



friendship force
INTERNATIONAL

AMBASSADOR

and **HOST** *Exchange
Director Manual*



CHANGING **THE** **WORLD**
THE WAY YOU SEE

Friendship Force International (FFI) is an international exchange organization that relies on the dedication and skills of volunteer leaders to fulfill its mission of promoting cultural understanding. There are many leadership opportunities, but the most important is that of the exchange director, referred to in this manual as the Ambassador or Host ED. Each year, hundreds of men and women from more than 50 countries take on the responsibility for leading exchanges. Whether you are an experienced ED or a new leader, the success of the exchange depends on you. It is an important responsibility. It is also a unique opportunity for you to make a positive impact on international understanding and goodwill.

There are a variety of leadership techniques for conducting exchanges. In the early days when exchanges were very large, elaborate exchange committees were required. Today's exchanges are much smaller (15-25 ambassadors) making possible a simplified planning and leadership system. Even so, there is no one "right" way to plan and lead an exchange. Each ED should decide what kind of organizational system is best suited to their particular exchange, taking into account the specific requirements of the exchange, as well as leadership style, club support, and other factors unique to the exchange.

To assist in the planning of your exchange, the FFI office in Atlanta, Georgia, USA, has prepared this manual. Your task is to adapt what is provided here to your needs and those of your exchange.

In addition to the material provided in this manual and through your local club, you will find valuable information available on the Internet. The Friendship Force website is www.thefriendshipforce.org. You should become familiar with the website, as it has a great deal of information such as forms and policies that can easily be downloaded for your use. The Internet is also a valuable tool in gaining information on your host country as well as travel-related sites.

At all times, remember that you are not alone! FFI's staff in Atlanta, along with experienced leaders from your club or region, are ready to assist you. If you draw on this support and follow the basic principles provided in this manual for planning, selling, and leading your exchange, I am confident that you will succeed!

Joy DiBenedetto
President, Friendship Force International
March 2014

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Chapter 1:

INTRODUCTION

If ordinary people get to know each other as friends, they discover that the values and experiences they share are more important than their differences.

*– Wayne Smith,
Founder
The Friendship Force*

Introduction

A Brief History

Wayne Smith, the founder of Friendship Force International, believed that friendship is a powerful force for change in the world. If ordinary people get to know each other as friends, they discover that the values and experiences they share are more important than their differences. They learn that differences do not have to divide. But how can we establish meaningful friendships across the barriers of language, culture, religion, and distance? Wayne Smith had an answer: employ the universal concept of hospitality to strangers as the means for bringing people together. Give people a few days sharing a home and they can become friends.

The Friendship Force envisions that friendships among people of different nations and cultures will not only be personally enriching for participants but also can promote international understanding on a broad scale. Based on this vision, Smith established The Friendship Force in March 1977 with the support of Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter. Mrs. Rosalynn Carter served as Honorary Chairperson of The Friendship Force through the first twenty-five years, working to ensure that the organization became vibrant and known around the world.

What sets Friendship Force apart from other exchange organizations is the focus on a 5-7 day homestay, the purpose of which is to promote global understanding by bringing people together across the barriers that normally separate them.

More than 600,000 ordinary citizens in 70 countries have learned that sharing a home for a few days is an ideal way to create new friendships. In the process, stereotypes that can lead to misunderstanding, fear, hatred, and even war, give way to understanding and goodwill.

Beginning with a bold series of large exchanges in the late 1970s, the concept took hold. Within a few years tens of thousands of citizen ambassadors and hosts could testify to the fact that a few days of sharing a home did indeed lead to lasting friendships. With the help of a USD\$3 million grant in the 1980s from the Sasakawa Foundation in Japan, Friendship Force transformed itself from a series of large exchanges to a global network of local chapters in more than 350 communities in 58 countries.

In the late 1980s, FFI became active in the former Soviet Union, pioneering homestay visits throughout the region. In large part because of this innovative program linking East and West, in 1992 Friendship Force was recognized internationally when it was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. Wayne Smith retired in 2000 and died in 2004. He was succeeded as President by Chip Carter (2000-2002) and Susan Smith (2003-2004). The current President, George Brown, was appointed to the position in April 2004. For a complete history of the first 20 years of Friendship Force International, see Charlene Terrell's book, *The Other Side of the Mountain*. Copies can be ordered from FFI.

Mission

To promote global understanding across the barriers that separate people.

Values

Mutual respect
Cultural Diversity
Cultural Exploration
Service

Vision

- Each individual will make a contribution to global goodwill.
- The Friendship Force worldwide network of clubs and individuals will overcome differences among people and nations.
- By connecting the world, one friend at a time, we will create a world of friends that becomes a world of peace.

Slogan

Changing the way you see the world

“A friend is one to whom one may pour out all the contents of one’s heart, chaff and grain together knowing the gentlest of hands will take and sift it, keep what is worth keeping and with a breath of kindness blow the rest away.”
Arabian Proverb

The Friendship Force Today... and Tomorrow!

In 2007, the FFI Board of Directors adopted a new Strategic Plan to guide the Friendship Force into a strong future, including the following major initiatives:

- ❑ A new logo was adopted in 2008, along with a greatly expanded website (www.thefriendshipforce.org) and revised mission and vision statements.
- ❑ New exchange formats are being devised, including expanded opportunities for teachers and youth, as well as specialized exchanges for language learning, humanitarian projects, interfaith dialogue and cultural understanding.
- ❑ Club expansion and leadership development, made possible by donations to the Legacy Fund (established in 2004 to raise money for Friendship Force expansion)
- ❑ Club revitalization through the development of new techniques for introducing the Friendship Force to the “next generation” of participants.

Today the Friendship Force carries forward a proud and successful legacy with 365 clubs (chapters) in 58 countries on six continents. Each year more than a thousand volunteer leaders guide the clubs as they provide vital international connections within the communities while conducting exchanges with approximately 5,000 ambassadors and twice that many hosts. New clubs are being established in key regions of the world.

Your Role as Exchange Director

The exchange director is one of the most important Friendship Force leadership roles. It is also one of the most rewarding. As an exchange director, you are the ‘face’ of FFI.

As ED for an exchange, you are responsible for planning the exchange, recruiting ambassadors/hosts, and leading the experience.

From the first exchange in July 1977 until today, the Friendship Force mission is carried out by bringing together two groups of people: ambassadors who travel to distant lands, and hosts who open their homes to the visiting ambassadors. Each takes on three important roles in the exchange. The Ambassador is a guest, a citizen ambassador and an international traveler. The host is a host, a cultural ambassador, and a guide (detailed description on page 41). Your role as ED is to select, prepare and lead ambassadors and hosts on an exchange so that they are able to carry out their responsibilities while having an enjoyable cultural experience.

Each exchange is unique, but there are some basic ingredients for success:

- ❑ YOU! An enthusiastic and organized leader.
- ❑ Effective communications among exchange directors, FFI program services coordinator and your local club leadership.
- ❑ Flexibility, patience, and understanding in dealing with other cultures.
- ❑ An appealing Friendship Force itinerary.

- ❑ A strong recruiting campaign that reaches beyond club membership.
- ❑ Qualified ambassadors/hosts.
- ❑ Cultural and logistical workshops.

By leading a successful exchange you will provide people from your club and community an important and rewarding cross-cultural experience. You will also be continuing a tradition that is reflected in the Friendship Force Ambassador Pledge:

As a member of the Friendship Force,
I recognize that I can make a difference.
I have a mission to be a friend to the
people of the world.

As I embark upon this adventure, I know
that others will be watching.

I know that through my example to my
fellow citizens and the people of other
nations, the cause of friendship, love and
peace can be advanced.

I CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

“Once you have traveled, the voyage never ends, but is played out over and over again in the quietest chambers. The mind can never break off from the journey.”
Pat Conroy

Chapter 2:

PLAN IT

*What makes travel with the Friendship Force unique is the opportunity to live for a few days or a week with a local host family. It is a very personal experience, as hosts **open their homes** to visitors from abroad, sharing their everyday life.*

Getting Started

Congratulations! You have been selected as ED for an exchange and now it is time to get started.

Many ambassador EDs will not be familiar with the cultural richness and opportunities available in the host community. As host ED you can provide this information. SELL YOUR CLUB well in advance to make your community and program sound like a "must see and do!" A good club profile and website can be an advantage.

Both Ambassador and Host ED will want to become familiar with the basic Friendship Force policies that pertain to your exchange. These can be found in the Club and Exchange Policies that are approved each year by the FFI Board of Directors. (See page 53 for instructions to download the current policies.)

In addition to the standard FFI policies that apply to all exchanges, you should also receive:

- A copy of any correspondence related to the conditions for your particular exchange.
- An Exchange Agreement, also called "It's a Match", see page 19.
- Suggested month of travel - try to plan the date of your exchange as close to the assigned period as possible since changing the month could affect the dates and success of other exchanges.
- Contact information for both clubs.
- Your recruitment goal - normally 20-25 ambassadors but some clubs may not have that capacity, so confirm the numbers as soon as possible.

