

- Official club name: **The Friendship Force of Manitoba**
- Closest major airport(s): Winnipeg International Airport
- Cost of transportation between the airport and our city (based on 20 people): Usually Hosts meet Ambassadors in private cars at airport.
- The maximum number of Ambassadors our club can host: 25 - 30
- About the club: The Friendship Force of Manitoba was first chartered in November 1997 and re-chartered in 2001. Current membership is 70 with more joining regularly. Membership consists of couples and single people who are interested in meeting people from different countries and travelling to areas around the world. Currently we plan for two incoming and one outbound exchange. Members have participated in FFI Festivals and Conferences and have hosted many exchanges. Most members reside in the City of Winnipeg but membership is open to people across Manitoba.
- About the region: Manitoba is one of three Prairie Provinces in Canada and the capital city, Winnipeg with a population of almost 700, 000, is located at the geographic centre of North America, approximately 60 miles (100 km) north of the USA border. Lake Winnipeg, about 1 hour's drive from Winnipeg is one of the largest inland lakes in the world with fine sand beaches comparable to those anywhere in the world. Grain farming is the major industry in Manitoba, along with the Aerospace Industry, manufacturing of clothing and buses, the mining industry, technology and forestry. Winnipeg is a multi-cultural city with the largest French-speaking population west of the Province of Quebec and some of Canada's largest Ukrainian and German communities. Winnipeg is a modern, cosmopolitan city, rich with old world traditions and cultures. It boasts 2 Universities, Community Colleges, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, Rainbow Stage Outdoor Theatre plus many other stage, concert and opera theatres, art galleries, museums, and historic buildings. Winnipeg is known as the Festival City of Canada with 130 days of annual festivals and celebrations: Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra New Music Festive in January, Le Festival du Voyageur in February, the Music Competition Festival in March (one of the world's largest music festivals with over 25,000 competitors), Jazz Festival in June, Winnipeg Folk Festival in July, and Folklorama in August, a celebration of Manitoba's ethnic diversity featuring entertainment, foods and crafts. Folklorama was voted the "Festival best depicting Canadian culture" by the World Tourism Association. Assiniboine Park, the 378-acre urban park, features English Gardens, Leo Mol Sculpture Garden, French Formal Gardens, Conservatory and a miniature railway. It also

houses the Zoo, home to over 1,200 animals. The Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature is one of the finest interpretive museums in Canada. Horse racing at Assiniboia Downs and gambling at the several Casinos are popular venues. The Red and Assiniboine rivers run through the City of Winnipeg. The Forks (where people have been meeting for over 6000 years) is located at the junction of the rivers. Now it is the focal point for many events and facilities, including the Children's Museum and the Manitoba theatre for Young People. The river walk is popular year-round as are the many shops. Excellent restaurants, here and throughout the city, provide traditional and exotic foods from around the world. Riverboats cruise these waters with tourists and residents. Lower Fort Garry is the oldest intact stone fort in North America (1850). Costumed staff re-create the spirit of the fur trade era and the fort's role as the social centre of the Red River settlement. Winnipeg is the "Christmas Capital of Canada" with spectacular displays of lights during the holiday season. Winnipeg enjoys over 2,300 hours of sunshine per year. Summers are hot and dry, winters are crisp and bright. Our sunsets are a constant source of delight. The awe-inspiring Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights) can often be observed due to our clean air. Friendship Force ambassadors, and other guests, have told us that Manitoba is one of the "best kept secrets" in Canada.

- About the exchange: A reception is arranged on arrival, when possible. A welcome and farewell dinner, as well as 2 or 3 group tours including all ambassadors and hosts are planned so that our members have an opportunity to interact with our ambassadors. Hosts are encouraged to provide flexibility for individual ambassadors. "Friendship" dinners are held where groups of ambassadors and hosts meet informally. Our Exchange Committee plans the week creatively, attempting to keep costs to the ambassadors to a minimum. If the ambassador group requests a special activity not planned by the committee, the Exchange Director, at an extra cost to the ambassadors, may arrange this in advance. Friendly Manitoba is the motto of our Province, and members of The Friendship Force of Manitoba are some of the friendliest people you will find anywhere!

- 2006-01-05