

**FF HUNGARY INBOUND MINI JOURNEY REPORT:
 JULY 18-21 2025 (4 DAYS ONLY)
 Host Coordinator Mary Jane Kelleher**

The 10 ambassadors arrived rested and eager to take in the sites of our Nation's Capital when they arrived on a Friday afternoon after visiting Quebec City and Montreal for one week each. This was an opportunity to rekindle old friendships for several FFO hosts who had visited some of the Hungarian clubs in the past.

We highlighted the Nation's Capital theme by attending the changing of the guards on the Hill, touring Parliament's East block, and the Central Experimental Farm. A second focus was our UNESCO- designated Rideau Canal with a boat tour, a visit to Hogs Back locks and to the Blockhouse Museum in Merrickville.



By the time of the farewell dinner, expertly hosted by Anna and Paul Rochon in Kemptville, the enthusiasm of the new friendships formed was palpable. On Monday morning, the ambassadors left by train for Toronto packing butter tarts and memories of their new friends. Their journey was short, but also sweet!



Thanks to FFO members
 Masuma
 Rahimtula
 and Anna
 Rochon for
 great photos!

This Journey was also a wonderful opportunity for some newer FFO members to join in various aspects of planning and organizing. Congratulations to those that stepped up and got their feet wet – we hope the experience has given you a better understanding of how FF clubs work and has fed your enthusiasm for future involvement.

We have several videos of this journey:

- Thanks to FFO member Matsuma Rahimtula for giving us souvenirs of the journey. See drive-shares-dm-noreply@google.com and/or a second version with non-copyright music. Thanks also to Anna Rochon, <https://youtu.be/GKxg6ojhJ-s>.
- From Krisztina Balogh, an interesting AI-engineered film clip on the sites of Székesfehérvár on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1C6e4aWAt0/>
- From Gabriella and Kamila, a souvenir video of the first ambassadors on an FFO journey to experience the interprovincial zip line. Some Hungarian members went zip lining and here is the link to the video: <https://youtu.be/PWxMUwerOio>



FFO OUTBOUND DOUBLE JOURNEY REPORT 2025:

a) FF MEDICINE HAT, ALBERTA, JUNE 11-18

6 FFO members and 3 FF Tucson members received a warm Alberta welcome. It was a busy week which started with chopping potatoes for the Prairie Gleaners Charity. We helped them turn rejected potatoes and other vegetables into dehydrated soup mixes which are donated around the world. There are currently 10 such groups across Canada with the Medicine Hat group in a prime location next to the town of Redcliff which is considered the "Greenhouse Capital of the Prairies".



World-renowned artist **Jim Marshal** explained to us how he first draws an image (in his hands) then transfers the idea to clay bricks which he erects as an everlasting mural (see behind him).

We enjoyed many

other unique experiences:

- ✓ A tour of the barns and explanation of chuckwagon races with one of the drivers before attending the races at the Medicine Hat Exhibition.
- ✓ Lynn Thacker Ag. Corp, the world's largest producer of catnip, where we were given samples of catnip for our feline friends and could purchase spearmint and dill oils.
- ✓ The Baker Hutterite Colony where we learned about the history and daily life of the colony and the member/guide patiently answered all our outside questions.

The journey concluded with a generous and delicious meal and some Scottish dancing.

b) FF MISSOULA, MONTANA, June 19-25 by Liz Ford

I joined FFO in October of 2024. As this was my first trip with Friendship Force, (a double trip to Medicine Hat, Alberta and Missoula, Montana) I had no idea what to expect. I was somewhat discouraged to find out that we were only a small group going, and that I would be flying alone, as everyone else was leaving early to visit family out west. But in true FF fashion, the others stepped up. Donna and Andre Dawson met me at my Calgary Hotel and drove me to Medicine Hat.



