



friendship force

BIG CANOE -  
NORTH GEORGIA

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<http://ffbcng.org>

April 2020  
Newsletter

CHANGING THE WAY YOU  
SEE THE WORLD

## Coming Events



August, 2020

Wine tasting in Cumming

September, 2020

Open World

[Editor's note: Obviously, these are highly subject to change, depending on the progress of COVID-19]



## Words from Sherry

**Greetings from your Prez!** A lot has happened since I last wrote a message for our newsletter. Unfortunately, the Covid-19 became a pandemic and changed our world.

### **2020 JOURNEYS**

**Incoming:** We were scheduled to host ambassadors from Costa Rico and Des Moines, beginning on 4/27. That journey has been cancelled, with hopes of rescheduling in 2021 or 2022. **Peggy and Bob Anderson** worked very hard to bring this three-way journey into reality. We all share their disappointment!

**Outgoing:** Our international journey was scheduled for Trujillo, Peru in October. **Phil Waldrop** stepped into the Journey Coordinator role and worked with the Trujillo JC to schedule our visit. Partnering with a travel agent, Phil set up a fantastic extension which included Machu Picchu and Lake Titicaca. That journey has also been cancelled with hopes of rescheduling. The FFBCNG board voted to discontinue international travel until a vaccine for the Novel Coronavirus is available.

**Open World:** Our delegation from Ukraine is scheduled to arrive in the USA on September 15<sup>th</sup>. The Open World Leadership Center has put a hold on all delegations until May 31<sup>st</sup>. A cursory internet investigation shows that Ukraine is under quarantine with its number of cases rising. In my opinion, Open World delegations will not resume until 2021.

### **CLUB MEETINGS**

Out of an abundance of caution, I cancelled our FFBCNG meeting on Sunday, 3/15. The School Street Playhouse allowed us to individually re-schedule our theater tickets.

Obviously, we will not resume meetings until the shelter in place order is lifted and we feel safe. I am looking forward to that time.

### **Pandemic impact and FFI financial contribution**

I am asking Ray to include two documents from FFI in our newsletter, just in case you did not see them. One is a letter from Jeremi Snook, the CEO of Friendship Force International. The other is a report that shows the financial impact of the pandemic on FFI's income and operations.

FFI has suggested that all cancelled journeys from 2020 be rescheduled in 2021 or 2022. I hope we will have the FFI staff available to help us after we emerge from this pandemic. Members' journey fees are FFI's main income source and the pandemic has erased that income. Another source of income for FFI is Open World fees and those delegations are on hold.

Jeremi's dire words in his letter make it clear that if FFI members do not make a financial contribution, FFI will not survive. Taking all of this into account, your board voted to make a \$3,000 club contribution to FFI. FFBCNG's bank balance after that contribution will be \$3,300, more than enough to see us through the rest of the year.

I would like to ask each of you to contribute to FFI as well. There is a donate button prominently displayed on the website <https://www.friendshipforce.org/>. If you were going on an international journey, you would have paid \$170 in FFI fees. For a 7-day domestic journey, the fee would be \$105. I just made a donation from Dan and myself.

Your Prez, Sherry



## Future Meetings and Journeys

As most of you know or have sensed, our Journey with Costa Rica/Des Moines scheduled for April 27 has been cancelled. We are hoping for a future journey perhaps as soon as next year. As you all know, our lives have been put on hold for awhile. Bob and I thank all of you who said yes when we needed you and hope you will continue to support us when and if we try this journey again.

The monthly meetings have been put on hold until we are able to gather once again in person. As soon as we get the green light for meetings, we will schedule a picnic to celebrate. Stay safe everyone!

Bob and Peggy Anderson

[Editor's note: the previous plans are still shown on the front page, just in case they come to pass.]



## Upcoming Journeys

We might host another **Open World Ukrainian delegation in September.**



## Birthdays and Anniversaries

### May

- 2 Carolyn Smith
- 17 Aime Baars
- 29 Kim Zachman
- 31 Tim Anderson



## Cares and Concerns

Please remember to inform me if you become aware of any care or concern.

Jeannette Waldrop 706-299-4972©



## A Message From Jeremy

I hope this letter finds you healthy and well-provisioned during this difficult time. This pandemic continues to impact all of us in unimaginable ways. **Now more than ever we need to hang on to hope for the future and reach out to friends and loved ones.**

As an organization, Friendship Force faces an economic crisis unlike anything we have experienced in our 42 year history. While we have survived Y2K, the attacks of 9/11, SARS, and many other global catastrophes, never before has our organization faced a situation that has impacted every club in every country at the same time.

As you know, the mission of Friendship Force is financially supported through the act of members participating in Journeys. Cancellation of nearly all Journeys for the foreseeable future has FFI facing the worst financial situation in its history, putting the organization itself in peril.