You are now ready to begin your planning by establishing direct contact with the people who will be working with you to ensure a successful exchange:

FFI PROGRAM SERVICES COORDINATOR

You will be assigned an FFI staff member in Atlanta, known as a program services coordinator, to support you and your counterpart host exchange director throughout the planning process. Your program coordinator will provide you with their e-mail address and direct dial telephone number. Don't hesitate to call any time.

YOUR COUNTERPART ED

Your most important contact will be with your counterpart host or ambassador ED.

- In some cases you will communicate with the club president until an ED is chosen.
- Establish early contact and get to know your counterpart on a personal as well as professional basis.

CLUB LIAISON

As ED for a club exchange you have been appointed by your club for this important assignment. You are in charge of the exchange, but you should maintain close communications with your club leadership throughout the planning process. Determine whom you should use as the

Inform your Program Coordinator of:

Planning details

Planning difficulties

Difficulty in communications with your counterpart

“When you travel, remember that a foreign country is not designed to make you comfortable. It is designed to make its own people comfortable.”
Clifton Fadiman

primary liaison within your club—it may be the president or another member of the board.

Exchange Committee: Some EDs like to establish a working committee from the beginning of the planning process.

- Committee members are usually exchange participants.
- An assistant ED is helpful both for training or emergencies.
- A financial assistant is also helpful. In some cases this is the club treasurer.
- Hosting EDs sometimes divide the program into segments (day, activity, etc.) assigning responsibility for each part to a different committee member.
- It is up to you to decide who to rely on for support and what kind of organizational style you believe will be most successful for your exchange. The important point to remember is that you do not have to do all the work yourself.
- DELEGATE!

Communicating Between Exchange Directors

The most important communication you will have will be with your counterpart ED(s). Establish your relationship EARLY in the planning process.

- Determine the best way to communicate with your counterpart (email, phone, Skype, fax).
- Adapt your correspondence to what is culturally appropriate for your exchange country and culture.

- Give your counterpart the opportunity for MAXIMUM, not minimum, response time.
- Talk about your planning process and deadlines.
- Call on FFI staff, experienced club leaders, and former exchange directors for support if you encounter problems.
- Remember that your counterpart may not speak or understand your language fluently.
- Confirm agreements in writing.

Planning the Exchange Experience

Now you are ready to plan the actual exchange experience. This should be a joint effort by the ambassador and host Exchange Directors combining the best the host club has to offer with the interests of the ambassador club.

SET THE DATES

- The first step in planning the exchange is to confirm exact dates.
- If there are two host clubs the process can be more complicated since both host clubs have to agree on dates that match outbound travel plans.
- If you have difficulty confirming the dates, do not just wait, as that can result in the loss of valuable planning time.
- If you have difficulties contact your FFI program coordinator.

Each hosting experience will have certain elements:

THE HOME STAY

What makes travel with the Friendship Force unique is the opportunity to live for a few days or a week with a local host family. It is a very personal experience, as hosts open their homes to visitors from abroad sharing everyday life. For the ambassador, it provides a wonderful opportunity to explore a culture from the vantage point of an insider, learning firsthand about the host culture, while sharing about his or her own culture. See page 41 describing the appropriate role for ambassadors and hosts.

GROUP ACTIVITIES

- Welcome and Farewell: Clubs want to provide a warm and hearty welcome and also a farewell get-together to celebrate the friendships that have been formed.
- City or Area Tour: The hosts will want to share their community and their culture.
- Discuss any plans to meet with local officials and if it is customary to present some form of greeting.
- There are different protocols in giving and receiving club gifts. The two EDs should discuss these in advance.
- Invite potential new members as well as non-hosting members to these group activities whenever possible.

CUSTOMIZED CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

- Some clubs offer special tours or activities such as going to a theme park, a music or theatrical performance, or taking an overnight coach tour to a nearby

point of interest. If these activities would incur costs beyond the regular budget, please refer to optional host week activities on page 17. For more ideas on hosting activities, please see page 44.

INDIVIDUAL TIME TO EXPLORE

- Offering a “Wish Day” enables ambassadors to pursue an area of special interest with their host.
- Some ambassadors would welcome time on their own to explore the area or a special interest. See information on page 47.

HOST ED INFORMATION

Providing a strong cultural hosting program and attracting the next generation of participants are our goals. The document beginning on page 44 has a multitude of ideas to help you.

- Ideas for a strong cultural hosting program
- Specific hosting ideas
- Improving your hosting program
- Free time for ambassadors
- Making the hosting experience culturally enriching
- Appealing to the Next Generation of ambassadors.

HELPFUL HINTS FOR HOSTING ED

- Hosting clubs frequently have more activities available than it is possible to do in a week! Wouldn't it be nice to share some of these as “choices” from which the ambassador ED could pick and choose according to the interests of the

See Supplemental Information on page 44 for: Cultural Hosting Ideas

"A journey is best measured in friends, rather than miles."
Tim Cahill

group?

- Do not over plan. Free time with the family is an essential part of the FF experience.
- Stay within your budget. Consider inexpensive or free activities available in your community.
- Adapt your plans according to traffic and transportation issues.
- Schedule time for ambassadors to 'treat' their hosts to a dinner, either by cooking for them or taking them to a local restaurant.
- Encourage hosts to arrange for ambassadors to meet neighbors or other family members.

Planning Ambassador Travel

In planning the Ambassador itinerary, there are three approaches that have been used successfully by Friendship Force. You may increase your pool of prospective ambassadors by recognizing that people have different interests, budgets, and time available for them to travel.

INDIVIDUAL TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS (FULL FLEXIBILITY)

The ED concentrates on the exchange experience and provides ambassadors with full information regarding the time and location for the beginning and end of the exchange, along with the cost for the 'exchange only' experience.

The advantage of this approach is that it gives the ambassadors maximum flexibility to find travel bargains or use frequent flyer miles. Ambassadors are required to meet at an assigned location, such as an airport or hotel, by a specific date and time.

GROUP TRAVEL WITH OPTIONAL TOURING (PARTIAL FLEXIBILITY)

The ED creates an itinerary from their city or an international gateway city. An optional sightseeing tour can be added. This option provides flexibility for ambassadors who choose to return home after the home stay as well as those who choose to continue traveling on their own.

GROUP TRAVEL WITH REQUIRED TOURING (NO FLEXIBILITY)

The ED may determine that an organized tour should be made a required part of the exchange.

HELPFUL HINTS FOR AMBASSADOR ED

- Provide accurate information to ambassadors.
- Provide information on Visa requirements where applicable.
- Provide appropriate immunization requirements where applicable.
- Feel free to contact your program services coordinator for help with these issues.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

- ❑ Trip cancellation insurance can avoid financial responsibility should a person have to cancel.
- ❑ Adequate travel and medical insurance is mandatory. When signing the application travelers state they will have adequate travel and medical insurance. See page 53 for instructions to access current policies.
- ❑ At the discretion of the ED, an insurance waiver form may be signed by an ambassador and notarized for those who choose not to secure insurance. Forms can be found on the FFI website, instructions on page 53. Your coordinator can also send you brochures.
- ❑ Ambassadors can select the travel and medical insurance of their choice.
- ❑ For Canadian and US residents FFI has negotiated a special insurance package from TravelGuard.

Setting the Ambassador Exchange Fee

We have provided a Sample Worksheet on page 20 to make this process easier. Pricing elements to consider:

- ❑ Host Club Program Fee of USD \$100. Used by the hosting club to cover expenses associated with the exchange such as the welcome and farewell parties/dinners, group activities and at the host club's discretion, to enable the hosts to participate in these activities.
- ❑ FFI Ambassador Fee of USD \$165/week for US outbound exchanges and USD

\$140/week for exchanges originating in other countries. This covers the cost of administrating and supporting exchanges. In addition, this fee is the basic revenue source for maintaining and supporting the entire FFI system.

- ❑ Travel and Associated Costs The ambassadors are responsible for the costs of traveling to and from the host club(s), along with any touring before or after the home stay experience.

If you have included travel and/or tours as part of the basic fee, then you will be responsible for handling these funds as well as the FFI exchange fees.

If you use a travel agency you may be able to make arrangements for individual ambassadors to pay travel costs directly to the tour operator by credit card.

- ❑ Optional host week activities In some cases the host ED may recommend activities that are not covered by the US\$100 fee. These activities should be optional. If the ambassador ED agrees that these activities should be included for all ambassadors, the Host Club Program Fee may be increased accordingly. However, if the Host Club Program Fee is more than US \$100, the host ED will present a full budget of all activities—both the basic cultural program and the additional activities—prior to the exchange and a post-exchange accounting of the actual expenses. Please communicate to the host ED early in the planning process if this might apply to your exchange (see current Club and Exchange Policies).

- ❑ Local Administrative Fee This is for ambassador club and should not exceed USD \$25. This fee is optional to cover

“The more I traveled the more I realized that fear makes strangers of people who should be friends.”
Shirley Maclaine

"Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail."
Ralph Waldo Emerson

such things as telephone, printing, postage, and other costs related to promoting your exchange. Note: The local administrative fee is non-refundable if an ambassador cancels AFTER acceptance on the exchange.

