



friendship force  
DENVER



Our April 9 program, beginning at 6:30, will feature **Ken Weaver** from Friendship Force of Northern Colorado.

On January 1<sup>st</sup> Ken began a four-year term on the FFI Board of Directors, serving on the Governance and Nominating Committees. Ken’s PowerPoint will highlight Our Pathway Forward, FFI’s 2024-2026 Strategic Plan.

Ken writes: “FFI’s over 300 clubs and over 8,000 members are served by a modest staff, so one of the paths forward is to engage skilled and willing members volunteers on a range of key growth initiatives.”

“Friendship Force seeks to make the global local. You’ve heard travel agencies tout *live like a local*. We go one better: *live with a local*.”

“How will we creatively achieve our Priority No. 1: To Reignite the Urgency of Our Mission? What can we do much more of together to increase our awareness and appreciation of differences? What more can we do to foster international goodwill as we cultivate person-to-person relationships?”

**Remember: FFD is in a new location now – Columbine United Church, 6375 S. Platte Canyon Road, Littleton.**

See the article about Ken’s talk on Page 3

### HIGHLIGHTS

<b>“Changing the Way You See the World”</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Notes from February FF International Mtg.</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Building Joy in Ukraine</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Hit Songfest Report</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>A Visit with the PEO Sisterhood</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Munch Lunch Bunch</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>A Note from Carol Coriell</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Calendar</b>	<b>12</b>

### ABOUT THE CLUB

We have moved to a new meeting place, Columbine United Church, 6375 S. Platte Canyon Rd., Littleton, 80123. We meet at 6:30 p.m. on the second Tuesday of most months. Please wear a mask if you are not vaccinated. See up-to-date information on our website: [friendshipforcedenver.wildapricot.org](http://friendshipforcedenver.wildapricot.org)

**Guests are always welcome.  
Come visit and bring your friends!**

Check us out on Facebook:

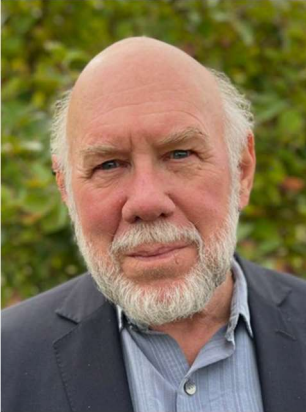
[www.facebook.com/friendshipforceofdenver](http://www.facebook.com/friendshipforceofdenver)

From the intersection of W. Bowles Avenue and S. Platte Canyon Road, turn south on S. Platte Canyon Road, and go .64 of a mile. The church is on your right.



# CHANGING THE WAY YOU SEE THE WORLD

by Ken Weaver, FF Northern Colorado Chapter



Tuesday, April 9<sup>th</sup>, Ken Weaver, member of FF Northern Colorado and the FFI Board of Directors will introduce *Our Pathway Forward*, our 2024-2026 Strategic Plan for impact and growth.

With great enthusiasm the Board met February 16-18 to map implementation.

Our FFI roadmap is now in 8 languages. We have four priorities:

1. Reignite the Urgency Behind Our Mission
2. Expand Membership, Build New Clubs, Offer Innovative Journeys
3. Broaden Partnerships
4. Engage Membership in Volunteering

What a privilege to share with such skilled leaders this joy of common purpose, as you see below! Donna Simek, Board Chair, stands next to Yoshiko Koizumi from Sapporo, Japan. Others are from Australia, Brazil, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and USA, including Michael English, CU Boulder.

<https://friendshipforce.org/leadership-governance/>



## Here's CEO Jeremi Snook's capsule summary of your International Board's February actions:

Thirteen Board members representing 8 countries came together in Jacksonville, Florida, in the first in-person Board meeting for FFI in four years. The Board received a series of reports from the CEO, Jeremi Snook, discussing the current state of FFI clubs, members, programs and technology.

The focus of the meeting was the state of Friendship Force International and the implementation of the recently published strategic plan.

