

Friendship Force International's Quarterly eNewsletter!

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friendship force
INTERNATIONAL

Experience different views. Discover common ground.



In this edition:

- August 2017 FFI Board Meeting
- "Why I Give" to the 40th Anniversary Campaign
- Manchester World Conference Highlights
- Calling All Amateur Photographers!
- Premiere of Newest FFI Video - "Now More Than Ever"
- New! eNewsletter Club of the Quarter



**FF Solothurn's Journey to Make
New Friends in Mongolia**

July 2017

After hosting two global Journeys, FF Mongolia hosted their first standard club-to-club Journey with FF Solothurn. This was a great Journey, with very friendly people, to a beautiful country.

On the first week of their Journey, FF Solothurn was hosted by the local club in Ulaanbaatar - the largest city in Mongolia, with 1.5 million people and where half of the Mongolian population lives. The hosts were mostly families, generously sharing their sometimes small apartments with the ambassadors.

FF Mongolia is a small club with working-age members who are active in their work life, with loose club structures and a project-oriented focus instead of a firm club organization. FF Solothurn's ambassador group was composed of 17 members, including two members in their twenties and six first-time ambassadors! The special destination proved to be a great draw and the Journey did not disappoint.

As with many Journeys, patience was a key component for all amidst the interaction of different cultures in different regions. Traffic in the big city was even more congested than normal with visitors to the famous Naadam festival, which the Swiss ambassadors were fortunate to experience. This festival, which takes place in mid-July, is the biggest traditional event in Mongolia with three major contests occurring: Mongolian wrestling, horse racing, and archery. There are also many smaller festivals on a local level, and ambassadors even watched a wrestling contest among family members during a birthday party they attended!

The FF Mongolia Club President and Host Coordinator, Bayar Lkhamjav, and other club members arranged this Journey in conjunction with Ambassador Coordinators Christine Diemand, Ruth Frei, and Hedy Hug from FF Solothurn. With the help of Bayar and other FF Mongolian members, the Swiss ambassadors extended their stay for an additional two weeks to see the rural side of this huge country. "What a contrast to the big city - driving on dirt roads for hours, climbing sand dunes in the Gobi desert, enjoying spectacular landscapes, sleeping in Ger camps, sharing the hospitality of the nomad people," said FF Solothurn member and FFI Board Member, Kurt Haefeli. "Our Mongolian friends also introduced us to new games, like the game of sheep anklebones" (see picture).

"This was truly a mind- and heart-opening experience for us - thank you FF Mongolia!" said Kurt.

Story and photos courtesy of Kurt Haefeli, FFI Board Member and Club Member from FF Solothurn, Switzerland.



FFI Board Meeting Highlights



The International Board of Directors held their bi-annual meeting in Manchester, U.K. directly before the World Conference. In addition to their business meeting (see link below,) [two new Board Members were officially elected!](#)

[Here are the highlights from the meeting.](#)

40th Anniversary Campaign



The 40th Anniversary Campaign is off to a great start, raising over \$10,000 in donations from members, clubs, and corporate donors as well. If you're wondering why you should give, read why some members have donated to the 40th Anniversary Campaign.

[Read what they had to say here.](#)

Recap of 2017 World Conference



From the far-out 70s themed opening night celebration to friendship-focused workshops and tours, there were no dull moments at this year's Friendship Force International World Conference in Manchester, U.K.!

[Read more and view photos!](#)

Calling All Photographers



Are you a Friendship Force member with an interest in photography? We are looking for members worldwide with an interest in taking and sharing photos and improving their photography skills to form Club Clusters. No professional training required!

[Read more here.](#)

New Video Premiere



Since 1977, FFI has worked to bridge the divide created by cultural misunderstandings and fear. We believe our mission is important "now more than ever" - see why in our newest promotional video.

[Watch the video.](#)

NEW! Club of the Quarter



Our first eNewsletter Club of the Quarter is a joint honor, featuring FF Oregon's Mid-Willamette Valley and FF Columbia Cascade, USA, with their fantastic program and effort in hosting an eclipse-themed Journey in August 2017.

[Read about the adventure here!](#)

In Case You Missed It!

- Updated [Member Resources](#) and [News and Media](#) Pages
 - CEO Jeremi Snook's [Blog Series](#) Continues
 - New [Global Youth Journey to Japan](#) for Students Age 14-18
 - Donate to Our [40th Anniversary Campaign!](#)
 - Why Our Mission is Important [Now More Than Ever](#)
 - Upcoming [Festival at Sea Cruise](#)
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