

Buddy System for Mentoring New FFNCA Members

Purpose

Our club has a Buddy System to make new members feel welcome, to inform them about the Friendship Force mission of international peace through friendship, and to help them become active members of the club. New members will be matched with more experienced members so they can learn about what is expected when we travel with Friendship Force, what is required when hosting incoming ambassadors, and what FFNCA projects they might be interested in volunteering for.

Assigning a buddy

When someone joins the club, the chairperson of the Membership Committee will send the new member a welcome letter. The letter will briefly explain the buddy system, tell the new member who their buddy will be, and let them know the buddy will contact them soon.

We will try to match a new member and a buddy who have shared interests as revealed by the new member's application form. An experienced FFNCA member might mentor one new member or several new members.

The FFNCA member will be expected to mentor his/her buddy for approximately one year, or until the time of the FFNCA annual meeting.

Process

The Membership Chairperson will consult the geographic membership list and send a request to all members in the same area as the new member asking if anyone would be able to partner the new member. Proximity will allow the buddies to share rides to meetings and/or meet for discussions and social events. If no one is able to volunteer, the request will next be sent out to the general membership.

The FFNCA member will contact his/her buddy within 2 weeks of being matched and arrange for an informal in-person meeting: an invitation for tea or wine and nibbles, for coffee or lunch at a cafe, or for a mutually arranged outing such as a visit to a museum or park. The buddy will ask how the new member prefers to be contacted (phone, text, email, or some other method).

At the first in-person meeting, the FFNCA member will provide brochures or other materials that will help the new member better understand the mission of Friendship Force, and share some positive travel or host experiences. Stress that Friendship Force is not just a travel club; Friendship Force is a peace-building club. Ask where the new member has travelled before and whether they have joined tours or have travelled independently. Explore what part of the world they might be interested in travelling to with Friendship Force.

The buddy will present the new member with the New Member Orientation Packet. The FFNCA member will explore the new member's interests and skills and make note of them for future reference. **Note:** The new member should be given time to become acquainted with the club before being asked to volunteer.

The Membership Chairperson will order a badge for the new member. As soon as it is ready, the buddy will present the new member with his/her membership badge.

The FFNCA member will plan ongoing occasions to meet with his/her buddy, at FFNCA events or at personally scheduled times. Personal meetings might be in person or via Zoom, FaceTime, Skype, etc. but some should be in person. These in-person meetings could include other members of the club. Meeting for lunch or for a happy hour after work will allow experienced members to share their experiences and what they have learned about other cultures or how they have broadened their perspectives.

Make sure the new member knows about upcoming FFNCA local events, offered outgoing journeys, or planned incoming journeys. At the first FFNCA event the new member attends, the buddy will introduce him/her to the group. The new member should share: 1) Where they are from, 2) Where they live now, 3) How they heard about Friendship Force, 4) Any travel experience they have had, and 5) something about their interests or hobbies.

At any FFNCA event, the experienced member will make every effort to talk with his/her buddy and make sure the person feels welcomed. After some time has passed and the new member is feeling more a part of things, the FFNCA member will share more information about how our club functions, and explain that we all help in making our club run well. The mentor will describe ways the new member can

volunteer, drawing on the interests and skills they have explored together. Share from personal experiences that volunteering is a good way to get to know people in the club.

At the FFNCA annual meeting, all new members will be formally welcomed into the club. **Suggested welcome:** Each FFNCA buddy will ask their new member buddy to stand, introduce the new member, have the new member share some information about him/herself, and present each new member with a club pin.

Club Responsibilities

Plan a special event to welcome new members. At this event, each buddy should introduce the new member who will share as noted above.

Organize ongoing casual activities to get to know new members and one another better. For example, one club has new-member pizza nights where the new members are guests of the club (they don't pay). At club gatherings, include at least one mixer activity so we all get to know one another better. Ask a person or group to create a list of these activities. Many options are available online.

New Member Expectations

Please make every effort to meet with your FFNCA buddy and learn more about Friendship Force. If you do not hear from your FFNCA buddy, please let the Membership chair know.

As you learn more about the club, think about what most interests you. Would you want to host or welcome incoming ambassadors? Would you like to help organize local events? Would you like to work on planning an outgoing or incoming journey? Could you add some zip to our club website or FaceBook page? Would you like to give a presentation or share your expertise: travel you have done, a book you have read, a hobby you enjoy, or a skill you possess (photography, quilting, etc)?

Commit to the mission of Friendship Force: promoting peace through friendship both locally and in other cultures internationally. Share this mission with friends who might be interested in joining FFNCA.