

TRAVEL DIFFERENTLY

1. GOOD MORNING AND WELCOME TO TRAVEL DIFFERENTLY.
2. MY NAME IS JOAN KINNIE AND MY HUSBAND LEONARD AND I WERE LOOKING FOR MEANINGFUL WAYS TO TRAVEL AS WE WERE ENTERING RETIREMENT. LUCKILY IN LATE FALL 2013, WE WERE AT A SEMINAR THAT INTRODUCED US TO FRIENDSHIP FORCE (FF). WE FOLLOWED UP AND QUICKLY DECIDED TO JOIN FF OTTAWA IN JANUARY 2014.
3. FF JOURNEYS HAVE ALLOWED US TO MAKE NEW FRIENDS, TO VISIT NEW PLACES AROUND THE WORLD, TO EXPERIENCE MORE PERSONAL ENCOUNTERS WITH LOCALS, LIKE VISITING A HIGH SCHOOL IN SURABAYA INDONESIA AND ATTENDING TWO WEDDINGS IN ONE EVENING.

4. FUKUOKA, JAPAN WAS OUR FIRST FF JOURNEY. WE STAYED WITH A GENTLEMAN IN HIS JAPANESE HOME IN THE COUNTRY AND WE SLEPT ON JAPANESE TATAMI MATS. DURING THE JOURNEY, WE LEARNED ABOUT THE TRADITIONAL TEA CEREMONY, HAD A LESSON ON HOW TO MAKE JAPANESE NOODLES, DRESSED IN JAPANESE KIMONOS, COOKED IN A JAPANESE KITCHEN..... AND SO MUCH MORE.

5. OUR GROUP ALSO GOT TO TRY ON TRADITIONAL JAPANESE GARMENTS. MORE THAN ONCE, THE MODELS NEEDED ASSISTANCE TO PUT THE GARMENTS ON AND TO TAKE THEM OFF. WHEN THEY TRIED ON THE KIMONO, THEY FOUND THAT BREATHING AND EATING WERE VERY DIFFICULT, AS WAS TRYING TO USE THE WASHROOM FACILITIES.

6. WE HAD THE BENEFIT OF VISITING TAIWAN AFTER JAPAN AND THE SAME HOSPITALITY, FRIENDSHIP AND KNOWLEDGE ABOUT OUR HOSTS' COUNTRY WAS SHARED WITH US. AFTER ALMOST 9 YEARS, WE STILL STAY IN TOUCH WITH OUR HOSTS.

7. SEVERAL OF OUR FF FRIENDS COME TO VISIT US AND WE MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO RECIPRICATE THE ROYAL TREATMENT THAT WE RECEIVED. OUR CLUB IS NOW PREPARING TO WELCOME KERN COUNTY, CALIFORNIA AND HUNGARY THIS SPRING AND SUMMER. ACTUALLY, THE CALIFORNIA CLUB INTRODUCED US TO THE MOHAVE DESERT AND WE GOT TO SEE THE VIRGIN GALACTIC SPACE SHIP BEING BUILT. WE ALSO WERE INVITED TO SEE THE AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL TOWER.

8. STAYING IN SOMEONE'S HOME FOR A WEEK AT A TIME, COMBINED WITH MEANINGFUL AND UNIQUE TRAVEL EXPERIENCES IN THE COMPANY OF FELLOW CLUB MEMBERS, HELP FRIENDSHIP FORCE JOURNEY PARTICIPANTS BETTER UNDERSTAND OUR WORLD AND DISCOVER OUR SHARED HUMANITY.

9. WHEN WE HEAD OUT ON AN OUTBOUND JOURNEY, WE ARE CALLED AMBASSADORS BECAUSE WE ARE PART OF A WORLDWIDE MOVEMENT OF KITCHEN TABLE DIPLOMATS WHOSE FOCUS IT IS TO PROMOTE

GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN PEOPLE AND BUILD FRIENDSHIPS.

10. MEETING DIFFERENT PEOPLE AND LEARNING ABOUT WHAT IT'S LIKE TO LIVE IN THEIR TOWN OR CITY HAS THE ADDED DIMENSION OF BEING ABLE TO EXPERIENCE DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEWS AND ULTIMATELY, DISCOVER COMMON GROUND.