- ❑ Exchange Director's Earned Seat Exchange Directors devote a great deal of time and effort to planning, conducting, and providing leadership throughout the exchange including any unforeseen emergencies. Because of this substantial responsibility the FFI Fee is discounted 50-100% depending on the number of fully paid ambassadors. Similarly, clubs are encouraged to authorize EDs to include part or all of the cost of their travel in the exchange fee. Note: including part or all of the leader's cost is standard practice for many group travel programs, thus the ED should not feel that he/she is taking advantage of the other participants. Follow your club's policy in regard to including a pro-rated amount to cover the ED's expenses. (See current policies, instructions on page 53.)
- ❑ Contingencies In some cases an ED will add a small amount to cover unplanned expenses along the way.
- ❑ After the ambassador's acceptance on the exchange, these fees should be deposited into the appropriate club bank account and held until time to be transferred to FFI and host club according to FFI policies and deadlines.
- ❑ Cancellation Policy: Cancellation from an exchange may result in financial penalties for the ambassador. These penalties, especially those related to travel arrangements, may be substantial depending on the date of cancellation prior to departure. It is vital for ambassadors to protect their investment appropriately with insurance.
- ❑ The USD\$100 host club program fee is non-refundable if an ambassador cancels from the exchange less than 60 days prior to departure and must therefore be transferred to the host club with the participating ambassadors.
- ❑ For more information about cancellation policies for the FFI portion of the fees, please review the 'Club and Exchange Policies' on website, instructions given on page 53.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT FOR AMBASSADOR ED

- ❑ The ambassador ED should have a thorough understanding of any contracts made with airline and travel vendors and enter the dates where penalties would be incurred in the Master Calendar.
- ❑ Your club will advise you regarding its banking policy.
- ❑ A substantial deposit should be collected payable to your club at the time applications are submitted.

Making your Master Calendar

The final step in the planning process is to make a master calendar. Friendship Force now allows nearly one year to plan and develop an exchange. You'll find this is the best way to ensure you keep on schedule as you move from the planning to the selling (recruiting) and leading phases of the exchange.

Adapt the Ambassador or Host calendars on the following pages to suit your particular exchange.

Sample It's a Match!

Exchange Name: Oita, Japan to Manitoba, Canada

Exchange Number: 11836

Departure Date: September 2014

Program Coordinator: Jane Doe - 404-965-43XX

Ambassadors

President's Name:

Location:

Telephone:

Email:

Hosts

President's Name:

Location:

Telephone:

Email:

Congratulations! Your exchange has been accepted by all participating clubs. Listed above is the contact information for the presidents of the clubs participating in this exchange. Please be in touch with your counterparts to discuss choosing dates for the exchange, using the suggested month on this form as a loose guideline.

Appoint an ED: We know from experience that appointing an Exchange Director (ED) from your club early in the planning process is essential to a successful exchange. This ED will be responsible for working with Friendship Force International and counterpart exchange directors to complete your exchange.

Please fill out the Exchange Leadership Information Form and return it to me with the ED's information as soon as possible so that I can contact your appointed ED.

The host club should be prepared to fill out and send the Health and Mobility Checklist to the Ambassador ED once he/she is appointed. This form allows the ambassador and host EDs to communicate about the level of physical activity required during the exchange and the ability of ambassadors to meet those requirements. Providing this information well in advance of the exchange allows the ambassador exchange director to recruit well-qualified ambassadors to participate in the exchange.

To use the fillable PDF forms in the links above, please download it and save it to your computer first. Then, fill in your responses and save again. You must have the most recent version of Adobe Reader (download it for free at <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>).

Thank you for your cooperation.

In Friendship,

Coordinator Name

Program Services Coordinator

Contact Information

www.thefriendshipforce.org

Sample Worksheet for Setting Exchange Fee

Exchange Example: USA to Europe for a one-week home stay. In Model #1, the ED has decided to have the exchange based just on the exchange week with guests making their own travel arrangements. In Model #2, the ED is providing an optional tour post exchange. Since it is optional, it is priced for a minimum of 8 participants. In Model #3, the ED has made the tour a required part of the exchange, with the tour based on a minimum of 16 participants. In this example the policy of the guest club is to provide a full pro-rated “earned seat” for the ED. This is calculated by including a pro-rated amount to the ambassador fee to cover the cost of the ED if the exchange has 20 or more guests. The amount included for the ED is the same for Model #1 and #2 since there is no required post-exchange travel. For Model #3, however, it is higher reflecting the added cost of the required tour, which the ED will be leading. (If the airline or tour operator provides a free seat, then this can be taken into account in calculating the extra cost of the earned seat.)

Model #1: Exchange only (full flexibility)

1. FFI Ambassador fee	165
2. Host Club Program Fee	100
3. Extra host fees as agreed by EDs	0
4. Local committee fee (non refundable)	25
5. Earned seat for leader (based on club policy) ..	50
6. Contingency	10
Total exchange fee	\$350

Model #2: Exchange + travel,
with optional tour (partial flexibility)

1. FFI Ambassador fee	165
2. Host Club Program Fee	100
3. Extra host fees as agreed by EDs	0
4. Local committee fee (non refundable)	25
5. Earned seat for leader (based on club policy) ..	50
6. Roundtrip airfare	900
7. Contingency	10
Total exchange fee	\$1,250

(Optional tour add \$1,200—
based on group size 8 or more)

Model #3: Exchange + travel + required tour
(no flexibility)

1. FFI Ambassador fee	165
2. Host Club Program Fee	100
3. Extra host fees as agreed by EDs	0
4. Local committee fee (non refundable)	25
5. Earned seat for leader (based on club policy) ..	105
6. Airfare + required tour (based on group size of 16 +)	2,000
7. Contingency	30
Total exchange fee	\$2,425

Sample Ambassador Master Calendar

9-12 Months Before Exchange Date

- Exchange assignment confirmed
- Contact FFI program services coordinator
- Contact the host ED(s) to establish the dates, maximum number of Ambassadors and any extra host fees
- Informal discussion and information gathering with club
- Plan itinerary and tour options.
- Select travel agent or airline if traveling as a group
- Provide itinerary and pricing to FFI
- Establish exchange budget and financial procedures
- Develop recruiting flyer or brochure
- Plan recruiting strategy
- Hold first introduction/informational workshop

6-9 Months or More Before Exchange Date

- Begin recruiting ambassadors
- Implement promotional plan for exchange
- Hold additional informational workshop(s)
- Begin receiving Ambassador Application and Agreement forms with deposits
- Delegate certain jobs or committee responsibilities
- Select an assistant ED from guests
- Establish cultural and pre-departure workshop dates, locations and content
- Continue communications with host ED
- Continue communications with FFI program services coordinator
- Use FFI Resources to help with recruitment if needed (contact your Coordinator)
- Check on visa and health requirements for host country

3-6 Months Before Exchange Date

- Finalize recruitment and selection of Ambassadors
- Report final details and Ambassador numbers to FFI
- Confirm final details and payment schedule with host ED
- Provide updated information to travel/airline agent to meet deadlines
- Finalize exchange program itinerary and payments with host ED
- Confirm from host ED what you need to take to officials in host city (letters, gifts, etc.)
- Hold cultural workshop(s) for Ambassadors

1-3 Months Before Exchange Date

- Fill any unused positions from waiting list or final recruiting push
- Send Ambassador information to host ED and FFI
- Finalize travel/tour arrangements with travel suppliers
- FFI fees due 60 days prior to departure
- Obtain travel itineraries from Ambassadors who are making their own travel arrangements
- Report to FFI Program Coordinator on final status of exchange plans
- Hold pre-departure workshop(s)
- Prepare Ambassador emergency contact list to take on exchange
- Prepare Ambassador ED Information Checklist to take on exchange (available on website)
- Prepare detailed exchange itinerary and contact information for local club contact and FFI

Post Exchange

- Submit online evaluation form
- Submit participant evaluation to FFI
- Submit exchange and finance report to club
- Have a party to celebrate a job well done!

Sample Host Master Calendar

9-12 Months Before Exchange Date

- Exchange assignment confirmed
- Contact FFI program services coordinator
- Establish contact with Ambassador ED
- Confirm exchange dates
- Let ambassador ED know how many you can host

6-9 Months or More Before Exchange Date

- Establish an exchange committee, delegating as appropriate
- Decide if you wish to propose any added options to ambassador ED communicating these ideas and costs for consideration
- Get written confirmation if additional costs are involved

3-6 Months Before Exchange Date

- Decide on how to handle your finances according to your club policy
- Prepare a preliminary program of activities for the exchange
- Communicate any choices within the program to ambassador ED
- Recruit hosts among your membership or prospective members
- Visit/evaluate host homes where appropriate
- Confirm final details with ambassador ED
- Obtain Ambassador/Host matching form from ambassador ED
- Prepare host matching chart and send to ambassador ED
- Reserve locations if needed for welcome and farewell parties

1-3 Months Before Exchange Date

- Select day hosts and dinner hosts as desired
- Finalize activities program and budget and review with club treasurer or Board
- Hold Hosting and Cultural Workshops for all home hosts, day hosts, and dinner hosts
- Reserve facilities, guides, and tickets for programs as necessary
- Keep frequent communications with counterpart ED
- Finalize matching of home hosts and ambassadors
- Discuss with the Ambassador ED the club's gift policy requirements, if any, for civic receptions
- Prepare "goody bags" for ambassadors (optional)
- Prepare exchange program booklet.

