



Hello friends,

As we celebrate our organization's founding with World Friendship Day today and throughout the month of March, I want to wish you all a fulfilled life, lived in friendship.

US President Jimmy Carter and Wayne Smith introduced the concept of a Friendship Force at the White House in 1977. Their goal, they said, was to "promote the cause of world peace."

Today, 37 years later, the Friendship Force has shown that peace and harmony in the world truly can be cultivated through individual friendships, and that a "world of friends can become a world of peace."

As we commemorate World Friendship Day, let us remember the legacy which we have created together and that we have to share with generations to come, to be able to carry Friendship Force forward long into the future.

Since I joined FFI last July, I have thought many times that, for all of us who are committed ambassadors of friendship, every day is "World Friendship Day". I challenge all of you to think the same, in each moment we have.

Make small steps, as the opportunity presents itself - to be a "force" of friendship at every turn, on both a global and local level - wherever you are this month.

Hold open a door for someone, smile as you cross a stranger's path, say hello as

you order a meal or pay your check. It is both the little gestures and our global efforts which make a difference towards collective world change for the better - one person, one friendship at a time.

Our work remains as relevant today as in the days we began, if not more so. To our volunteers and ambassadors throughout the years, I say thank you. Your dedicated efforts have made an impact on our world, and it is your support that brought us to this celebration today.

To our members today, I say, let us make the most of our firm foundation of friendship, building upon it together with new friends and old.

I hope you enjoy the exciting activities your clubs and communities have planned for this 37th anniversary, and I look forward to our bright Friendship Force future together.

In friendship, most sincerely,

Joy DiBenedetto
President, Friendship Force International