



**friendship force**  
international

## IMPORTANT MEMBER UPDATES

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Dear Friendship Force Member,

On behalf of the FFI International Board of Directors, I extend a warm greeting to all Friendship Force members around the world. I hope you and your family are in good health and looking forward to getting back to making friends around the world. Recently, we informed club leaders of some changes approved by the FFI International Board of Directors at their September meeting; now I would like to share them with you too.

For many months, the FFI Board has been debating how the organization can best prepare to emerge from this prolonged pandemic

in a position of strength. These past 18 months have not been easy, yet despite the enormous challenges we have persevered. FFI exists today because of the incredible generosity of members and clubs, operational grants from the US, UK, Australian and French governments, and some major belt-tightening.

Throughout this time, the FFI Board kept three objectives in mind: 1) we must ensure FFI survives the pandemic, 2) we must continue to support club retention and member engagement in the absence of face-to-face Journeys, and 3) we must build the necessary infrastructure for growth and expansion for when travel resumes.

The changes you see below reflect these objectives. Please keep in mind that this list represents only a fraction of the totality of decisions, actions and progress made despite the pandemic. This communication is focused only on the items that were most recently approved.

Just before we get to that though, let us take a moment to take stock of where FFI is today:

- As a result of maintaining an incredibly lean budget and operations with a limited staff, **FFI has survived the worst of the economic impact of the pandemic** and has a series of contingency plans to ensure FFI's long-term survival as we emerge from the global pandemic.
- Over the past year, **we have successfully launched a broad series of FF Virtual Experiences**, which have connected hundreds of members globally through online social events, language learning exchange, the exploration of shared interests, and virtual Journeys bringing two clubs face-to-face via Zoom.
- **Development for a new multi-lingual website** that focuses on our mission has continued in spite of the pandemic and is set to debut later this year.
- **Members can now receive timely, multilingual, communications through my.friendshipforce.org (myFF)**, and have the chance to privately and securely connect around club, member, and journey activities. In the coming months, we will unveil further features: the ability to join virtual interest groups, to apply for global Journeys or participate in regional

Journeys with open seats, to transact more securely with FFI's Finance Department, and to communicate, in real-time, with FFI staff online.

- **The FFI Board has approved the first four members of the newly reinvigorated International Advisory Council (IAC).** This is part of a larger marketing and communications strategy as we go into 2022 to raise the profile of FFI globally and attract new members.
- **We are looking ahead to our first post-pandemic World Conference,** currently scheduled for 2023, with locations currently being evaluated.

There really is so much more, but this effectively gives us the highlights.

To continue positioning us for a stronger future, the following changes have also been recently approved by the Board of Directors:

1. **The annual fee paid by members, either as part of the club charter renewal process or directly to FFI, shall be referred to in all publications as: FFI Membership Dues. (EFFECTIVE 2021).**
  - As you will see in the language changes below, members around the world use different terms to describe this annual fee. This change is part of a larger initiative to bring clarity and consistency to FFI's vocabulary.
2. **The FFI Membership Dues for 2022 shall be set at \$25 USD per annum per member. (EFFECTIVE January 2022)**
  - The FFI Board had considered increasing the dues to as much as \$40 USD in light of the pandemic's ongoing impact on operations, but eventually opted for an inflationary adjustment for 2022.
3. **The FFI Membership Dues for 2023 shall be set at \$30 USD per annum per member. (EFFECTIVE January 2023)**
  - In 2023 the organization will raise its FFI Membership Dues. This fulfills the increase that was delayed for 2022.
4. **The FFI Journey Fee will change from a flat 'per journey' fee to a flat 'per night' fee. The fee will be set at \$25 USD per Journey night regardless of accommodation type, ambassadors' origin, or the Journey destination. There is no distinction between international and domestic travel. (EFFECTIVE January 2022)**
  - This long-overdue change brings Friendship Force in line with other hosting organizations, makes FFI Journey fees

fair and equitable, and brings much-needed flexibility to our program. Whether you are participating in a one-night or two-week Journey, whether you are traveling to the next town or a country 10,000 miles away, this Friendship Force Journey fee is easy to calculate and fairly distributes the responsibility of supporting FFI as part of the experience. Programmatically, this fee opens the door for shorter durations, small group journeys and more domestic experiences.

5. **FFI will announce a \$45 voluntary donation from all members between now and early 2022, entitled “\$45 in honor of 45 years of Friendship Force.”**
  - Friendship Force International is here today thanks to the kindness of a select group of clubs and members who have donated generously. But we are not yet free and clear. Rather than passing a compulsory pandemic recovery fee, as many nonprofits have done this year, the FFI Board asks each member, especially those who have not given to this year’s campaign, to submit a donation of \$45 along with their FFI Membership Dues. Although this is voluntary, the Board strongly encourages all members to do their part to help the organization they love through the remainder of the pandemic. What better way to celebrate Friendship Force’s 45th anniversary of making a difference around the world than by showing one’s support!
6. **For Special Journeys such as cruises, staff-organized tours, staff-managed/-recruited Journeys, festivals, conferences and other special events, fees will be set by staff to reflect the amount of administration time required.**
  - This has always been the case, of course, but given the new fee structure, the Board wanted to make it clear that there will now be a distinction between the per night fee and any other fee that may be charged.
7. **Specific language changes shall be adopted effective immediately:**

CURRENT	APPROVED CHANGE
Charter Renewal Fee Club Renewal Fee Annual Membership Dues Annual Affiliation Dues Annual Membership Renewal	FFI Membership Dues
Club Dues (paid by individual members directly to the club)	Club Membership Dues
Unaffiliated Member Global Member Individual Member	Global Member
Global Journeys Themed Journeys Friendship-in-Action Journeys	<i>Special Journey (Themed, Friendship-in-Action, Destination, Cultural, etc. will still be specified under the umbrella of a Special Journey)</i>
International Club-to-Club Journeys EU & Schengen Journeys Stopover Journeys	International Journey

As the year comes to a close, please be on the lookout for information on a new FF Individual Journey program for members, while the world slowly opens its borders. Also forthcoming is a new position statement

on FFI's commitment to DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) reflecting the work of a new Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council that has been meeting over the past several months. Finally, thanks to the work of a select group of environmentally-minded FFI members, we have a new pledge to promote environmentally conscious travel with practical tools that can be adopted during your next journey. To receive instant notifications when these announcements come out, please make sure you have created an online account at [my.friendshipforce.org](https://my.friendshipforce.org)!

I want to extend a special thank you to each of you for staying focused, optimistic, and engaged.

Let us look forward to the future ahead and seeing each other in person soon!

In friendship,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeremi". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a small dot above the "i".

Jeremi Snook, CEO & President