During Last Month Before Exchange Date

- Purchase gifts for ambassador ED and club if that is your club policy
- Finalize details for arrival and departure details
- Verify arrangements regarding government officials
- Prepare agenda for arrivals, welcoming party, and farewell party
- Reconfirm if entertainment has been booked
- Hold final workshop with committee and/or hosts

Post Exchange

- Submit online evaluation form and prepare final report for club and FFI
- Have a party to celebrate a job well done!

Chapter 3:

SELL IT

*A successful exchange begins and ends with an enthusiastic exchange director who truly believes that the Friendship Force provides great opportunities for people to **experience the world** while making new friends.*

Developing a Successful Recruiting Strategy

Your recruiting goal is to solicit enough applications so that you can have a full exchange with excellent ambassadors and hosts. If you have done a good job in planning the exchange, this should be an achievable objective. Participating in an exchange entails a major commitment of time and money on the part of both ambassadors and hosts.

Armed with an excellent itinerary and an enthusiastic attitude, where will you find prospective ambassadors and hosts? Consider the first three separate target populations below for both ambassadors and hosts and the fourth one for just ambassadors.

YOUR FELLOW CLUB MEMBERS

You should start publicizing the exchange in your club's newsletter and on the website as soon as your exchange is confirmed. Make sure, however, that you let your members know the type of exchange you are planning and the degree to which it will be physically challenging. Be sure the members of your club understand that they are applying as ambassadors or hosts. They are not simply signing up on a first come first serve basis.

THE BROADER COMMUNITY

It is equally important to look to the larger community to recruit new participants. One of the best ways to do so is to see your exchanges as an excellent way to enlist

new people from the community. There are many other ways to get the word out: local newspapers, radio announcements, speaking to civic organizations, placing flyers at local libraries, or seeking support from a local university professor.

YOUR FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES

Do not forget to invite friends, family and professional colleagues to consider joining you on the exchange.

FRIENDSHIP FORCE MEMBERS FROM OTHER CLUBS

EDs are recognizing that other clubs provide an excellent source of potential ambassadors. Even if you would like to fill the exchange from within your own community, you should look for ways to promote the exchange to other clubs from the very beginning. Too often EDs wait until they know they have vacancies before doing this and then very often it is too late.

The key is to pursue all categories simultaneously. The mistake that is often made is to focus only on the club membership during the early months of recruiting. The problem with this approach is that if the club membership does not provide sufficient qualified applicants, then it may be too late to recruit from the other categories.

Four Target Ambassador Groups:

1. Club Members
2. Broader Community
3. Friendship Force Members from other Clubs
4. Friends and Colleagues

“Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry and narrow-mindedness.”
Mark Twain

Promoting The Exchange

The best way to begin promoting your exchange is to produce flyers or brochures that can be produced and distributed electronically, along with articles in your club newsletter that can be used as the basis for press releases and other written material.

In getting the word out beyond your club members, there are a number of avenues that can be pursued:

- Media:** Depending on the size of your community, the local newspaper may be interested in a Friendship Force story. Or try local access cable television and Internet bulletin boards.
- Business, Civic and Religious Organizations:** Members of your club may be affiliated with other local organizations. Consider approaching these groups as partners in your promotional efforts. Place a notice in their newsletter or on their website promoting your exchange; ask to address one of their meetings to promote your exchange.
- Local International Organizations:** Some good places to start are university international student offices and programs, Sister Cities, International Visitor Councils, and student exchange organizations.
- Be Creative!** See your exchange as providing a service to your community and look for ways to offer that service as broadly as possible.
- The Host ED** may help promote the exchange by preparing an invitation for potential ambassadors. This can be used as part of the promotional materials for the exchange.

Remember, until ambassadors submit an application with a significant deposit they are just “interested.” They have not really applied. You will have succeeded once you “close the deal” by having them submit deposits with their applications.

What to Look for in Potential Ambassadors and Hosts

Most people who genuinely support the goals of Friendship Force will make great ambassadors or hosts. As you consider whom to include on your exchange, here are some characteristics to look for in your candidates:

- An Open Mind:** The ability to keep one’s opinions flexible and receptive to new stimuli.
- A Sense of Humor:** The ability to laugh and find humor in things helps guard against disappointment and frustration.
- Flexibility and Adaptability:** The ability to cope with new situations as well as keeping options open and judgmental behavior to a minimum.
- Positive Regard for Others:** The ability to express warmth, empathy, respect, and positive regard for others with a willingness to communicate both verbally and non-verbally.

The Selection Process

The selection process begins with the Ambassador or Host Application and Agreement form, which should be completed and signed by each applicant. (A copy of the agreements can be found online, instructions on page 53.)

- ❑ The interview process is important for both prospective ambassadors and hosts. Guidelines can be found on the website.
- ❑ Applicants should be made aware of the specific requirements for your exchange including fees and deadlines, travel options (if any), as well as the physical and cultural conditions you anticipate.
- ❑ The EDs are in an excellent position to recruit new members. Being a host or an ambassador is a wonderful way to become involved with the Friendship Force for the first time.
- ❑ You should get to know each applicant personally before determining whether or not to accept him or her for the exchange. This may be through a formal interview or perhaps over the phone.
- ❑ Ask for written references or people you can call if the ambassador has not been on an exchange or is applying from another city.
- ❑ Remember, you are responsible for the entire exchange and will want to make certain that each person you accept will be a great Friendship Force ambassador or host.
- ❑ Prior club membership SHOULD NOT be made a precondition for a person to apply to be an ambassador.

However, some clubs have a policy that all who join an exchange are required to join the club. It is simple to include club dues as a part of the Exchange Program Fees for non-members.

- ❑ It is a mistake to follow a “first come, first serve” approach to recruiting - rather emphasize from the outset that you are looking for those that are best qualified. Applicants are not signing up the way they might for a cruise or a conference. They are applying and need to be accepted before they can be considered on your exchange. If you make this clear from the beginning you can avoid problems later on.
- ❑ Strive for a true cross section of the community. If, after completion of general recruiting, the group lacks participants from certain races, ethnic groups, occupations and ages, specifically seek to recruit them.
- ❑ The final ambassador list with profiles should be sent to the host ED as early as possible. If host matching information is received well in advance, contact can be made by mail or email before the exchange.

SPECIAL NOTE ON MOBILITY AND HEALTH LIMITATIONS

Ambassador exchange directors are responsible for accepting only those who can comply with the physical requirements of the exchange program. Ambassadors must be able to join in with the activities of their hosts. Extensive walking, carrying one’s own luggage, riding public transportation, and climbing stairs are all normal within an exchange. Participants must also be alert

“There is nothing like returning to a place that remains unchanged to find the ways in which you yourself have altered.”

Nelson Mandela

"The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page."
St. Augustine

and capable of following directions.

Here are some tips for screening potential ambassadors:

- ❑ Review the health section of the Ambassador Application with the applicant and make sure that any potential or current health problems, including mobility and stamina issues, are adequately noted. Limitations or conditions within the hosting homes or community should also be taken into consideration. This could be everything from the form of public transportation available or altitude of the host city.
- ❑ Ask applicants direct questions about their daily routine, travel habits, and level of physical and mental abilities. Explain the nature of activities proposed on the exchange.
- ❑ If the applicant has traveled previously with Friendship Force, check with the applicant's most recent exchange director. Or, ask for references that can speak about the applicant's level of physical and mental capabilities.
- ❑ If concerns remain, ask for a letter from their health provider indicating that the applicant will be able to meet the requirements of the exchange.
- ❑ Use common sense. There will come a time when each of us will no longer be able to travel comfortably. If you believe that to be the case, be candid but caring, sharing your concerns. Make sure they realize that it is not fair to the other members of the exchange if you accept a person who is unable to cope.

FFI does support the participation of ambassadors with health limitations and physical disabilities. However, without

exception, they can only be accepted on an exchange upon full disclosure of their limitations to both the ambassador and host exchange directors and with written agreement from the host exchange community and/or travel suppliers that they are able to accommodate the limitation.

Host Matching Process

As you begin matching your ambassadors and hosts, here are some helpful suggestions:

- ❑ Pay particular attention to age and activity level so that both hosts and ambassadors can enjoy comparable activities.
- ❑ Thoroughly review the list of ambassadors when you receive it from your counterpart. Check interests, hobbies, occupations, age and gender to match with a host.
- ❑ Organize one or two workshops where the culture of the ambassadors and activities scheduled will be discussed. The workshops provides an opportunity for experienced hosts to share their experiences with those who are new.
- ❑ Pay special attention to ambassadors who smoke, have pet issues or that have allergies, special food needs or disabilities. It is important that prospective hosts are aware of any special requirements and are able to accommodate them.
- ❑ Make note of pets and/or smokers in host families to ensure allergic ambassa-

dors are not matched with them.

