friendship force
KAPITI COAST

MEMBER
HANDBOOK

CHANGING THE WAY YOU SEE THE WORLD
Introduction

This handbook has been prepared for members and new members of the Friendship Force of Kapiti Coast. It contains an outline of our Club’s history, information about the Friendship Force organisation, and helpful advice on participating in inward and outward exchanges.

What is The Friendship Force?

The Friendship Force is an international home hosting organisation for people who love to travel and meet other people, stay with them, and explore their lifestyles and their area.

The aim of the Friendship Force is to provide friendship to people within the club and across the barriers of distance, culture, language, religion and politics. This is done in a non-political, non-religious and non-racial manner.

You arrive as strangers, you leave as friends.

Mission

To promote global understanding across 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.
These three words are simple and easily translated into other languages, and they capture the essence of the Friendship Force mission.

**Explore**

Each Friendship Force experience begins with the desire to explore. We explore new countries and regions; we explore new cultures and new ways to connect across the barriers that separate us.

**Understand**

Through home hospitality the Friendship Force introduces people at the personal level. By sharing a home, meals, and conversation, people become friends, seeing beyond governments and borders into the heart of a country and its people. By combining home hospitality with cultural exploration, Friendship Force ambassadors and hosts reach a new level of understanding. We learn to celebrate and enjoy our differences and, most importantly, we learn that differences don’t need to divide.

**Serve**

Exploration leads to understanding. Understanding leads to a profound experience of our common humanity and the desire to serve our global village—with words and actions that support each other.

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**The Friendship Force Pledge**

As a member of the Friendship Force
I recognise that I can make a difference.
I recognise that I have a mission.
That mission is to be a friend to the people of the world.
As I embark on this adventure, I know that others will be watching me.
I know that through my example to my fellow citizens, and people of other countries,
the cause of peace and friendship can be furthered.
I can make a difference!
Explanation of some Friendship Force terms used in this Handbook

- **FFI**: Friendship Force International.
- **Outward Journey**: a visit to an overseas club.
- **Inward Journey**: a visit from an overseas club.
- **Interclub Journey**: a visit to or from another New Zealand club.
- **AC or Ambassador Co-ordinator**: the leader of a journey, either inward or outward.
- **Ambassador**: one who takes part in an inward or outward journey.
- **“It’s a Match”**: a term used to confirm a journey is acceptable to both parties.
- **Accommodation Host**: a member who hosts ambassadors on an inward journey.
- **Day Host**: a member who looks after ambassadors on an inward journey during the day.
- **Dinner Host**: a member who hosts ambassadors on an inward journey to dinner in their home.
- **Club Administration Fee**: an amount paid by ambassadors on an outward journey to the organising club for local costs.
- **Club Programme Host Fee**: the amount paid by ambassadors on an outward journey to their host club.
- **FFI Administration Fee**: the amount paid by ambassadors to FFI for outward journeys.
- **Field Representatives**: New Zealand members selected by FFI to assist New Zealand clubs. There are currently four Field Reps in New Zealand.
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 Carter served as Honorary Chairperson of The Friendship Force through the first twenty-five years, working to ensure that the organisation became vibrant and known around the world.

What sets Friendship Force apart from other exchange organisations 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.

In 1992, The Friendship Force was recognized internationally when it was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

The website for FFI is www.thefriendshipforce.org.
The Friendship Force in New Zealand

The Friendship Force in New Zealand consists of 21 clubs, mainly in the North Island. Each club is autonomous but is affiliated to Friendship Force International with headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia.

Each club is run by an elected committee, which is called a ‘Board’. Elections are held annually. During the year clubs have social events about once a month and usually have one outbound and two inbound journeys with clubs from other countries. In addition, visits to other clubs in New Zealand for one to three nights are often arranged.

There is no formal governing body in New Zealand, so Friendship Force in NZ is overseen by four volunteer Field Representatives selected by FFI who manage any problems occurring in New Zealand clubs.

A bi-annual conference is held for all New Zealand clubs, usually in February each year. All members are welcome to attend the bi-annual conference.