FFI operates on a \$1.2 million budget annually. This budget pays for our technology needs, marketing efforts, club growth and development, and our small staff of 15 people—half of whom work part-time. The pandemic has erased nearly 60% of our revenue this year so far, causing us to cease all technology projects, eliminate all expenses, and, sadly, even lay off some staff and reduce paid hours for everyone else. Without a miracle, FFI will deplete its \$200,000 in savings and lay off all of our dedicated staff by August. We must not let this happen.

Although there are hundreds-of-thousands of people who have already lost their jobs and thousands of businesses already closed (some permanently) as a result of the pandemic, Friendship Force has one major advantage: **you.**

If we band together, we can support the basic infrastructure of FFI to keep its doors open until our Journeys are able to pick up again. One of the things the world will need when this pandemic subsides is to get out and visit old friends and make new ones. In many ways, I believe this pandemic will be a wake-up call for most people to seek and embrace real and meaningful relationships. Ones that expand their understanding and connectedness to the world around them, and Friendship Force needs to be there!

**I am asking everyone to step up and commit to donating one-week's worth of a US outbound Journey fee to FFI; more if you are able to do so.** We often talk about how "one week" on an FFI Journey can change your life. During this crisis, "one week" can ensure that FFI will be here in 2021 and beyond, for you and for future generations. If we all come together and give, even just a little, collectively we can ensure Friendship Force's future.

**Communication, transparency, and access are essential in this effort.** To read the latest bulletins from myself or FFI, to seek answers to your questions, or to ask anything of FFI, please don't hesitate to call, email, text, Facebook, or WhatsApp me. A special link is being set up to keep everyone informed at [blog.friendshipforce.org](http://blog.friendshipforce.org) and, if you haven't signed up to receive notifications, please go to our website and do so today.

Thank you in advance for considering your special gift to Friendship Force International. Stay safe and let's keep in touch.

In friendship,

Jeremy Snook, President/CEO



We welcome information for future issues of this newsletter. To make it informative and interesting we need information about what is going on in the club. If you have something you could share, such as committee updates, member updates, or photos of your recent travels, please share it. Send by e-mail or telephone call to the newsletter editor:

Ray Bowyer

raybowyer@earthlink.net

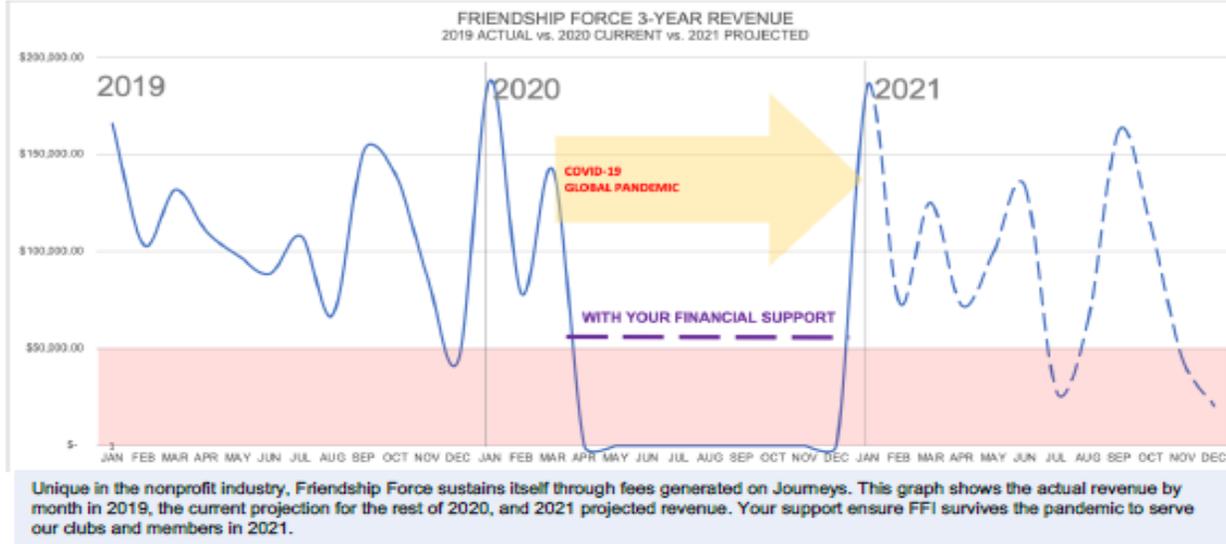
770-366-3736

Deadline for the May issue is May 3, 2020.

# FRIENDSHIP FORCE INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL IMPACT REPORT

## IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON OPERATIONS

April 1, 2020



Understanding the full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on FFI operations is important to understanding how contributions to FFI help to sustain the organization through the pandemic.

Although there are still Journeys scheduled to depart in the third and fourth quarter of 2020, it is becoming very apparent that business will not return to some level of normalcy until 2021. Long after the actual impact of COVID-19 has subsided in the world, the psychological impact will likely keep members from traveling until the first quarter of 2021. Therefore, we must move forward with the assumption that all journeys for the remainder of 2020 are compromised.

