

CLUB PROFILE

- ❖ **Official club name:** Friendship Force of Kansas, Inc.
- ❖ **Closest major airport:** Dwight D Eisenhower National Airport
- ❖ **Cost of transportation between the airport and our city:** No cost. Hosts always greet ambassadors on arrival at the airport and take them to airport when they depart.
- ❖ **The maximum number of Ambassadors our club can host:** 25
- ❖ **About the Club:** FF of Kansas was chartered in August 1983. We have 100 members, including families and singles. We prefer to host one inbound and one outbound exchange a year, but are open to more. We always look forward to meeting new friends from new places but still love to reunite with old friends that we have met before.
- ❖ **About Our City:** Wichita, a city of approximately 300,000 people, is located in Sedgwick County in south central Kansas at the confluence of the Little Arkansas and the Big Arkansas rivers. Wichita is noted for its large aircraft manufacturing industry. It is the home of Cessna, Beechcraft, Bombardier Learjet and Spirit Aerosystems. Wichita is the home of the Coleman Company, makers of outdoor camping equipment. Pizza Hut also originated here. McConnell Air Force base, home of a large fleet of refueling tankers, is part of the Wichita community.

Our old downtown warehouse district has been renovated and redeveloped into the “Old Town Marketplace” shopping and entertainment area. Here you will find many unique restaurants, antique and gift shops, a former warehouse which is now a hotel, and live theater performances. In our “Old Cowtown Museum” you can experience the Old West, a 17 acre living history museum near downtown. You can walk the wooden boardwalks of a recreated 1870s cattle town and visit a working farm.

Exploration Place, located near downtown on the banks of the river, is a place for young and old to explore, using hands-on exhibits, everything from flight and design to nature, to human life. The famous CyberDome Theater is a special feature that creates unforgettable experiences. This theater is only the second of its kind in the world, the other being in Chicago.

We have a beautiful Botanical Garden and a large zoo, the Sedgwick County Zoo, where you can view many animals from different regions of the world. There is a jungle, a rainforest, and a children’s farm as well as African, Australian, American and Asian animal exhibits. In 2004, the Downing Gorilla Forest was added featuring several Lowland Gorillas. In 2008, the zoo added the Cessna Cove’s Penguin Exhibit with South America’s Humboldt Penguins and Inca Terns. In 2009, the zoo opened up the Slawson Tiger Exhibit with two Malayan and two Amur Tigers. A new, larger elephant exhibit, Elephants of the Zambezi River, is scheduled to open Memorial Day weekend 2016. The Sedgwick County Zoo is one of the top 10 zoos in North America.

Wichita has three art museums, an aviation museum, a railroad museum, a county historical museum and an African American history museum. We are also home to the Mid-America All-Indian Center and museum, built at the confluence of the two rivers. Outside this museum stands the magnificent bronze sculpture of the “Keeper of the

Plains” designed and built by a well known local Native American artist, Black Bear Bosin.

During the first week in June, Wichita has its annual Riverfest. Because of the Arkansas River flowing through the middle of our city, all the activities take place on and around that river. Concerts, the River Run, children’s activities, carnival rides, book and craft exhibits and sales, the annual Walkfest, and a variety of contests occur for 9 days. In addition, festive fireworks occur along the river the first and last nights of Riverfest.

We have a large convention and exhibition center where the Wichita Symphony, Wichita Grand Opera and Wichita Music Theatre perform. Intrust Bank Arena, a 17,500 seat venue, hosting sporting and entertainment events, opened in 2010. Wichita State University, Friends University, Newman University, and the Wichita campus of the Kansas University School of Medicine are all located here.

We also have a Class AA baseball team and a professional hockey team.

- ❖ **About the Region:** The area around Wichita is a large agricultural region where tremendous amounts of wheat, corn and feed grains are grown. There are many oil and gas producing areas and large cattle ranches and farms. Summers in the region can become quite hot, especially during July and August, so incoming exchanges should try to avoid these two months. Three winter months of Dec., Jan. and Feb. are our most undesirable winter months for incoming exchanges.

About one hour outside of Wichita, in the city of Hutchinson, is located the world renowned Kansas Cosmosphere and Space Center, the most comprehensive space museum in the world. Here, in the Hall of Space, you will view exhibits telling the full story of the space race. The actual Apollo 13 command module “Odyssey” is here with the violent scars of reentry remaining. The center contains the world’s largest collection of spacesuits and the resurrected Liberty Bell 7 Mercury spacecraft capsule. Here in the IMAX Dome Theater, you can see breathtaking scenes from your seat under the 44-foot dome. Also, located in Hutchinson, is the highly-acclaimed Stratica, an underground salt museum. Visitors go down 650 feet below the earth’s surface and see the cavernous chambers with salt deposits that have been here for 275 million years! These caverns, which if fully mined would extend through three states, also serve as storage, because of the preservation and climate-controlled environment, for movies, business, health, and government records. This is one of the 8 wonders of Kansas!

The Dwight D Eisenhower Presidential Library, Museum and Boyhood Home is located in Abilene, approximately 90 miles north of Wichita. Ike spent most of his life in Abilene until he took the train to West Point to begin his military career. The family home, the cornerstone of the museum, rests on its original site. A small chapel is the resting place of the former president, his wife and an infant son. One may view collections of documents and items from his years as World War II Commander of the European Forces and as President of the United States.

The Tallgrass Prairie National Reserve, voted as one of the 8 natural wonders of Kansas, is about two hours from Abilene. Included in this historic area is the Spring

Hill Farm and Stock Ranch where one can get a good look at the working ranches that flourished in the “Old West”.

Old World charm springing from a rich Swedish heritage can be experienced in Lindsborg, Kansas. Lindsborg is a special blend of history and culture set in the middle of Kansas wheat country.

About the Exchanges: We have a welcoming and farewell party as well as other group activities and seeing the local sights for our guests during their week of homestay. Family and neighborhood gatherings help the Ambassadors to meet other community residents. We eagerly look forward to each and every incoming exchange as a chance to increase our understanding of other people and cultures.

Edited 9/2015