

# NEIGHBORHOOD

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EXTRA

## Kyrgyzstan students visit Lincoln thru Friendship Force

**MAXINE MOUL,**  
**FRIENDSHIP FORCE OF LINCOLN,**  
for the Neighborhood Extra

Eleven guests from Kyrgyzstan (Keer-guh-staan), in central Asia, found the Zoo School, Roca Berry Farm, Innovation Campus and their homestay hosts to be among their favorite experiences in Lincoln last week.

Friendship Force of Lincoln welcomed its second group of international students to Lincoln in 2022 from Sunday, Oct. 30, to Sunday, Nov. 6. The students stayed in the homes of Friendship Force members.

Kyrgyzstan, which is about the size of Nebraska, became independent after breaking away from the Soviet Union in 1991. It is bordered by Kazakhstan to the west and north, by Tajikistan on the south (beyond Tajikistan are Afghanistan and Pakistan), and by China to the south and east.

The guests were Salkynai Emilbekova (group leader), Begaim Akmatova, Aidina Kazymbek, Nursultan Quinzhee, Ulukmyrza Imanov, Bekzhan Kasymbekov, Bekbolot Ergeshbaev, Bermet Darbisheva, Viktoriia Efimova, Milagres Alymbekova and Aizada Berdibekova.

They wanted to learn as much as possible about America and



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Begaim Akmatova and Aidina Kazymbek, hosted by De Tonack, experienced pumpkin carving for Halloween.

democracy. It was a timely time to visit since it was the week before the Nov. 8 election. Themes covered included Nebraska history and government (Lancaster County Board of Commissioners, City Council, Civic Nebraska, legislature and lobbying; education (Lincoln

High and Career Academy, Zoo School, Light House); entrepreneurship (Engler Agribusiness and Innovation Campus); and volunteerism (actual volunteering at the People's City Mission Help Center and the Center for People in need). They also attended a meeting of the Lincoln



Kyrgyzstan student visitors accomplished T-shirt design and printing at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Innovation Campus.

South Rotary Club.

The American Leadership Experience (ALEX) program is offered through the U.S. Department of State. The two-week programs include:

1. A virtual pre-departure orientation in their home country;
2. A one-week civic education workshop in Washington, DC with a group of 50-60 peers; and
3. A one-week leadership program for small groups at a program hosting site in the U.S. focusing on themes such as service learning, volunteerism, disability rights, equity and inclusion, entrepreneurship, and environmentalism.

Annual membership in Friendship Force Lincoln is \$50. The FFL website with local club information is [www.friendshipforcelincoln.org](http://www.friendshipforcelincoln.org).

With COVID-19 restrictions being lifted, Lincoln members of Friendship Force will again have the opportunity to visit overseas clubs at least once a year, and to host an international club in Lincoln.

Friendship Force of Lincoln is one of 364 chapters or clubs affiliated with Friendship Force International, a nonprofit organization based in more than 45 countries and on six continents, with 15,000 active members and over 300 journeys taking place each year. Friendship Force is dedicated to the principle that each person can contribute to global goodwill through personal friendships. The international website, [www.friendshipforce.org](http://www.friendshipforce.org), lists journeys in the United States and internationally.