The New Zealand Friendship Force has its own website: this is www.friendshipforce.org.nz.

The Friendship Force of Kapiti Coast

The Friendship Force of Kapiti Coast is an incorporated society founded in 1987, and has approximately 65 members. The Club meets monthly for social occasions in addition to hosting and organising journeys. A newsletter is produced each month which keeps members up to date with the social programme and with current and planned journeys.

We normally host two or three international journeys each year from many different parts of the world. In addition, we are allocated one outward journey each year in which our members can participate, although members are free to join other clubs’ journeys if space is available. We also participate each year in inter-club journeys with other clubs in New Zealand.
Club Structure

Governance

The Club is governed by a Board, comprising a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and up to six Board members. The Board meets monthly in the homes of Board members to make decisions on behalf of members about the running of the Club. Club members are welcome to attend Board meetings, which are publicised in each newsletter.

Social Events & Newsletter

Social events are organised by the Board with the help of co-opted members, and are advertised in the monthly newsletter (which is sent out in the second week of each month by email). Events include monthly coffee mornings and regular Let’s Eat Out lunches; annual ten-pin bowling; the soup lunch; ‘Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner’; an annual combined picnic with the Wellington Club; welcome and farewell dinners for incoming journeys; themed dinners, and more.

Subscriptions

Annual subscriptions are set by the Board each year, and are payable on the 1st day of October. Part of this fee goes to FFI in Atlanta, and the remainder is used to run the Club.

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The AGM of the Kapiti Coast Friendship Force is held in November each year. Elections for all Board positions are held at the AGM. The President normally serves a two-year term, but all other positions can be on-going.
Friendship Force Journeys

The Importance of Journeys
- A journey is the home-stay visit between two clubs from different parts of the world.
- The journey is the main method by which The Friendship Force seeks to achieve its mission.
- These journeys are between 5-7 days in duration.
- Taking part in the hosting involved with a journey is therefore the key activity for members of the club.

Allocation of Journey
- Each year, we put in an application requesting countries we wish to visit on outward journey the year after next.
- Clubs around the world do this in a similar way.
- FFI endeavours to meet as many requests as possible, but it is accepted that some countries have few clubs and it may be difficult to gain a journey into these countries.
- Each year FFI will normally allocate our club one outward journey, which might be to two or more places; and one or two inward journey.

Journeys are accepted
- Once FFI makes the initial allocation, the clubs decide whether to accept the journey offered.
- If both clubs involved accept the journey, FFI declares ‘It’s a Match’ and allocates a journey number.
- The planning at each end is then able to start.
Friendship Force
Ambassadors and Hosts

The goal for a Friendship Force journey 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. After a few days ambassadors and hosts become friends, despite their differences, and begin crossing the barriers that normally separate them.

THE AMBASSADOR

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

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 first-hand 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, travelling 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 club programme host fee. Some expenses outside the home may be the responsibility of the ambassador – these may include local transportation, 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 journey will be appreciated by the host.

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. **Traveller:** 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 off-the-beaten-track opportunities? Just ask! Ambassadors who enjoy striking out on their own will find ample time for exploring on their own. Travelling 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 5-7 days, offering what is natural for them and their culture in the way of food and activities in the home and community.

   Each ambassador should be provided with 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 can be expected to pay for meals and activities outside the home. It is also customary for the ambassador to take the host out 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 recognises 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 journey program. They also may be travelling 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 journey. 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.
What is Expected of You as a Host

At the beginning of the journey:

 On arrival, if the Ambassadors are tired after a long journey or flight, give them the opportunity to have a rest.

 Allow them time to unpack and show them drawers and wardrobe space available to them. Perhaps place a container of water, glasses and maybe some fruit or snacks in their room.

 Show them the facilities of the house, including bathroom (especially operation of the shower), toilet, windows, heating/cooling system, electric blankets and so on.

Making the ambassador feel at home:

 Make sure they know they are welcome to help themselves to such things as tea, coffee, biscuits etc (people from some cultures may not be used to doing this).