- ❑ Check the number of bedrooms and type of bed in each host home. Both will influence the matching process. Look over the paperwork to see if certain ambassadors want to be hosted in the same household.
- ❑ Find out early which home hosts require a day host because of work or other commitments so an adequate number can be recruited.
- ❑ It is a good idea to have hosts in reserve in case of an emergency.
- ❑ Provide each host (both home and day) the name, address, phone and email of their ambassador as early as possible to allow for a letter of welcome and a chance for both guest and host to develop an acquaintance.
- ❑ Day hosts should make arrangements regarding the ambassadors directly with the home hosts.
- ❑ Free days should be included as part of the program so that hosts can tailor activities to their specific ambassadors. See page 47.
- ❑ Explain to hosts that the ambassadors should invite them out or cook for them one evening meal during the week. Confirm this tradition with the ambassador ED.
- ❑ In a city where admissions and parking are expensive, guests should be provided with a list of optional activities and explain what EXTRA costs will be involved.
- ❑ Advise the hosts to discreetly bring problems which may arise to your atten-

tion. Early identification of a problem can result in early resolution.

Enthusiasm!

There are many ingredients to a successful exchange, but perhaps the most important is to make sure you approach the process with the right attitude. According to one experienced Friendship Force leader, to be successful in filling a Friendship Force exchange you need to know just three words:

1. Enthusiasm!
2. Enthusiasm!
3. Enthusiasm!

It probably isn't that simple, but it is true that a successful exchange begins and ends with an enthusiastic exchange director who really believes that the FF provides great opportunities for people to experience the world while making new friends.

"Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines, sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover."
Mark Twain

Part 4:

LEAD IT

A Friendship Force home stay has a built-in energy that draws people together and progresses on its own. Let the qualities of flexibility, good humor, patience, and respect be your guides.

Workshops to Prepare Ambassadors and Hosts

Exchange workshops are extremely important to prepare ambassadors AND hosts for the role of citizen diplomat and cross-cultural friend. It is at these workshops that goals and objectives of the Friendship Force are presented. They also serve as an important review for experienced participants and are a vital part of host/ambassador preparation – as they build excitement and momentum for the friendship experience.

INFORMATIONAL WORKSHOP

These should be fun, friendly, and informative. Serve refreshments and invite some experienced members so they can help answer questions from those who are new to Friendship Force. These early workshops are good tools for selling your exchange!

CULTURAL WORKSHOP

Here are some suggestions for cultural presentations:

- Information about the partner city and country. Use videos, art, music and food, or a guest speaker.
- Provide information on the culture, history, government, geography, climate, and language. Review cultural differences.
- Ambassador ED should review suggestions for the gift-giving protocol.
- Distribute the exchange program or itinerary.

- Keep language instruction simple—but do it! Knowing even a few basic greetings is a sign of respect.
- Ask each ambassador to write a letter about themselves that you can forward to your counterpart ED.

PRE-DEPARTURE (FOR AMBASSADORS) WORKSHOP

You will need to spend time at the final workshop on the logistical details for the exchange—or you may want to have a separate workshop just for this purpose. You will need to cover the following:

- Details regarding departure.
- Currency needs.
- Any health related information.
- All logistics related to the exchange, including any post-homestay tours.
- Emergency contact and health insurance.
- Final information that has been provided by the host ED regarding hosting assignments.

PRE-ARRIVAL (FOR HOSTS) WORKSHOP

Booklets (in each language if applicable) for the exchange should be prepared and should provide the following:

- Contact information for both ambassador and host ED.
- A list of ambassadors and their hosts with addresses, phone and cell numbers and email.

“Like all great travelers, I have seen more than I remember, and remember more than I have seen.”
Benjamin Disraeli

“A passport, as I’m sure you know, is a document that one shows to government officials whenever one reaches a border between countries, so the officials can learn who you are, where you were born, and how you look when photographed unflatteringly.”
Lemony Snicket

- An itinerary and description of hosting activities with maps as needed.
- Information about the host city or area.
- Hosts need to know exactly where to meet their guests. It is very important to be on time.

Both ambassador and host ED should be prepared for many detailed questions—some of which you will not be able to answer. Tell them that you will be accessible throughout the exchange if they should have any difficulties or need to contact you. If any of the ambassadors or hosts seem particularly worried, you may want to schedule an individual meeting with them to provide the reassurance they need.

DEADLINES

Keep track of deadlines for payments to FFI, hosting club, tour operators and other contractual obligations.

Be sure to make arrangements for payment of Friendship Force fees and host club program fees at least 60 days prior to departure. If there are any questions regarding this, consult your FFI program coordinator. If an ambassador cancels less than 60 days prior to departure, the Friendship Force and host club program fees are non-refundable.

Being Prepared for Emergencies

Each year FFI conducts 250-300 exchanges with over 5,000 ambassadors. The majority take place without any problems at all. Therefore, it is important not to spend too much time in your workshops focusing on

emergencies that are not likely to occur. There are two kinds of situations that you should be prepared to handle, however.

GROUP EMERGENCIES

- Travel delays and surprises: There is always the possibility of changes in the itineraries due to weather or airline-related changes. Have 24-hour phone numbers for any travel agents, tour operators or airlines. Insure that all travellers have contact details for the ambassador ED. Have all contact details for the host ED so you can alert them to changes in arrival times.
- Political unrest or natural disasters: FFI and your host leaders will keep you informed prior to your departure and if there were any concerns the exchange would be cancelled or postponed. Should there be unexpected emergencies or natural disasters, you should immediately contact your country’s nearest embassy or consulate and they will provide you with very clear instructions on how to proceed. (You should have this information with you as part of your emergency contact list.)

INDIVIDUAL EMERGENCIES

- An ambassador or host is hospitalized or has to be treated for more than a minor illness during an exchange.
- An ambassador leaves a home stay during an exchange, either voluntarily or involuntarily.
- An ambassador or host has engaged in inappropriate behavior. Use Ambassador Pledge (included in Ambassador Application & Agreement, see page 53) or other instructions to avoid

misunderstandings.

- ❑ An ambassador or host is an alleged victim, perpetrator, or witness to a crime during an exchange.
- ❑ An ambassador loses his/her passport or other vital document, particularly if this results in the need for separate travel arrangements.

HELPFUL HINTS

- ❑ Ambassadors should keep copies of their passport identification page in a location separate from the original (making it much easier to replace a lost passport).
- ❑ Some EDs ask the ambassadors to provide a sealed envelope with detailed health information, to be opened only in case of an emergency.
- ❑ If the emergency is health-related, first make sure the ambassador receives the necessary treatment—the travel insurance company can be of assistance as well. Your second task is to contact the appropriate family member back home.
- ❑ If the emergency takes place during the home stay experience, your host ED will be the best source of support, since they understand the local situation.
- ❑ If the emergency takes place during the travel portion of the exchange, the best assistance will come from the travel provider.
- ❑ Contact the FFI staff in Atlanta. Use the 24-hour emergency number if the office is closed. That number is 404 522 9490 extension 375. There will be a message directing you to the on-call staff member who will assist you.

Final Preparations

As the departure day approaches, make sure all of the preparations are in order:

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

If the exchange includes travel or tours, make sure all of the arrangements are finalized well in advance, payments have been made, and ambassadors are informed of details.

DOCUMENTS

Secure all of the documentation needed for emergency situations from ambassadors. Other vital pieces of information are: contact numbers for both EDs, travel suppliers, and the embassy or consulate in the host country.

AMBASSADOR EXCHANGE DIRECTOR INFORMATION CHECKLIST

Should be completed by ambassador ED and taken on the exchange. Be sure to give a copy to the Assistant ED. See page 53.

Leadership During the Exchange

A Friendship Force home stay has a built-in energy that draws people together and progresses on its own. Let the qualities of flexibility, good humor, patience, and respect be your guides.

- ❑ An ambassador or host ED is a spokesperson, and may be asked to make comments or presentations at exchange functions, at meetings with local dignitaries, or perhaps with the news media.
- ❑ Should any problems arise during the week, your role is to help define the

“There are no foreign lands, it is only the traveler who is foreign”

Robert Lewis Stevenson

“The most important trip you may take in life is meeting people halfway.”
Henry Boyes

situation, serve as liaison between those involved and to help resolve the difficulty.

- ❑ In many cases the two EDs will be staying together and should work closely together regarding each step of the program itinerary.
- ❑ It will be important for each ambassador and host to know how to contact their ED.
- ❑ When there are group activities, speak with each ambassador and host to make sure all is going well...encourage those who are having any difficulty and deal decisively with any situations that require a change.
- ❑ Occasionally, even with careful recruiting and workshop preparation, an ambassador or host who appeared to understand the goals and objectives of the Friendship Force prior to an exchange behaves in a manner to the contrary. When this happens, the exchange director has the authority to handle the situation in the best interest of everyone concerned. Behaviors such as abuse of alcohol, illegal drugs, verbal or physical abuse are unacceptable at any time.
- ❑ Working with your counterpart ED you should first try to resolve the situation with tact as well as firmness. Sometimes a private conversation between the ambassador or host and relevant exchange director will be sufficient to solve the problem. The ambassador ED has the authority to remove an ambassador from a home and place them in a nearby hotel. This would be at the ambassador's expense if they are the offender.

- ❑ If the problem appears to be related to the hosting situation the host ED can change hosts and handle the problem with discretion.
-

Your Final Assignment: Have Fun!

You planned a great exchange.

You recruited a winning delegation of ambassadors and hosts.

Your entire delegation is well prepared for the experience.