The Board of Directors (BOD) were introduced to a new framework for managing the more than 30 growth projects currently identified to support FFI's strategic priorities.

A project task force has been created to work with the CEO that will formalize the framework being implemented and announce the first set of projects to members.

- The BOD began a process to formally assess **FFI's membership and revenue model** taking into account FFI's history, recent changes and future needs for sustainability and growth.
- Success of the **Independent Journey pilot program** was assessed with a focus on a need for **greater education and brand clarity** for existing and prospective members.
- In a pivotal vote for FFI, the BOD approved the expansion and extension of resources to support FFI's growth by inviting volunteers to support FFI operations by helping fill key positions as well as actively participate on the strategic plan project teams. For the first time in FFI's history, **clubs and members will be invited to actively work side-by-side with FFI Board and staff** in realizing our future.
- With the support of the Board, the Nominating Committee has implemented **a year-round nomination process** that allows more fluid appointments to the Board.

The Board of Directors is pleased to announce the appointment of Marlena Cukteras from Dubrovnik, Croatia, to the Board of Directors.

**With a renewed focus on our mission in everything we do, the Board is excited about the future of FFI and our plan to move forward.**

We hope every FFI member will take a few minutes to read *Our Pathway Forward*. Here's the link:

<https://www.paperturn-view.com/?pid=ODc8784830>

Ken's presentation April 9<sup>th</sup> will PowerPoint exciting new opportunities as FFI faces the challenges of change.

Perhaps the seven clubs in our Mountain States Region of FFI will pioneer some of these new possibilities.

# Building a Circle of Friends in Ukraine

by Alex Toporivskyi



February of this year marks exactly 5 years since my visit to the USA through the Open World Program, which was a pivotal experience for me.

I regularly connect online with my favorite host families, the **Crockers** (Stephen and Nancy) and the **Forneys** (Gerry and Irene) meeting every month. I recall sharing about my favorite project at the time, a new youth space I was working on in Blahodatne in the Volyn region in northwest Ukraine. We had a few thousand dollars and were still short, but we were making steady progress.

Unexpectedly, I received a letter one day with a simple message: "Let me know when it arrives." It turned out to be a donation to our Caritas account that not only allowed us to complete the project but also exceeded our expectations!

Later, Gerry mentioned that his mother was deeply concerned about the children affected by the war in Ukraine:

"Gerry, my heart goes out to them. What can I do to help?"

"Just give them money, Mom," Gerry replied.

During that period, we were working with 50 children from various backgrounds: crisis families, internally displaced families, and children of fallen heroes. We conducted classes in a cramped youth center with only 33 square meters of space.

I thought about a nearby hall, which had previously served as a banquet hall and later as a kitchen for military cooking and a humanitarian warehouse during the war. It was 90 square meters—more space than we could have hoped for!

After a brief conversation with the mayor, we purchased new windows and other materials. To save costs, volunteers and children helped us prime and paint the walls and ceiling, and lay the floor. It wasn't just about getting the job done; it was about creating a sense of ownership and community among everyone involved.

We were thrilled to receive discounted windows from the factory and free furniture. It made us realize how many friends we truly had!

One day, while painting the walls, I overheard a conversation among the children:

"Remember when we baked treats, held a fair, and raised money for windows?"

"Yeah, that's when the bearded man was making cotton candy."

At that moment, I knew I had to let all the willing children help paint the walls and screw in screws. It was about them understanding the value of their contributions and genuinely wanting to help. We weren't just building a space; we were creating a home for a big family.

In the week leading up to the space's opening, I caught a cold. Despite the fever and body aches, I took "Coldrex" and worked late into the night with everyone. I was so focused on the project that I forgot about being sick, and miraculously, the illness passed quickly.

We named our space "Circle of Friends" because it's a place filled with joy, where children eagerly come together. We were overjoyed when the mayor, the bishop, our partners, and donors attended the opening. We host developmental activities for children, and creative individuals hold poetry readings and other intimate events here. Additionally, we conduct group sessions with psychologists for parents.

