facilitator.

- Sept. 11: *Send for Me* (Germany and Wisconsin) by Lauren Fox; facilitator: Mary Hauser. **Special Event:** The book discussion will be at 1 p.m. in the Firefly Room of the Wauwatosa Public Library, where author Lauren Fox will be speaking to us. Please consider inviting your non-FFGM member friends so that we have a good turnout to hear Fox talk about her book. *Send for Me* moves between Germany on the eve of World War II and present-day Milwaukee.
- Nov. 13: *American Dirt* (Mexico and U.S.) by Jeanine Cummins; facilitator: Iva Richards.

## NOVEMBER: new zealand

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It's time to compile the final list of members interested in the New Zealand/Australia Friendship Force journey this fall. Both weeks of the main two-week journey will be New Zealand — one week with the Manawatu Whanganui club and one week with the Wairarapa club.

An optional week in Australia is offered (with a limit of six individuals) in Tweed Valley.

We expect the first night with our NZ hosts to be Nov. 1. With the long travel time and crossing the dateline, expect to leave the United States Oct. 28 or 29.

Please note that this is considered a very physically active journey.

If you are interested in participating, please respond via email by **JUNE 25** to BOTH Clarine Furey AND Carol Gau.

## JUNE 19 & JULY 9

### W.H.E.T. walks

Do you remember that W.H.E.T. stands for Walking, Hiking, Eating, and Talking?

Come walk with us in both June and July. On Wednesday, June 19 we will meet at ProHealth Care Park at 2950 S. Sunnyslope Rd., New Berlin, at 1:30 p.m. After hiking there, we will head to the Culver's nearby.

On Tuesday, July 9 we will meet at 1:30 p.m. at Wirth Park, 2585 Pilgrim Rd., Brookfield. Meet in the parking lot near the skateboard park in the rear of Wirth Park. We will go for a treat afterwards at Scratch ice cream in Ruby Isle.



Indomitable W.H.E.T. walkers Ann Line and Clarine Furey at the chilly May walk.

## JULY 10: decluttering

If you need to get rid of stuff, you're not alone!

FFGM member and AARP presenter Mary Wacker will tell us about "Decluttering and Downsizing: You Can't Take It With You!" from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. on Wednesday, July 10. Her presentation will be at Immanuel Baptist Church, 4250 N. 137th St., Brookfield. R.S.V.P. by July 7 to Mary Wacker.

Mary's presentation explores why stuff is so important for some people and teaches practical, easy-to-follow tips on downsizing and decluttering. Learn how to get started!

Following this presentation, we will listen to a Civic Plaza Concert from noon to 1 p.m. at 2000 N. Calhoun Road in Brookfield (across the street from Ruby Isle). Marcell Guyton, a keyboard player and vocalist will be playing Stevie Wonder- and Billy Joel-style music. Bring food and a drink, and have lunch while enjoying this concert.

The church where Mary's presentation will be is also the drop-off point for the peanut butter and jelly sandwiches several of our members make for homeless people. An organization called Street Life distributes the sandwiches.

A Street Life representative said the group currently needs the following items, which you could bring to Mary's presentation, if you like:

- Men's t shirts (M-XL)
- Women's t-shirts (S -L)
- Men's shorts (30-36) or (M-XL)
- Women's shorts (0-10) or (S-L)
- Women's new underwear (S-M)
- Men's new underwear (M-L)
- Men's and women's new socks
- Travel sized body wash, shampoo, conditioner, lotions and toothpaste
- Blankets

## JULY 31: milwaukee county zoo

Sure, you've been to the Milwaukee County Zoo, but have you ever had a two-hour guided walking tour of it?

Our own FFGM member Dave Loosen, who is a docent at the zoo, will give us a special tour of some zoo spots you may never have seen. We'll visit Monkey Island and the Animal Health Center, among other places.

Meet at the Gathering Place near the main entrance at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, July 31. You will each pay your own admission to the zoo. You might like to check your local library to see if a free Explore Pass is available.

Please contact Ann Line so we know to look for you.