Your final assignment is a very important one. Enjoy your own exchange experience! The entire Friendship Force leadership system is based on volunteers enjoying the exchange experience. Remember that some of your ambassadors and hosts are potential future EDs. You will want them to see you having a great time as well as providing effective leadership.

Post-Exchange Activities

Ambassadors have returned home; hosts are getting back to their normal routine – but there are still several important post-exchange responsibilities to complete.

REUNION PARTY:

It is fun to get together for an informal reunion. The sharing of photos and stories is a way to remember the experience and to keep alive the friendships developed. Consider community activities that might help promote the Friendship Force by shar-

ing the results of your exchange with the local media.

KEEPING THE INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIPS ALIVE:

New friendships can be long lasting, but only if they are nurtured.

- Cultures differ regarding the etiquette pertaining to thank you notes and other communication following the exchange. However, it is the responsibility of the ambassador ED to make sure each ambassador sends a “thank you” message to their hosts.
- Discuss with ambassadors and other club members how best to stay in touch and share with each other your successes (and failures) of long-distance communication.
- If a club has not hosted a delegation from previous host country recently, invite them for an official exchange.
- Members of the delegation may want to invite their new friends to come on private visits.
- Either way, you will be continuing the mission of the exchange to establish lasting friendship and understanding.

EXCHANGE EVALUATION:

Following the completion of the exchange, your FFI program coordinator wants to know how things went, both the good and the not so good. Your FFI program coordinator will send you and all other exchange participants an online evaluation form to fill out. The survey is confidential and only FFI staff will see the results. Your FFI coordinator will provide you with an overview of the results upon request.

It is very important to provide a candid and

accurate report on the exchange so that we can work with all clubs to correct any difficulties. The FFI staff is also interested in learning what went well, so that future EDs can have the benefit of your experience.

Pictures are always good! We love sharing your exchange photos via our FFI website, our Facebook page or other media. Send photos by email to your FFI program coordinator. Be sure to include the location, date and names of people in the photo.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

To be prepared for the local club or FFI for national exchanges.

Thank You

You and your fellow EDs around the Friendship Force world play a vital role in carrying out the mission of our organization. By serving as a volunteer exchange director, you enable people from your community to establish direct links with people of another country and culture. Together they develop a level of cultural understanding that simply is not possible as ordinary tourists. This could not happen without your leadership. We hope you receive real satisfaction from knowing the importance of the contribution you have made.

On behalf of Friendship Force members in your community and around the world, THANK YOU!

“The whole object of travel is not to set foot on foreign land; it is at last to set foot on one’s own country as a foreign land.”

G . K. Chesterton

APPENDIX:

I. *General Information*

Friendship Force Ambassadors and Hosts

The goal for a Friendship Force exchange is to promote global understanding across the barriers that separate people. This is achieved by bringing together two groups of people: the ambassadors who travel to distant lands, and the hosts who open their homes. The hospitality provided by the host provides a unique setting for the exchange of ideas and culture at a very personal level. In a few days time, ambassadors and hosts become friends, despite their differences, and begin crossing the barriers that normally separate them.

THE AMBASSADOR

A Friendship Force ambassador, traveling to another country, takes on three distinct roles: guest, ambassador, and traveler.

1. **Guest:** What makes travel with the Friendship Force unique is the opportunity to live for five to seven days with a local host family. The ambassador becomes part of the host family, sharing everyday responsibilities around the home while learning firsthand about the host culture. Living conditions vary around the world, and the ambassador should be physically able to meet the requirements of the host community. This may include walking to the market, traveling on public transportation and climbing stairs in the home. Lodging and meals in the home are provided by the host, and group activities, such as welcome parties and local sightseeing, are included in the basic Friendship Force fee. Other expenses outside the home are the responsibility of the ambassador: local transportation (or a tank of gas), admission costs to local attractions, and meals outside the home. Sometimes ambassadors like to share their culture by preparing a meal in the home—purchasing the items required at the local market. Being a good guest also means expressing gratitude in appropriate ways. Taking the host out to dinner and sending a thank you note (not just a quick email) after the exchange.
2. **Ambassador:** Those who travel as Friendship Force ambassadors go not just for their own personal goals but also to represent their home community and their country. This means that in addition to learning about the host culture, they can share about their own. As they make friends in the host community, ambassadors provide a very personal and unique connection on behalf of their country. They should go prepared to be a true ambassador, reflecting the best of their country.
3. **Traveler:** A Friendship Force experience is a great way to experience the world from a new and unique perspective. With local citizens as guides, the ambassador is introduced to the best attractions of the region. Interested in particular opportunities? Just ask! Ambassadors who enjoy exploring on their own will find ample time for it. Traveling as a FF ambassador is enjoyable and enriching, but it also requires special dedication and preparation. A spirit of adventure, flexibility, and being open to new experiences are all essentials for a successful Ambassador experience.

THE HOST

The Friendship Force host also takes on three roles: host, cultural ambassador, and guide.

1. **Host:** The host provides home hospitality to the visiting ambassador(s) for up to one week, offering what is natural for them and their culture in the way of food and activities in the home and community. Each guest should be provided private sleeping quarters, but it is fine for guests to share bath and toilet facilities with members of the host family. The time spent in the home is used to establish a close personal friendship between the host and guests. This can be done without host and guest sharing the same language—but it helps to have someone available who does speak the ambassador's language. At all times the host should be respectful of the culture of the ambassador. While the host may choose to invite the guest to participate in

religious observances, these should always be optional. Meals in the home are the responsibility of the host, but the ambassador should be expected to pay for meals and activities outside the home. It is also customary for the ambassador to invite the host to dinner one night or to offer to prepare a meal in the home. The host should accept these offers as they help ensure the establishment of a mutual and balanced relationship. A good host also recognizes the visitors' need for rest! After a long international trip or a busy day sightseeing, the visitor may need some time to rest and catch their breath, before another busy day.

2. Ambassador: Although the Friendship Force assigns the title "ambassador" to the visitor, in many respects the hosts are also ambassadors, representing their communities and cultures. The host should see this as an important and enjoyable aspect of serving as a Friendship Force host. As hosts get to know the visitors, they should look for ways to share their culture—through ordinary experiences in the home and through activities in the community that can help the visiting ambassador better understand the host culture. Hosts should also introduce their visitors to others in the community, finding opportunities for family and friends outside the home to meet the visiting ambassadors.
3. Guide: The visiting ambassadors are provided some formal cultural tours as part of the overall exchange program. They also may be traveling in the region separate from their Friendship Force experience. Even so, the host has a great opportunity to serve as a local guide, providing the visitor with insights into the local community and culture that normal tourists never see. To see a new community through the eyes of the local host rather than from the window of a tour bus is part of what attracts people to a Friendship Force exchange. On days when no formal activities are planned, the host can take the visitors into the community, sharing places of mutual interest. In

some cases ambassadors may want to explore the community on their own. Hosts should recognize that this is part of the thrill of experiencing a new community. If ambassadors want to have time on their own, the hosts can arrange the best way for carrying out this goal.



friendship force

INTERNATIONAL

Who We Are

Friendship Force International {FFI} provides opportunities to explore new countries and cultures from the inside by bringing people together at the personal level. Through the signature program of home hospitality, local hosts welcome international visitors into their culture, sharing with them meals, conversation, and the best sights and experiences of their region.

In a typical Friendship Force program, a local club (chapter) prepares an itinerary of cultural activities, inviting members from clubs in other countries to come and stay with them in their homes for up to a week. Friendship Force International conducts over 300 programs every year, in 377 communities in 56 countries.

Mission

To promote global understanding across the barriers that separate people

Values

Mutual Respect • Cultural Diversity • Cultural Exploration • Service

Vision

Each individual will make a contribution to global goodwill.

The Friendship Force worldwide network of clubs and individuals will overcome differences among people and nations.

By connecting the world, one friend at a time, we will create a world of friends that becomes a world of peace.

Slogan

Changing the Way You See the World

Tagline

Explore • Understand • Serve

Explore: We explore new countries and regions. We explore new cultures and new ways to connect across the barriers that separate us.

Understand: By sharing a home, meals, conversation and everyday experiences, people become friends, seeing beyond governments and borders into the heart of a country and its people. By combining home hospitality with cultural exploration, we reach a new level of understanding.

Serve: Exploration leads to understanding. Understanding leads to an acceptance of our common humanity and the desire to serve our global village—with words and actions.

OFFERING A STRONG CULTURAL HOSTING PROGRAM

Travel to make friends? I don't have time to keep up with the friends I have now! This was the statement of a young woman who attended a focus group FFI conducted in an effort to keep our organization cutting edge. So, we have a CHALLENGE to attract the next generation. We know that in each of our 350 cities we have a way to give an excellent cultural experience. Now, not only can this person make friends, but have a wonderful cross cultural education in the process!

Pretend you are the Hosting ED and just received the following E-mail:

Dear E.D.

I have good news! We are coming to your club with a full exchange.

Most of our ambassadors are in the 45 – 60 year old age range and this will be their first ever Friendship Force exchange. We have worked very hard to attract this next generation of Baby Boomer type folks and feel the future of our club depends on the success of this exchange. I know they will be exposed to an excellent cultural experience with your club but my ambassadors are so excited they would like to hear more specifics.

Please share some details and especially how these ambassadors will learn more about your culture on their first Friendship Force adventure!