It's incredibly sad that Marilyn Forney passed away just before our space opened. We sincerely hope that Gerry and Irene will soon visit us to see another good deed that will honor the memory of the great philanthropist Marilyn Forney. Our prayers are for all of you.

Alex Toporivskyi



## **A SONG FEST OF MEMORIES** **Our Rockin' March 12<sup>TH</sup> meeting**

We had our own personal troubadour lead us in some good old time singing at the March meeting. **Wade Krauss**, songster and guitarist par excellence, led us through a romp of songs by the likes of **Patsy Cline**, **Elvis Presley**, **Willie Nelson**, **Nat King Cole**, and so many others. We snapped our fingers, belted out the lyrics (or at least pretended to when we couldn't recall the words), and jived to the music.

Songs included "Sweet Georgia Brown," "Five Foot Two, Eyes of Blue," "I'm Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter," "Crazy," "Mairzy Doats," "Always on My Mind," "Accentuate the Positive," "Blue Suede Shoes," "Can't Help Falling in Love," "Kansas City," "Danny Boy," and a special singing of "Sweet Caroline" to **Carol Coriell** via phone, because she was unable to be with us this night. It was Carol who introduced us to Wade, having met him when she was a resident at a nearby care facility a few weeks ago.



*Ilene Americus, Wade and Luree Miller*

Wade's mission is to bring energy, smiles, and songs to hospitals, rest homes, and hospice centers. And on this night, he brought all of that to the Denver club of Friendship Force. Thanks to Wade (and Carol) for making this meeting night such a lively, fun-filled evening! If you weren't there, you missed a genuine highlight!

And if you want to get a flavor of what the night was all about, check out these links to Wade and The Hoagies band (named after Hoagy Carmichael):

[https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=wade+krauss](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=wade+krauss)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cksxdpqm2G0>

# JOURNEYS

**2024**

## ***Inbound***

The **Friendship Force Club of Austin, Texas** will be visiting us September 18-22, 2024.

**Les Eckstat** is the Inbound Journey Coordinator. Les is an experienced journey coordinator and will work closely with everyone who volunteers for a committee.

As a journey committee volunteer, you can help coordinate everything from home, day, and dinner hosts to daily activities and welcome bags. Your creativity, knowledge of the Denver area, and communication skills will be welcomed and highly valued. If you have just a few hours to spare over the next few months, won't you volunteer? Please contact Les to explore the possibilities. His email is [eckstat@gmail.com](mailto:eckstat@gmail.com), or you can find his phone number in our Membership Directory at:

<https://friendshipforcedenver.wildapricot.org/Members-only-Click-Here>

With your help, we can make the Austin Journey Awesome!

**Open World Turkmenistan** Reduction of Methane Emissions – October 30-November 5, 2024

**Gerry Forney** will spearhead this hosting of the Open World program from Turkmenistan. He is in need of assistance in planning and hosting. Contact him ([Gerald.forney@gmail.com](mailto:Gerald.forney@gmail.com)) to volunteer.

Labeled a methane "super-emitter" by NASA's Earth Surface Mineral Dust Source Investigation, Turkmenistan is a leading source of human-caused methane emissions along with Russia and U.S., both of which have much larger industries and populations. However, the government of Turkmenistan has recently expressed interest in the Global Methane Pledge and is now more welcoming of international expertise to mitigate the issue. Local specialists in the oil and gas sector are in dire need for technical guidance on methane management, standardized methane emission reporting protocols as well as methane alert and response systems used in Western countries. Supporting the Turkmen government with this endeavor is part of the climate change mitigation policies of the Embassy and the State Department.

## ***Outbound***

At present, we have no outbound Journeys scheduled for 2024.

The North American Conference encompassing Canada, Mexico and the USA will be held October 7-10, 2024 in Milwaukee WI. To attend, please register at <https://whova.com/web/gjG-Tw7jXN2ln78ilbTPPmIqLicFmNx-NZKq8rLCuk4%3D/> It would be nice for Denver to have a large presence at this conference.

