



friendship force
INTERNATIONAL

The Trailblazer Project

March 2011

Goal: To develop and implement innovative strategies for global Friendship Force growth.

Concept: A trailblazer is a pioneer, an explorer, a leader, and an innovator. As we look toward the future, we see that the Friendship Force needs volunteers to take on these exciting and challenging roles, to develop new strategies to help our organization grow and thrive. Clubs selected to take on a Trailblazer project will make a multi-year commitment to explore, lead and innovate with a pioneering spirit, to create new ideas for growth for the Friendship Force. The results of the Trailblazer Project will be shared with all Friendship Force clubs, providing valuable models for future growth throughout our global network.

Project Description: Each Trailblazer project will include an innovative action plan that can lead to significant growth and that can be shared with other clubs. Clubs interested in taking on a Trailblazer project will submit a project proposal to FFI. If the proposal is accepted, FFI will work with the club to establish an individualized timeline for putting the project into action. The progress of the project will be recorded regularly. The results of the project must be documented through reports, statistics, media attention, photographs and/or written accounts. The end result will be a proven growth strategy that serves as a model for other clubs. (Proposals from individual Friendship Force leaders for global or regional initiatives based on web communications and/or social media will also be considered.)

Clubs interested in participating may submit a Trailblazer project proposal based on one or more of the following:

1. Themed and global exchanges: One of the best ways to expand the Friendship Force is by developing exchange themes for outbound and inbound exchanges that will attract new participants. To be considered for a Trailblazer project, exchanges should be in addition to the club's regular assignments and include a specific strategy for gaining new ambassadors and/or hosts.
2. Community outreach: Growth can be enhanced by raising the visibility of the Friendship Force in the local community. This can include partnerships with other organizations, local programs and service projects that promote the Friendship Force mission in the community, as well as through traditional or online media and public relations.
3. Club Mentoring: A strong club may contribute to Friendship Force growth by developing or mentoring other clubs—either in the region or in another region of the world. In this case, a club may propose multi-year projects aimed at providing exchange and organizational support to assist another club's development. A variation on this theme could be a regional project with one club taking a leadership role in guiding a group of clubs in a coordinated growth strategy.
4. Membership Growth: New strategies are needed for attracting the “next generation” of members and leaders to Friendship Force clubs. Membership projects should have specific growth goals that include developing a younger and more diverse membership base for the future.

5. Other: Clubs are encouraged to be creative. Projects that combine elements of the above themes or have an entirely different approach are welcome. They should, however, be projects that, if successful, can be used by other clubs.

Application Process: Any Friendship Force club may submit an application to FFI for a Trailblazer project. Proposals will be evaluated on their ability to create significant new growth for the sponsoring club, as well as their relevance as new models for growth that can be followed by other clubs in the future. Success will require strong project leadership, support by the club and sufficient resources. Projects should be designed to last 2-3 years. Most of the financial resources needed to complete the project should come from club resources (existing or raised specifically for this project). In addition, matching Trailblazer grants may be requested from FFI. (The club would be expected to contribute at least as much as is being requested from FFI.) For assistance in completing the application or to discuss potential trailblazer projects, please contact George Brown (gbrown@thefriendshipforce.org) or Debbie Powell (dpowell@thefriendshipforce.org).

The application should include the following information and be sent via email attachment directly to Debbie Powell (dpowell@thefriendshipforce.org):

1. Project Description:
 - a. What is the proposed project?
 - b. How is the project innovative and growth-oriented?
 - c. How will success be measured? (measurable goals and outcomes)
 - d. How can the project be used as a model for other clubs?
2. Resource requirements:
 - a. What is the general budget for the project?
 - b. How will the club support the project financially?
 - c. What outside financial support will be required from the local community, and how will it be obtained?
 - d. Will matching funds be requested from FFI?
3. Project leadership:
 - a. Who will serve as the Trailblazer Coordinator? Provide a brief biographical summary.
 - b. What other club and/or community leadership will be used?
4. Club endorsement:
 - a. Include a statement of support from the club board.
 - b. The application should be signed by the club president and submitted via email attachment to dpowell@thefriendshipforce.org.

Applications will be reviewed as they are received – there is no deadline. FFI will process applications quickly, accepting as many as it can support that are truly innovative and growth-oriented. Once a project has been approved, FFI will work closely with the club's Trailblazer coordinator to ensure the highest possible results. In addition, the various Trailblazer coordinators will be able to share information with each other as their projects are developed. This will be done via email and internet conferencing arranged by FFI.

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