With Great Anticipation,
Ambassador ED!

How would you respond? Clubs around the world are coming up with ideas on how to create excellent programs emphasizing their culture. Read on!

EARLY COMMUNICATION AND PLANNING

- Early communication between host and ambassador clubs is essential.
- Communication between host and ambassador ED must be very good.
- Let incoming club know what is available.
- Get feedback from the other ED.
- Offer options and let the ambassador ED choose from them.
- Give suggestions.
- Advise ambassador ED of opportunities and costs.

If these are "extras" beyond the typical exchange program they would be presented as an option to be agreed upon in advance, along with an explanation of extra costs involved, e.g. a special activity or excursion.

- Find ambassador sporting interests to see if a game can be organized.
- Ask ambassador ED to provide more feedback on individual ambassador interests, group expectations. Ask for profiles – not just circling of options

on application forms – this helps to know more clearly the needs and wishes of the individuals in the group.

- Establish a strong committee and make sure the committee gets the ambassadors' interests prior to making the program.
- Ambassador ED should inform applicants of the Friendship Force health and mobility policy, so that a program tailored for a fit and healthy group would be appropriate... Some alternatives can always be provided within the program....active ambassadors could go canoeing or kayaking down the river whilst others enjoy a picnic on the river banks.
- List of Community Cultural events, including sporting events, are available on the internet up to a year in advance so the hosting committee can plan ahead. These community events allow the ambassadors to meet the local community as well as the other way around and may increase publicity for your program.

- Understand the other culture which may be more formal or informal than your own. Make opportunities for the formal or allowances for the less formal.
- Learn about the other group's culture when developing the exchange program.
- Seek out Baby Boomers to participate.
- Share club profiles.
- Be careful not to overpower with information, especially if translating between languages is required.
- Giving people positive attitudes is very inspiring.
- Be sure the ambassador ED understands the protocol if you are having a civic reception and whether tokens of greeting are exchanged.
- Recruit hosts in same age range and consider ambassadors and hosts with matching interests.
- Offering "Wish Days" in which individual ambassadors can pursue a special interest is easier with advance planning, but can sometimes be accommodated if hosts communicate with ambassadors at the beginning of the exchange.
- Be positive to meet the requests and the challenges.
- Day hosts are essential to allow ambassadors to hear the views of another club member. They can even be used to host a "Wish Day" or flexible day.
- Invite ¼ of the ambassadors plus ¼ of all club members to individual homes for an activity.
- It is important to visit other homes besides that of the host.
- Divide ambassadors into groups who are interested in specifics: schools, hospitals, environment, tramping/hiking...include club members who will facilitate.

WELCOME IDEAS

- Greet with banners and wear Friendship Force shirts.
- Have reception at the airport.
- Invite all club members to the Welcome Party.
- Cocktail welcome party featuring local wines and food specialties with a general bar available.
- Potluck Dinner (Someone pointed out that these are indeed representative of some cultures.)
- Outdoor BBQ with beer/wine.
- Invite family members and younger neighbors or friends to help with the welcome party. These folks might become interested in your Friendship Force.
- Prepare a Welcome Bag with the program, local maps, small gifts, etc.
- Take travel weariness and time of day into account when planning welcome event.
- Have some local cultural content to the welcome event.

CIVIC RECEPTION

- Arrange well in advance with government officials.
- Give Ambassador ED the proper title and name for the mayor, governor, or other official who will be greeting the contingent.
- Some town councils or legislative bodies welcome a visit by an ambassador group which can then see government in action.

"TREAT" THE HOST TIME

- Some clubs schedule an evening when ambassadors treat their hosts to dinner at a local restaurant.

- Some ambassadors bring special foods and prepare a dinner for their hosts in their home.
- Consideration should be made so as not to choose a restaurant that is too expensive and would be a hardship. As someone said, "Being a friend is more important than money."

FRIENDSHIPS AND FOOD

- Progressive dinners give a chance to see other homes and include non-members.
- Have an event featuring local food products and specialties.
- Wine tasting and wine and cheese gatherings are popular.
- Micro-Breweries or Breweries can be of interest.
- When dinner hosting, invite younger neighbors who are not FF members.
- Have small dinner parties in members' homes.
- Breakfast, brunch, lunch on the beach or at a park.
- Outdoor BBQ's are always popular.

ACTIVITY IDEAS

- Vintage car tour.
- Wildlife sanctuary visit or zoos.
- Visiting gardens or arboretums.
- Acknowledge traditional land-owners and incorporate their culture in the program, such as the aboriginal peoples/Maori/Native Americans, etc.
- Fishing (one group went fishing and had their catch "smoked").
- Shopping (which could be a drop-off and pick-up of the shoppers).
- Sports activities.
- Seeing little children play football or soccer or baseball is fun to watch.
- Singing can be added to many activities.
- Four-Wheel driving.

- Evening Plans: music, clubs, theater, opera, dancing – organize hosts for transport.
- All kinds of dancing: Line Dancing, Folk Dancing, Square Dancing, some dances are native to a particular culture that would be fun to teach the ambassadors.
- Outdoor activities: boating, hiking, biking, swimming.
- Play acting: re-enactments of a famous trial or other historic event.
- Lawn bowls
- Car Rally (Bakersfield, California USA does one with clues that was very popular!)
- Visit local schools or university.
- Visit museums or art galleries.
- Visit local historic or cultural sites, unique community projects, environmental sites.
- Have a "Fun Day" featuring a local sporting event or a celebrity guest.

UNIQUE IDEAS

- Find unique activities that no one would do just on their own: use your members for ideas.
- Hold a street party with hosts to meet local residents and neighbors.
- "Wish Day" where individuals have the opportunity to do something of special interest either with or without their hosts.
- Celebrate a national holiday with all of the traditions EVEN THOUGH IT IS A DIFFERENT DATE!
- Riding through coastal sand dunes.
- Bushwalks, beach or trail walks ending at a pub!
- Contact other "special interest" organizations to become involved, e.g. car rally clubs, quilting guilds, sporting groups. The local council and the internet can help with these contacts.
- One night – mix members and make pizzas!
- Camping or orienteering

- Quizzes between clubs. Each one answers questions about their own culture. Then reverse to see how well you know the other culture!
- Going to the outback, the mountains, the wilderness, the woods, whatever is near you that would be a different treat for your ambassadors.
- Explore local volunteer, humanitarian, or environmental issues.

EXCURSIONS

Some side trips and activities can be accomplished within the \$100 Club Hosting Fee but others would have to be covered by charging the ambassadors more, such as overnight excursions, trips to the Great Barrier Reef, Disneyworld or other theme parks, or special theatrical or musical performances. These can be done as a part of the exchange or as a pre-exchange activity or post-exchange activity. The important thing is that they be presented as an option with costs outlined in writing and the ambassador ED agrees in advance. Protocol can be found in current policies accessible when following the instructions on page 53.

- Biking/Hiking in the rain forest, through the park, on the local walking trails.
- Theme Parks such as Sea World, Disneyland, etc.
- Train trips.
- Boat trips.
- Ferry rides.
- Overnight tours.
- Two day trips, to a national park, to explore nearby points of interest, to go to a special destination.
- Staying in a youth camp at a park.
- Bus trip to a unique area exploring cultural points of interest along the way.
- Going to a special festival or unique cultural event.

FAREWELL

- Have a SMASHING farewell party with the entire club invited
- Take pictures of host and ambassadors together. If gifts are typically exchanged at the farewell, make sure that both EDs share the same protocol. If one club has a policy of giving the ED a gift, the other should reciprocate. If one club no longer gives gifts but may give a contribution to the Legacy Fund or a local charity instead, make sure the other club is made aware of your policy.
- Discuss and communicate from beginning to end and the whole exchange will be SMASHING!

DON'T OVERPLAN!

- You have just read dozens of ideas for your hosting program. The tendency is to fill every minute with exciting activities. However, planned group activities should be balanced with free time with the hosts as well as time for the ambassadors to explore on their own.

FREE TIME WITH HOST FAMILIES

- Don't over-schedule activities. Leave room in the schedule for flexible days.
- Use the term "flexible" rather than "free" days, which may infer that they are cost free.
- Two consecutive "flex" days in the middle of the program would enable private pursuit or an opportunity for the host or day host to travel further to showcase another area or point of interest.
- Allow enough family time so that hosts and ambassadors can form a bond.

FREE TIME ON YOUR OWN

This is a different concept than having free time with the host families. (However, many itineraries are over-planned and do not offer sufficient free time with hosts as well.

Spending too much time in the home and in supervised activities is a turn-off to some ambassadors, especially the “next generation.”

Explain the public transportation, provide schedules and maps, deliver your ambassadors to a place and arrange to pick them up later. Places to consider:

- Downtown
- Historic or Cultural District
- Art Gallery or Museum
- Shopping Center

Try to create opportunities for your guest to pursue his favorite pastime:

- Bicycling
- Boating
- Walking/Jogging
- Motorcycling
- Golfing
- Offer the use of a bike and point out interesting areas or your local trail system.

Guidelines for Travel Arrangements

Here are some suggestions to help you get started with the process. If at any time you need further assistance, feel free to contact FFI staff for advice and recommendations.