I also drove to Missoula with them for the second week of our journey. Joan Kinnie and Leonard Bonnet drove me back from Missoula to Calgary, even though their trailer was still parked in Medicine Hat, three plus hours south of Calgary. Thanks to all of you for making what could have been a challenging trip into a memorable one. I am thankful for your friendship and enjoyed your company.

Missoula is a lovely city of close to 80,000 people situated in a mountain valley, about 4,000 feet above sea level. It did not seem like a big city to me. There are 3 rivers running through it - the Clark Fork, the Blackfoot and the Bitterroot. Fly fishing for trout is a huge thing for both locals and tourists. The University of Montana is there, so it's an educational center as well as a tourist destination. It also has a **unique indoor carousel with hand-carved and painted wooden horses** from artists around the states and one from Calgary AB.



Indoor painted carousel with wooden horses in Missoula

Our hosts in Medicine Hat were super. I felt like family. That continued in Missoula. Missoula has a small club, but we received a very big, warm welcome. Our hosts not only fed and housed us, but they drove for hours every day, acting as day hosts, too, to see the very interesting historical and natural sights for which Montana is known. Everyone was friendly and keen to interact with us. I felt like I was meeting long lost family members. It amazed me that in both places, everyone was so compatible. Such friendships are something to be treasured.

I have found Friendship Force travelling so much more rewarding and enjoyable than the commercial tours I've taken.



A REPORT FROM 2 FFO MEMBERS ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCE CROSSING THE USA/CANADIAN BORDER JUNE 2025 - By Joan Kinnie and Leonard Bonnet

Since January 2025, reports about the challenges of crossing into the USA from Canada or the reverse have flooded a lot of the news' feeds. Despite our concerns about crossing the border into Montana in June, Leonard and I refused to be dissuaded from joining the FF Missoula Journey.



Our preparations for crossing the border involved the following:

1. We ensured our documents (passports and driver's licenses) were current and readily available.
2. We had, on hand, where we were going and the exact address of our hosts.
3. Rather than travel across the border with our trailer, we opted to leave it behind in Canada along with anything we wouldn't need for the second leg of our trip.
4. Initially we considered taking two older cellphones that had no recent history of our social media or web browsing activity but decided against that and took our chances with our current phones.

We left Medicine Hat on Tues. June 17 and headed to Missoula, Montana. Our border location at Coutts was 2 hours and 30 minutes away.



There were 2 vehicles in front of us at the border and within 4 minutes it was our turn. The US Border Patrol looked at our passports (which we had ready) and we were asked if we had any food with us, where we were going, why and how long we would be in the USA. Leonard responded that we were going to Missoula to visit a Friendship Force group for a week. The Border Patrol person said thank you and enjoy your visit. All in all, it took us about 2 minutes, and we left very happy!

On our way back, we were going to Calgary. We crossed at a small Canadian Border office and again we showed our passports, responded to a couple of questions and away we went, grateful that our concerns were never realized.

VP JOURNEYS

BARBARA DAVIGNON

Journeys are the core activity of the 350 Friendship Force clubs on six continents around the world. They serve to facilitate learning about other countries and cultures through home stays.

We travel in the company of fellow club members when visiting other destinations. From firsthand experience, Friendship Force members have learned that the best guides to the understanding of another culture are the people who live it. This will promote understanding across the barriers that separate people, toward the acceptance of a common humanity.

Hosts that are prepared to invite others to live with them, share insights, experiences, fun, and friendships - many long lasting. We do not simply visit places; we experience a different way of thinking. We also reciprocate by hosting in our homes and community. These visits, whether outbound or inbound, are called *Journeys*.

EXPERIENCE DIFFERENT VIEWS. DISCOVER COMMON GROUND.

JOURNEY OPPORTUNITIES

Did you know that there are 4 different ways to travel with Friendship Force? Check the FFI website: https://my.friendshipforce.org/en/users/sign_in

Go to the **Journeys** button on the left side of the screen, and then you will see club-to-club journeys, special journeys, and independent journeys. Just click on the journeys that interest you for more information.