 Keep the house warm in cooler times—some ambassadors are from warmer countries where heating is not required.

 Make clear the situation in your home regarding the use of phone, internet and email, and be prepared to help with placing an overseas call.

 Explain how they can have their laundry done.
Food:

- Your guests expect to share your lifestyles, so prepare the same foods for them as you do for yourselves.

- At the same time, you need to find out about any special needs they may have for health, religious or cultural reasons.

- If they offer to take you out for a meal (it is traditional but not obligatory), select a restaurant that is within the price range of your ambassadors.

Keeping the household going:

- As a host, keep to your regular daily schedule as much as possible, and allow your ambassador to share it.

Programme of activities:

- Make yourself familiar with local places and sights that you could share with your guests on free days.

- Discuss these free time activities with the ambassadors, as they may have special interests they wish to pursue.

- If they are interested in shopping, allow them time to do this either with you or by themselves. Ensure they have your address and phone number, a map, and good instructions on how to travel home, or where to be picked up.

- Give your ambassadors time to get to know you, your family and friends, and to relax in your home.
What is Expected of You as an Ambassador

As a Kapiti Coast Club member:

- Remember, you are not only an ambassador for the Kapiti Coast club, but also for your country and for the Friendship Force organisation.

As an Ambassador:

- Be considerate of limited resources. For example, your hosts’ hot water supply may not be equal to what you are accustomed to at home, so use it sparingly.

- Offer to take your hosts out for a meal, and/or ask if you can use their kitchen to cook them a typical New Zealand meal.

- Take a variety of small gifts for people you meet, and take one good present for your hosts. They particularly like things you have made, or from your local area.

- Take along photos of your home, family and town to share with your hosts so they have a better understanding of you.

- This may be your host’s first FF experience. You are not only going as a citizen ambassador, but as a representative of the Friendship Force. It would be sad if your host chose never to be involved again because of your actions or lack of appreciation.

- If you have a problem, tactfully raise the matter with your host. If this fails, then contact your Ambassador Coordinator. But remember, you are their guest and must respect their customs and habits, and you are only there for a week or less.
As a person:

- Have a positive, open mind and leave negative thoughts at home. Remember that you are a guest in a foreign country and have no rights to criticise people, customs, or government. Do not expect to find your country in another country.

- If you are not prepared to try new ideas, new food and have fun, then don’t go on journeys.

- Be independent. Enjoy the activities your hosts have planned for you, but be able to amuse yourself part of the time. Explore the neighbourhood, write postcards, or go on sightseeing and shopping trips alone while the family is busy.

- Treat your hosts as new family you’ve never met before.

- Travel in a spirit of humility and with a genuine desire to learn more about the people of your host country.

- Instead of the practice of ‘knowing all the answers’, cultivate the habit of asking questions.

- Go not only to make a new friend, but more importantly, to be a friend.

  **Be yourself, but be your best self!**

Remember: If you go on a journey experience, you will discover that ... you can make a difference.
Making the Most of Your Membership

Members are encouraged to become fully involved in the activities of the Club, so that they can gain the most benefit from being a member. New members will not get to know everyone on their first visits, but over time any will become very good friends.

Core activities of the club you can become involved with include:

- Attending the monthly social functions
- Hosting during an inward journey, thus taking part in the main activity of the Friendship Force
- or being a day host or a dinner host if full hosting is not possible
- or just attending journey activities open to all members, such as welcome and farewell dinners.

Other rewarding activities you can be involved with include:

- Joining up to go with our club, or another club, on an outward journey overseas
- Joining any interclub journeys within New Zealand that are arranged
- Attending the bi-annual National Conference
- Becoming a member of a journey Committee
- Accepting nomination for Club Board or Committee.

Remember that through your effort, you can make a difference.

**Wear Your Name Badge!**

*Your name badge is important.* Please wear the name badge to all Friendship Force activities. This is an important way of helping all members to get to know you, and for you to get to know them.

**Resignations**

Should a member decide to leave the Club, the standard procedure, as in all clubs, is to forward a letter of resignation to the President or Secretary.