We will search for other opportunities for our club to travel and host in 2024. We also plan to resume a Coordinator Training Course for all those interested in participating.

**2025**

## ***Outbound***

The visit to **Sapporo, Japan**, which had been scheduled for 2024 will hopefully occur in 2025. Assignments are made in April. Denver has specifically requested this Journey from FFI, as well as a Journey to **Peru**.

**To find information on other Journeys log on to the FFI website:** <https://my.friendshipforce.org>



## FF Denver presentation to the PEO Sisterhood

On March 5, 2024 FFD members **Luree Miller** and **Ilene Americus** gave a presentation about Friendship Force to the members of the PEO Sisterhood chapter that meets at Wellshire Presbyterian Church. At the invitation of our own **Ann Somerville**, a member of this group, we presented information about our group and FFI. We also have several other FFD members actively involved in P.E.O., including **Cindy Tanner, Karen Gulley** and **Willa Rose**.

There were approximately 15 members of P.E.O. attending and we enjoyed meeting these wonderful ladies. One of their members, **Linda Denny**, attended our March meeting. We hope to see others in the future.

*P.E.O. is a philanthropic organization  
where women celebrate the advancement of women;  
educate women through scholarships, grants, awards,  
loans and stewardship of Cottey College and  
motivate women to achieve their highest aspirations.*

Over the years, PEO Sisterhood has helped more than 122,000 women to achieve their educational goals, through \$415,000,000 in direct aid, which is provided through six philanthropies and one foundation.

P.E.O. Sisterhood was founded in 1869 at Iowa Wesleyan University in Mount Pleasant, Iowa and has a long and proud history of promoting education for women. It has 197,000 members in 6,000 chapters across the United States and six Canadian provinces. Each state has at least one chapter. Its headquarters are in Des Moines, Iowa.

Cottey College was acquired by PEO in 1927 and is the only nonsectarian college owned and supported exclusively by women. It is a nationally ranked, fully accredited, independent, liberal arts and sciences college for women. Located in Nevada, Missouri, it offers baccalaureate and associate degrees in a variety of majors. Cottey College is a debt-free institution that welcomes women from around the world.

We're looking forward to getting better acquainted with this Denver chapter – one of fifty in the area -- of this dynamic and interesting association!

---

# MUNCH LUNCH BUNCH

Five members of FFD met at **Ilene Americus'** home on March 20 to share jokes, sandwiches, divine chocolate cake and get to know each other better.

New (to Denver) members **Bev Himes** and **John Nollen** joined **Ilene Americus**, **Luree Miller** and **Gina Harrell** for laughter and helped brainstorm new ideas for Journey activities.

We missed the rest of you and hope to see you at our next MLB at DMNS in conjunction with FF Northern Colorado – CLEO, Colorado Let's Eat Out! The schedule is below.

**THURSDAY, APRIL 18: 10AM to 2PM**

**DENVER MUSEUM OF NATURE AND SCIENCE  
2001 Colorado Boulevard, Denver, CO 80205**



## Schedule:

- 10:00 AM: Meet at the *T. rex* skeleton near the museum entrance.**
- 10:30 AM: Free admission to "Blue Whales: Return of the Giants" IMAX.**
- 11:30 AM: A la carte lunch together in the T. rex Café.**
- 12:30 PM to 2:00 PM: Free time in the museum. Museum closes at 5 PM.**

Please RSVP to [ffdboard@gmail.com](mailto:ffdboard@gmail.com). You will receive a confirmation.  
If you have questions (or get lost on the way), please contact:  
Gerry Forney at 303-653-3475

---

## A NOTE FROM CAROL CORIELL

I am happy to report that on Feb. 29<sup>th</sup> I WALKED out of Porter Hospice! After a week in a rehab facility, I came home on March 2<sup>nd</sup>.

I continue with in-home physical therapy. The house is back in order, and I have dealt with an enormous stack of paper, including income tax. I am getting a bit stronger every day, but after two months of doing nothing, it's going to take a while.