1. CLUB-TO-CLUB JOURNEYS

These Journeys are the main way FFI facilitates cultural exchange. Members host each other in their homes, providing first-hand experience of local life and culture. The program aims to break down barriers and promote understanding by encouraging shared experiences, meals, and friendships.

There are 2 types of Club-to-Club journeys:

- Inbound where the receiving club members will host Ambassadors from the travelling club.
- Outbound where the travelling Ambassadors will stay in the hosts' homes.

2. UNDER-SUBSCRIBED JOURNEYS

FFI members can travel with other clubs who have room for more ambassadors when a journey is not filled. An example of this is the recent outbound journey to Medicine Hat, AB in June 2025 in which 6 FFO members and 3 FFI Tucson members joined in the journey.

See journey report of FFO to Medicine Hat AB on Pg 2.

3. SPECIAL JOURNEYS (previously GLOBAL Journeys)



Special Journeys are trips organized by FFI and any member of any FF club can join them. Currently there are 19 Special Journeys listed on the FFI website.

➤ **One of FFO's new members would like to know whether another FFO member would be interested in joining her on a Special Journey: APRIL 19, 2026, to UZBEKISTAN - CULTURE AND COMMUNITY ON SILK ROAD. Interested? please email eventsffo@gmail.com.**

4. INDEPENDENT JOURNEYS

Individuals can participate in cultural exchange and home stays without the structure and group format of a typical FF Journey. This allows for more flexibility and personalized experiences, while still connecting with the club's global network. There are many listed for 2025/ 2026 around the globe.

FFO CALENDAR OF EVENTS IN 2025-2026

2025

Mon Oct 20	FFO General Meeting & speaker 10am at Riverside Church
Tues Nov 18	Friendly Wanderers - MJ & Colin's FF Journey in 2025 to Azerbaijan & Armenia - <i>Lands of Fire & Illumination</i> at Summerhays Grill on Baseline Road
Mon Dec 08	AGM & Christmas turkey dinner \$30pp at Riverside, catered by Leatherworks

2026

Apr	FFO Outbound to Leuven, Belgium
Jun 08-13	Inbound FF Western N Carolina, USA
Sep 21-28	Inbound FF Western Colorado, USA
Oct/Nov	FFO Outbound to Perth, Australia

➤ **Note newly REVISED dates for 2 Inbound journeys in 2026.**

EXPERIENCE THE JOURNEY YOURSELF WITHOUT EVER LEAVING YOUR SEAT - WITH FRIENDLY WANDERERS!

Friendly Wanderers, Sep 23, 2025, at Swiss Chalet

The Schouten's terrific presentation of their travel highlights is best summarized by the quotes they used to organize their talk:

- Do the difficult things first. Your knees have an expiration date. (*Patricia Shultz*)
- My favourite thing is to go where I've never been. (*Diana Arbus*)
- People travel from the other side of the world to see what we have right under our noses. (*Anonymous*)
- Walking is the age-old form of travel, the most fundamental, perhaps the most revealing. (*Paul Theroux*)
- Animals have personalities like people and must be studied. (*Walt Disney*)
- Whether you are on a luxurious safari, or on a basic tour, the wildlife you see is exactly the same. (*Eddy Mobumbu, South African Guide*)
- A journey is best measured in friends rather than miles. (*Tim Cahill, soccer player*)
- The years are flying by, and we all waste so much time if we dare to do this or that. The thing is to leap, to try, to take a chance. (*Leonard Cohen*)



Schoutens hiking in Auyuittuq Nat'l Park, Baffin Island

COMING SOON IN THE CAPCON.....

Have you, or someone you've been on a journey with, experienced a shift in their behaviours, their perspective on things or even their moral compass? If yes, we'd love to hear about how Friendship Force's mission plays out when FFO members travel to or host other clubs.

Please send in your stories to Joanne Curran for publishing in our new column entitled "BUILDING BRIDGES".