1. Begin researching possible airlines and travel itineraries as soon as your exchange assignment is confirmed. While it is not possible to get final pricing and confirmations more than a year in advance, use the internet to investigate sample airfares, tour itineraries, etc early.
2. FFI staff members can provide advice on itineraries that have proved successful in the past and may also be able to refer you to exchange directors who have traveled to the same destination or provide a list of recommended travel suppliers.
3. In conjunction with the host club(s), establish your exact exchange dates as well as the program for any pre- or post-exchange touring. You will receive better service from travel providers if you have a fairly firm idea of your plans before they begin researching options while still being open to suggestions.
4. Decide whether you feel more comfortable working with a local travel agency or with a large, national consolidator or tour operator. You may get better prices from a consolidator, but you might receive better service by working through a local agency. Don't be afraid to interview several agencies to see which one feels like the best fit.
5. Select an agency to work with and ask them to make the airline bookings and/or tour arrangements and confirm the price to you.
6. It is standard practice to require a deposit to hold airline space in advance, usually \$100 per seat. This allows the airline to hold a block of seats for your group on specific flights at a guaranteed price without knowing the passengers' names and with the actual ticketing not taking place until closer to the departure date. The club should assist with the payment of this deposit – the funds will be returned after the group travels as long as the terms of the contract have been fulfilled. Ideally, you will want to have a confirmed program and price about six months before your exchange to allow for maximum recruiting time.
7. Don't wait until the exchange is recruited before making travel arrangements. It may seem easier, but it can lower the participation on the exchange in the end by discouraging potential guests as they can be reluctant to commit to an exchange without knowing the final cost in advance. .
8. Make sure you understand the terms of your airline and/or tour contract. In most cases with airline contracts, you can hold all seats without penalty until 90 days before departure. At that point, you will need to start guaranteeing the number of participants or risk losing your deposit. Typically, at 90 days out, you must guarantee 80% or 90% of the travelers. You will still want to hold as many additional seats as you can in order to have space for late additions to your exchange, but you will need to cancel seats that may not be used in order to protect your deposit. Keep in mind that usually there is a minimum of 10 people required to travel together in order to receive the discounted group fare. Take care to also get clear information on the airline's policy about deviations from the main itinerary – whether it is allowed, if there is any extra cost involved, etc.
9. When pricing your exchange, use the worksheet provided by FFI.
 - a. Make sure that you know in advance any potential expenses in addition to airfare, hosting fees, local club fees and FFI administrative

- fees.
 - b. Are you asking your host club to arrange any special activities that will result in additional cost?
 - c. Consider transfers from your arrival airport to the host club, or between Phase I and Phase II hosting. Keep in mind that standard hosting fees do not include the cost of airport transfers.
 - d. If there is a land package included in the program fee, do you want to include money to cover tips and gratuities?
 - e. Consider including a small amount as a “contingency” fund to cover unanticipated costs such as an increase in airline taxes. If this money is not used, you can return it to the ambassadors, pick up the tab for a meal not covered on the program, or donate it to a charity in the community you will be visiting.
 - f. Some exchange directors include in the price the earned seat for the exchange director so that their costs for the exchange are fully covered with 20 or more paid ambassadors and discounted proportionately with 10 or more paid ambassadors. Discuss this with your board or your program services coordinator.
10. If your program fee includes a tour or land package that is priced according to the number of participants (for example one price for a minimum of 15 people, lower if there are 20 or 25, etc.), we recommend that you set your price based on a lower number of participants than you expect. For example, if you hope to have 20 ambassadors on the exchange, use the tour quote based on 15.
- a. Let your ambassadors know that if more people sign up for the exchange, the price can be lowered for everyone. It is a lot easier to lower the price than to increase it! It will also encourage others to join the exchange.
 - b. You also want to protect your pricing from a situation where your exchange might be full but some ambassadors may choose not to join the tour so that your tour numbers are lower than total travellers. This will also protect you against late cancellations from the tour that might cause the price to be raised for all participants.
11. Once you have your arrangements set and priced, you’re ready to recruit!
- a. Be sure to keep your program services coordinator at FFI updated as to your dates, plans, and status so that he/she can assist you.
 - b. As ambassadors sign up for the exchange, make sure they provide you with a photocopy of their passport along with their Application. You will need to provide a list to the airline with the names exactly as they appear in the passport.
 - c. Check that all of the ambassadors have passports valid at least six months past the return date of your exchange since some countries require this before allowing entry.
 - d. Your program services coordinator can also help you find out if your ambassadors will need visas for travel to your country of destination and what the procedure is for that process.
 - e. Be sure to provide ambassadors with information on the FFI travel insurance policy; remind them that they are required to have adequate insurance coverage for the exchange.

APPENDIX:

II. *How To Download
Policies and Forms from
thefriendshipforce.org*

Downloading Policies and Forms from the FFI Website

The FFI website can be very useful for exchange directors. Supporting materials for Friendship Force volunteers are located in the Club Resources section of the website. The most current policies and forms are posted here for you to download, read and print easily.

1. Go to the Friendship Force website: www.thefriendshipforce.org.
2. Click on the red Club Resources tab. This section is designed especially for Friendship Force volunteers and contains supporting materials and information.
3. Click on Documents, located in the red, horizontal menu bar. Here you can find forms, policies, samples and reports related to clubs and exchanges.
4. Click on Exchange Documents, located in the yellow horizontal menu bar. This section contains materials for both ambassador and host EDs.
5. Scan the list to find the item you need. Click on MSWord to download the item as an editable Microsoft Word document, or click on PDF to download the item as a non-editable document compatible with any computer. Note: When looking for the current policies, download the version that corresponds with the year in which your exchange will take place.
6. Click "Open" or "Allow" if prompted.
7. When the document opens, you can save it to your own computer or print it.



APPENDIX:

III. *Exchange Policies and Forms*

Index of Exchange Documents

The following exchange documents, including policies and forms, are available for download on the FFI website.

Go to www.thefriendshipforce.org. Click on red Club Resources tab, then “documents,” then “exchange.”

2013 Friendship Force Policies:	Policies and procedures approved by the FFI Board of Directors to govern all Friendship Force club and exchange activity.
Health and Mobility Checklist:	A checklist for the host exchange director to complete and give it to the ambassador exchange director. Providing this information well in advance of the exchange allows the ambassador exchange director to recruit well-qualified ambassadors to participate in the exchange.
2013 Exchange Director Manual:	Although there is no one “right” way to plan and lead an exchange, this manual will guide you through the basic principles for planning, selling, and leading your exchange.
Leadership Information Form:	The club president should complete this form and submit it to FFI once an exchange director has been appointed.

Ambassador Documents

Ambassador Application and Agreement:	To be completed by all members interested in participating in an exchange and submitted to their ambassador exchange director.
Ambassador Agreement Confirmation:	To be completed by the ambassador exchange director and submitted to FFI to confirm that all ambassadors participating in the exchange have applied and been approved to participate.
Ambassador Emergency Contact Form:	A chart for ambassador contact information, for use by exchange directors in the event of an emergency.
Ambassador Sample Calendar:	Use this checklist to ensure you keep on schedule as you move from planning to recruiting and leading phases of the exchange.
Ambassador ED Information Checklist:	A checklist and reference of items to bring and information to have on hand during the exchange for ambassador exchange directors.
Guidelines for Travel Arrangements for US Clubs:	Suggestions to get you started on making your travel arrangements.

Continued on the next page...

www.thefriendshipforce.org

Index of Exchange Documents cont'd

Host Documents

Host Application and Agreement:	To be completed by members interested in hosting. This helps exchange directors to select hosts who are representative of their community or region. The detailed information provided also helps match host families with ambassadors.
Host Sample Calendar:	Use this checklist to ensure you keep on schedule as you move from planning to preparing agendas and hosting phases of the exchange.
Request for Certificate of Liability Insurance:	For US and Canadian clubs to request a Certificate of Liability for local meeting facilities if required.

Ambassador and Host Documents

Interviewing Potential Ambassadors and Hosts:	Guidelines and sample questions to aid exchange directors in interviewing candidates for the exchange.
Ambassador and Host Matching Form:	A useful tool to help exchange directors match ambassadors and hosts.
Participant Evaluation Form:	After the exchange, give your feedback to FFI by completing this online evaluation form, which will be sent to you by your FFI program coordinator.
Incident Report Form:	A guide for dealing with emergencies and the form to submit to FFI in the unlikely event of an emergency.

Travel Guard Insurance Information

Purchase Travel Guard Insurance Online	Follow the instructions to purchase travel insurance through Travel Guard at a special Friendship Force rate.
Travel Guard Insurance Coverage Brochure:	FOR US AND CANADIAN AMBASSADORS: FFI receives a special rate on travel insurance through Travel Guard. This brochure provides you with information on what they cover.
Travel Guard Insurance Vacation Plan:	FOR US AND CANADIAN AMBASSADORS: A complete description of Travel Guard's Vacation Plan coverage for FFI members.
Travel Insurance Waiver Form:	All FFI ambassadors are required to secure adequate travel and medical insurance to cover emergencies during their exchanges; however, at the discretion of the exchange director, this insurance waiver form may be signed by an ambassador and notarized for those who choose not to secure insurance.