Special thanks to Gina Harrell for setting up not one, but two goat-petting experiences, which is something I had been wanting to do. We all agreed to name this darling two-month-old baby "Porter," in honor of the hospice. He had the most amazing crystal blue eyes, and sat quietly in my lap, enjoying being stroked.

And thank you, everyone, for the many phone calls and visits. They all contributed to my recovery. Phone calls (cell 303-818-6570) and visits to me at home will still be much appreciated. Please call first, the therapy schedule is complicated.



Thank you to Steve Crocker, for taking over the newsletter and doing a great job.

I hope to see everyone soon,

*Carol*

---

**Show your Friendship Force Denver pride with your favorite clothing!!**

FFD has partnered with R&D Embroidery in Sheridan (CO) to provide embroidery services to club members. You supply the clothing, bag, hat, etc. and R&D will do the embroidering of the FFD logo. There is a round logo (design below and on fleece jacket in photo) and a more elongated design. Prices will range from \$7.00 to \$15.00 depending on the item. There is a 3-piece order minimum. Please contact Heidi at a club meeting, or email [heidileem@aol.com](mailto:heidileem@aol.com), to arrange pick-up and delivery of your items.



**friendship force**  
DENVER



## CALENDAR 2024

**NOTE NEW MEETING PLACE: MAP PAGE 2**  
**Columbine United Church**  
**6375 S. Platte Canyon Rd**  
**Littleton CO 80123**

**BOARD MEETING via Zoom** **APR 8**  
**Tuesday, 1:30 - 3:30 p.m.**

**APRIL PROGRAM** **APR 9**  
**Tuesday, 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.**  
**Ken Weaver "Changing the**  
**Way You See the World"**

**APRIL MUNCH LUNCH** **APR 18**  
**Thursday, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**  
**Denver Museum of Nature and Science**  
**2001 Colorado Blvd, Denver**  
**IMAX: Blue Whales: 10:30A**  
**Lunch with FF Northern Colorado**

**BOARD MEETING via Zoom** **MAY 7**  
**Tuesday, 1:30 - 3:30 p.m.**

**MAY PROGRAM** **MAY 14**  
**Tuesday, 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.**  
**Program: Galapagos**

**BOARD MEETING via Zoom** **JUN 4**  
**Tuesday, 1:30 - 3:30 p.m.**

**JUNE PROGRAM** **JUN 11**  
**Tuesday, 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.**  
**Program TBD**

**NO MEETING IN JULY OR AUGUST**

**BOARD MEETING via Zoom** **JUL 16**

**BOARD MEETING via Zoom** **AUG 6**

**ANNUAL PICNIC** **AUG 11**  
**Sunday, 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.**

## FESTIVAL AT SEA 2024

Announcing the 2024 Festival at Sea

**2 Days in Athens**  
and  
**7 Nights Passage to Rome**  
Aboard the Oosterdam

August 23 to September 1



➤ 2-night central Athens hotel stay with breakfast and transfers ➤ Welcome dinner in a traditional Greek taverna ➤ FFI welcome and learning session in Athens ➤ **[Optional] Half-day tour in and around Athens** ➤ **7-day cruise from Athens to Croatia, Montenegro, Corfu & Italy** ➤ Enrichment sessions in Athens and onboard by a veteran classicist ➤ Friendship Force happy hour meet-ups and games ➤ FFI's sponsored onboard welcome and farewell cocktail parties ➤ Festival At Sea gift bag, souvenir shirt, and a surprise.

**Cost:** Your total cost for the *Festival at Sea: The Classical World* comprises a \$695 FFI program fee + your cruise fare.

**Details:** Cruise fare and cabin types are on the pre-registration page of our cruise partner, Total Travel Events.

**Cruise questions?** Email Total Travel Events' Sherry Rice at [sherry@totaltravevents.com](mailto:sherry@totaltravevents.com)

**Pre-cruise Athens questions / need a roommate?** Email FFI's Debbie Powell at [debbie@friendshipforce.org](mailto:debbie@friendshipforce.org)