Milwaukee County Zoo photo

# CONFERENCE TOPICS INCREASE UNDERSTANDING

Friendship Force chose Milwaukee's Drury Plaza Hotel at Wisconsin and Water for the 2024 North American Conference. The sessions on Oct. 8 will include the following topics to give you a better understanding of what is on the minds of Friendship Force members:

- Trending to the Future: Six Things to Know About FFI's Evolution
- Climate Change and Why It Matters to Friendship Force
- Diversity Locally: The Globe At Your Doorstep
- Q&A With the FFI Board of Directors
- Social Media – Get Into the Game
- Be a Better Global Citizen

This conference is also a great way to share experiences and get to know members of other clubs in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

For more information and to sign up, log into your account at [my.friendshipforce.org](http://my.friendshipforce.org) and click on the photo of the conference when it scrolls by. The President's Column in this newsletter describes how the first 10 FFGM members can get a \$50 stipend for the conference.

If you want to help out with the conference, let Dave Kalan know. FFI will let us know what help they need closer to the conference date. You don't need to register for the conference to volunteer.

## member updates

### NEW MEMBERS

Rick Piraino

Sharron Ronco

### CORRECTION

In the May-June 2024 newsletter, new member Wendy Jabas was introduced as Wendy Laux. Wendy and Mark Laux are married, but Wendy has always used her maiden name

### AGNES M. RUSY MOURNED

Agnes Rusy, 88, a faithful member of Friendship Force of Greater Milwaukee for nearly ten years, died on June 10.

Agnes participated in many FFGM activities and went on seven Friendship Force journeys. Funeral arrangements are pending. R.I.P.



### JUNE 5th @ 5

A couple dozen members enjoyed a perfect summer evening at Barbara and Joe Geck's backyard in Waukesha.





## **SHELBY OUTBOUND**

Nine FFGM ambassadors enjoyed a week of true Southern hospitality with the Shelby, N.C. Friendship Force — visiting the historic Vanderbilt Estate, a restored carousel, Grandfather Mountain, Lake Lure, the amazing Tryon International Equestrian Center, the Earl Scruggs Center and so much more.



# MUY RICA!

## A REAL PERUVIAN FIESTA

Ismael and Mercedes Sialer and their daughter Dora Sialer hosted a true, homemade Peruvian fiesta at Dora's home in Menomonee Falls on May 4 for about 30 FFGM members and guests. Ismael and Mercedes live in Peru but visit their daughter's family each winter and joined FFGM.



## SPRING FLING

A well-attended Spring Fling on May 18 featured a line-dancing lesson and barbecue lunch at a Greendale church.



## FFGM MAKES AN IMPACT

At the Spring Fling, FFGM members donated 230 pounds of food that was delivered to the Despensa de La Paz food pantry where several members volunteer.

## ROAD AMERICA TOUR

19 people got an entertaining and informative bus tour of Road America's iconic 4.048-mile track and 640-acre parklike grounds between Elkhart Lake and Plymouth in May, then shopped in Plymouth and enjoyed dinner at Chissy's in Waldo.



## SUMMER THEATER

Twenty-two FFGM members and guests gathered June 12 for a picnic and evening performance of “Steel Magnolias” at the Summer Stage at Lapham Peak State Park near De-la-field. A brief sprinkle passed through and left a perfect night for the funny and touching performance. Thanks to Mary Wacker for organizing the evening!



## MEMBER TRAINING AMONG MANY FFI VIRTUAL EXPERIENCES

A good way to learn more about Friendship Force International—either as a new member or a long-time member—is to take advantage of FFI virtual training opportunities.

A New Member Orientation at 6 p.m. Thursday, June 20, is available via Zoom. This orientation also will be available at noon Thursday, July 25; at 11 a.m. Tuesday, Aug. 27; and at noon Thursdays, Oct. 17, Nov. 7 and Dec. 5.

FFI has many virtual experiences at [my.friendshipforce.org](https://my.friendshipforce.org), including art workshops to paint or draw; music sessions where members sing and play music together; presentations on past journeys, like “Hiking in Bavaria” and “The Baltic Cruise”; coffee chats in English, French, Japanese and Spanish around various topics; trivia quizzes for members worldwide to play in mixed teams; the FFI Book Club; workshops on global issues like the climate crisis, and much, much more.