11. CONSIDER HOW AMAZING IT IS TO BE GREETED BY A PARADE OF RICHLY ATTIRED YOUNG CADETS AND MUSICIANS ACCOMPANIED BY WAVING INDONESIAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AND THEIR TEACHERS LINED UP ALONG THE ROAD. THIS OVERWHELMING WELCOME WAS BESTOWED ON US BECAUSE WE WERE CANADIANS WHO TOOK THE TIME TO VISIT THEIR SCHOOL AND TO SPEAK TO THEM IN ENGLISH.

12. BY LIVING WITH AND LIKE A LOCAL FOR A WEEK AT A TIME, STRANGERS BECOME FRIENDS OVER SHARED MEALS AND LAUGHTER AND WE'VE LEARNED FROM FIRST HAND EXPERIENCE THAT THE

BEST GUIDES TO HELP US UNDERSTAND ANOTHER CULTURE ARE THOSE WHO LIVE IT AND AS A RESULT, THE WEEK OF ACTIVITIES PLANNED BY THE HOST CLUB, NEVER, EVER DISAPPOINT!

13. OUR FRIENDSHIP FORCE TRAVELS HAVE TAKEN LEONARD AND I TO MANY DESTINATIONS THAT WE LIKELY WOULD NOT HAVE CONSIDERED VISITING DUE TO PRACTICAL CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH TRAVEL, FOREIGN CUSTOMS, CURRENCY AND LANGUAGE, NOT TO MENTION WHICH SIGHTS TO SEE. NEITHER WOULD WE HAVE SEEN THE VIRGIN GALACTIC BEING BUILT WITHOUT OUR HOST CLUB KNOWING SOMEONE WHO KNEW SOMEONE.

14. TRAVELLING WITH A GROUP OF LIKE-MINDED FF AMBASSADORS HELPS ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES WELL IN ADVANCE OF THE JOURNEY TAKING PLACE. WE SHARE THE BURDEN OF IDENTIFYING ALL OF THE VARIOUS LOGISTICAL PIECES OF TRAVEL PLANNING, LIKE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS, PLACES TO VISIT, THINGS TO DO PRE AND POST FF JOURNEYS AND

COLLECTING RELEVANT INFORMATION ON THE LAWS AND CUSTOMS OF THE COUNTRY BEING VISITED.

15. AND, AS FOR THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE BEING SPOKEN BY OUR HOSTS, REGARDLESS OF THE AVAILABILITY OF WIFI AND GOOGLE TRANSLATE, WE STILL FIND THAT SMILES AND HAND GESTURES ARE SURPRISINGLY EFFECTIVE IN HELPING TO BREAK DOWN LANGUAGE BARRIERS.

16. WHEN INTERNATIONAL OR DOMESTIC FF CLUBS VISIT CANADA'S CAPITAL, MEMBERS OF FF OTTAWA VOLUNTEER TO HELP PLAN ONE-OF-A-KIND, CANADIAN AND LOCAL EXPERIENCES NOT TYPICALLY AVAILABLE TO TOURISTS.

17. THROUGH THESE VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCES OUR CLUB MEMBERS BECOME TOUR GUIDES AND VISITORS IN THEIR OWN CITY.

18. ADDITIONALLY, MEMBERS GET TO EXPERIENCE WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE A HOME, DINNER OR DAY HOST; OPPORTUNITIES WHERE CULTURES ARE SHARED AND LASTING FRIENDSHIPS ARE MADE. EVERY ONE OF THESE EXPERIENCES IS TREMENDOUSLY ENRICHING AND EVEN, AT TIMES, SURPRISING FOR BOTH THE HOST AND THE VISITING CLUB MEMBERS.

19. AND ON IT GOES, THIS FRIENDSHIP FORCE CONNECTION TRANSCENDS LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AND ILLUSTRATES THAT THERE IS SO MUCH MORE THAT UNITES US THAN DIVIDES US.

20. QUESTIONS? COMMENTS.