Friendship Force International runs on a razor-thin budget. Although we are proud to have been sustainable on annual member participation in Journeys since the early 1980's, the organization is also highly susceptible to fluctuations in the travel industry. If members don't travel, FFI does not receive funds to support its mission. Unlike SARS, 9/11, H1N1 or any number of natural disasters FFI has survived, this pandemic impacts every country where FFI clubs exist, leaving no way to escape the full impact of this economic crisis.

**61% Revenue Loss**

**147 Journeys Canceled\***

**241 Journeys Pending Cancellation\*\***

At the heart of FFI are 15 highly dedicated and talented staff, half of which are part-time and globally positioned, with a combined 10.38 FTE (full-time equivalents).

- **40% Reduction in Expenses for remainder of 2020**
- **20% Reduction in staff payroll**
- **All projects suspended**
- **All nonessential subscriptions and costs eliminated**

**Friendship Force International operates on a roughly \$1.2 million annual budget.** That budget supports, in large part, the very small staff: a group of highly talented and passionately loyal individuals that keeps FFI going. In a healthy financial year, everything from Journey support, club development, business support, marketing and public relations are handled by your staff. During this pandemic, our operations have been scaled back to not only ensure the survival of Friendship Force, but to ensure that work continues on 2021 and beyond.

No one will escape the economic impact of the pandemic and, like yourself, we are hopeful we can take advantage of US government assistance being passed through legislation so that we can get back to the business of promoting peace through friendship. **Our revised budget for the rest of 2020 shows a 20% reduction in hours and pay for all staff as well as some staff being furloughed.** It keeps a basic level of operations going while we navigate these next few months. We can get through this, with your support.

**This unprecedented \$340,000 global campaign is about ensuring that FFI is here after the pandemic, when the world will need us more than ever.**

*Friendship Force International is overseen by an eleven-member volunteer **International Board of Directors**, all of whom are Friendship Force Members.*

*The **Finance Committee** of the Board oversees the annual budget and works with the CEO in ensuring the sustainability of FFI, especially during times of crisis like this. **Both the CEO and members of the Board are available to meet with club leaders and members to answer any questions may have.** Simply email [support@friendshipforce.org](mailto:support@friendshipforce.org) and put **COVID-19 MEETING REQUESTED** in the subject line.*

	ORIGINAL BOARD APPROVED	2020 REVISED BUDGET
Revenue	\$1,059,296	\$408,203
Expenses	\$1,059,296	\$750,090
Surplus/Loss	0	\$(341,886)
The campaign to save FFI is based on this revised budget the reduces staff, expenses and operations but ensures FFI will be here when the pandemic subsides.		

**WE ARE HERE TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS!**

- Request a meeting for your board or club to meet virtually with Jeremi Snook, Friendship Force’s President and CEO.
- Check for the latest news and notes from FFI regularly at [blog.friendshipforce.org](http://blog.friendshipforce.org).
- Reach out to the International Board of Directors or staff anytime.

## **Frequently Asked Questions...**

### **1. Doesn't FFI have an endowment or savings account for just this kind of event?**

FFI has had a savings account with \$200,000 in it for nearly five years. This amount, with no revenue, covers only two months of operating. Industry standard is to have six months of operating in savings. Last year (2019), as a result of high program participation, we had a very healthy financial year and were able to add nearly \$100,000 to our savings account. Unfortunately, the joy of this success has been short-lived with the pandemic's economic impact. Even with drastic expense reductions, FFI's savings will only sustain the organization through the end of May.

### **2. What are FFI's biggest expenses and how are they being managed through this crisis?**

Friendship Force International is in the people industry, and it takes people to help manage our programs. *FFI's greatest asset, outside of the clubs and members, is our staff.* Without them, there is no FFI as it currently exists. Despite some people's assumptions, FFI's staff work well below industry pay standards and for those in the US accept less-than-optimal health insurance and benefits. Like our members, the staff at FFI are dedicated to the mission of FFI and are passionate about seeing this organization grow. As a result of the pandemic's impact on FFI operations, all staff are taking a 20% reduction in pay and some staff are being furloughed (temporarily released). This austerity will continue until FFI finds ways to make up for lost revenue. Unfortunately, if this continues, it will be at a great loss to FFI with talented staff being terminated, ultimately to the detriment of FFI itself.

### **3. What level of transparency can FFI provide related to the organization's financial position and actions taken to save the organization during this crisis?**

FFI is managed by a staff and by a CEO that reports to a volunteer international Board of Directors that are nearly 90% made of experienced FFI members. There has never been a lack of transparency, since the organization is run by the very volunteers it serves. There has been, admittedly, a lack of communication largely as a result of an unspoken 'English-only' policy, which I am committed to changing.

Throughout this crisis I am making myself available, as well as the Board of Directors to answer any questions you may have. Any member may go to [blog.friendshipforce.org](http://blog.friendshipforce.org) to get the latest details on the crisis as well as other news from FFI and the CEO.