Remember, to access these experiences, you need to sign in at [my.friendshipforce.org](https://my.friendshipforce.org). If you haven’t yet received a password by creating an account, sign in and use the “forgot password” feature so that you can establish a new one. Your email address is already at the site, if you’re a member.

For a listing of virtual experiences and how to sign up for them or watch recordings, click <https://blog.friendshipforce.org/virtual-experiences/>.

UKRAINIAN DOCTOR PLEADS:

## 'DON'T FORGET US'

Ukrainian physicians who were in Milwaukee two years ago to study blood bank operations here disturbed our consciences with demoralizing accounts of danger and deprivation that remain even more dire today.

"We just want to live!," Olena Malyhon wrote in a recent email to Bob Blazich, who hosted her in October 2022 with his wife Jan at their home in Thiensville. Bob and Olena have been in steady contact since then.

Olena runs a blood center in Kharkiv, Ukraine's third-most pop-

ulous city, with more than 2.5 million people, most of whom speak Russian.

This spring, the Russian army launched a new offensive operation, pounding Kharkiv with bombs and missiles. According to news accounts, the offensive led to Russia's biggest territorial gains in 18 months.

Kharkiv was the site of much damage early in the war when the Russian army destroyed Olena's home (photos of the home, below, and what is left after the bombing) leaving her and her husband to sleep on the basement floor of the hospital where she practices. They continue to live in that basement.

Olena was among four physicians from Ukraine who studied the blood banking system here while staying with members of FFGM. Their visits were made possible thanks to FFGM volunteers and funding from Open World, an exchange program sponsored by Congress to support democracies in post-Soviet countries.

Bob asks that we read Olena's message, ponder her life, and support her and her country in any way we can.



## Olena's message:

*Tired of smiling and pretending we're holding on.*

*It seems to some that Ukrainians live a normal life . . .*

*Each of us is dead — someone burned out inside, someone died for real . . .*

*The pain of the mother and father, the beloved, and often the only son who gave his life for his country . . .*

*The pain of a young widow who will never be embraced by the arms of her beloved . . .*

*The pain of children who will never feel parental support, never feel a strong, reliable parental shoulder . . .*

*This is really FOR WHAT ???*

*Broken destinies, unfulfilled plans and dreams that were never destined to come true . . .*

*Yes, we exist. We go to work (who still has it), to shops and even meet with friends, with those who are not at war yet . . .*

*And we don't know how much of that life we have left.*

*You don't know if you will be able to wake up in the morning.*

*You do not know whether you will return from work or from the store.*

*Will there be another call from my son and lover . . .*

*How much more will the list of angels who will never call again increase . . .*

*World, hear us! Do something! Do not forget that at this moment innocent children are dying near you; innocent people are dying!*

### Olena's house, before and after





**friendship force**  
GREATER MILWAUKEE

## new member profile

### RUTH HOZESKA



I currently work as a psychiatric registered nurse at the VA Medical Center and plan to retire June 29. I graduated from UW-Madison in 1977. My hometown is Burlington but I live in Franklin. I enjoy reading, hiking, travel, and learning. I am very fortunate to have a diverse group of friends and acquaintances from many cultures. I look forward to learning more about people and places in the U.S. and outside the U.S.

### MARY WACKER



Mary Wacker is delighted to re-join Friendship Force! She was a member in the mid-1990s and hosted the welcome party for a Russian delegation who visited during that time. Due to work commitments, she needed to take a break and recently learned from Gayle Best about the club's current activities.

Mary is mostly retired from a consulting career offering coaching, team building, leadership development and service management to area companies including business, healthcare, insurance and non-profits. A highlight was presenting at a conference in Trujillo, Peru in 2004, where, true to the mission of FF, she made lifelong friends! Prior to her career in organization development, she played guitar and sang in local clubs for several years.

Mary has a passion for travel and learning about other cultures. She has participated in seven medical mission trips to Nicaragua, Guatemala, and Mexico. She has also visited over 35 countries. Some of her favorites were the Galápagos Islands, Lebanon, Bali, Argentina, Peru and Eastern Europe. She is looking forward to traveling with FF on future trips, and is enjoying getting reacquainted with old and new friends in our club.