

What Does Being a Good Ambassador Really Mean?

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First I would like to talk about the history of Friendship Force International, our Founder David Wayne Smith, then I would like to talk about the geographic regions, the philosophy and mission of Friendship Force International, the aim of Friendship Force International and discuss what is needed to have a strong and growing club.

Knowledge and history of FFI.

The history and heartbeat of the Friendship Force - as told to me by a very good friend and founding member of Sydney Friendship Force Club – Lorna Mears. Lorna has a personally signed Certificate of Appreciation from Wayne Smith, the Founder and is the first person to be nominated by the Sydney Club to receive the Wayne Smith Medal.

David Wayne Smith is considered to be the founder of Friendship Force. He was born in 1934 in South Charlestown, West Virginia. He read a book titled "The Other Side of the Mountain" and this is where his natural curiosity about the world around him came from i.e what was on the other side of the mountain.

Wayne was considered to be a quiet hardworking student and after graduating from the Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Virginia with a Bachelor of Divinity in 1961 became a Pastor at a Presbyterian Church in Charlestown. In 1963 he became a Presbyterian missionary taking his wife and 4 small children to Brazil and after mastering the language of Portuguese he was sent to a large construction camp with very primitive conditions. In 1970 he returned to the USA and appointed Minister of North Avenue of Churches – Minister of the Community in Atlanta.

He met Jimmy Carter, who was the Governor of Georgia and their views on racial discrimination were shared. Wayne and Jimmy Carter were close friends and when Carter became President of the USA in 1976 the seeds for Friendship Force International were sown. On the 20th January 1977 after Jimmy Carter was inaugurated as President, President Carter agreed with Wayne as to the design of an Organisation which we now know as Friendship Force International. President Carter and his wife Rosalyn pledged their personal support with the proviso that the Government does not get involved financially or at any level. After Wayne Smith had the Friendship Force incorporated as a non-profit organisation, Rosalyn Carter agreed to be Honorary Chairperson a position she held until 2002.

The first exchange left amid much fanfare and excitement. Delta Airlines charter flight brought 381 goodwill ambassadors to Atlanta, Georgia, USA from Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, England and 381 Georgians returned to Newcastle. For 10 days friendships were celebrated.

This was the beginning of Friendship Force Exchanges.....my how things have changed!!

Explain what we do now...

Geographic Regions

For administrative purposes, Atlanta has divided the world into 8 regions. Asia with approximately 48 clubs, Canada with about 27 clubs, Caribbean with only 1 club, Europe and Asia with about 83 clubs, Latin America with 44 clubs, Middle East and Africa with 13 clubs, my area the South Pacific with 47 clubs and the USA with more than 100 clubs. The total exceeds 360 clubs. From my prospective as President of the Sydney Club it seems that the staff of Atlanta tend to specialise on individual regions.

Philosophy and Mission of FFI

The mission of FFI is **"to promote global understanding across the barriers that separate people"**. Their main catchcry is **"changing the way you see the world"** – (GROUP PARTICIPATION) ASK MEMBERS TO GIVE THEIR THOUGHTS ON THIS CATCHCRY. AFTER THEIR THOUGHTS EXPLAIN HOW I SEE IT.

- This is a very powerful phrase because it can be taken more than 1 way. It can mean that you will see the world through the eyes of other people. It can also mean that you will see the world by a different method i.e. not sitting in a tourist bus, staying at hotels etc. You will be seeing it by sitting at the kitchen table enjoying the hospitality of the people of other countries.

Aim of Friendship Force International

The aim of Friendship Force International is to maintain their mission and purpose, provide financial oversight of Head Office as Club members and office bearers are all voluntary, ensure adequate resources are available, maintain legal and ethical integrity and accountability.

Lets talk about your Club and what you see as an ideal club – (GROUP PARTICIPATION) ASK MEMBERS TO DISCUSS WITH EACH OTHER WHAT THEIR THOUGHTS ARE ON WHAT THEY SEE AS AN IDEAL CLUB?? WHAT WORKS WITHIN YOUR CLUB?

Strong and unbiased leadership?

Meaningful meetings?

No rival groups?

Social outings?

Respect for each other?

Ideally each club should have a strong and solid leadership with members eager to be involved at all levels. It is highly desirable for the members to be united in their aims and not breaking into small rival groups. From my experience clubs go through different phases as time passes. They very often are very united and eager when they are actively involved. As time goes by,

many older members who still want to be involved with the club have difficulty in being involved due to age, health, travel restrictions, insurance etc. and some even seem to resent changes and new ideas.

If the situation in the club is less than ideal problems will arise and I have seen a club fractured between factions and have major difficulties in continuing to function.

ASK FOR GROUP PARTICIPATION ON THOUGHTS ON HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR CLUB OR MINIMISE THESE PROBLEMS.

Since Friendship Force International's founding in 1977, the Friendship Force has brought together millions of people. Today we are active in 70 countries on 6 continents, promoting friendship and goodwill through an extensive program of home hosting or exchanges.