

WE ARE OUT HERE

Pat Weitzmann, Friendship Links Coordinator, USA



It is a new calendar year. Like many of the volunteers in ACWW and its member societies around the world it is a time for a lookback and a look forward.

I became a Friendship Links Coordinator in 2017 because I believe in the value of friendship on a global basis. The members of ACWW are a fantastic resource of people who share many of the same interests and values in life, no matter where they live in the world. It is the connections part of the ACWW tag line "*Connects and Supports Women and Communities Worldwide*" that the coordinator position is all about.

When I look back to 2017, my experience as a Friendship Links Coordinator has included communicating with the other Coordinators and the Chairman of the Communications and Marketing Committee, Magdie de Kock; but also reaching out to ACWW member societies and members- contact has been through telephone calls, written correspondence, emails, in-person meetings and through attending conferences and branch meetings around the USA. I've had assistance from the USA Area President Jo Ellen Almond in promoting Friendship Links at society conferences around the country when I have been unable to attend myself. But most of all, my Lookback includes the wonderful process of linking or matching ACWW members with some interest or value in common. Hopefully it began their journey to a rewarding international friendship.

Connections like these were made: a woman with a crop producing farm in Illinois and a woman who raises show poultry in Australia; a Kentucky woman who enjoys piano playing, craft making, reading and volunteering with a woman in Scotland who enjoys reading, knitting, music and travel; a North Dakota woman who loves dogs, walking, spending time with friends connected with a Canadian woman who is into preventative medicine, very health conscious and "*Loves life and meeting new people*".

Looking forward in 2018, I have plans to expand my promotional efforts in the USA for the ACWW Friendship Links scheme, to continue to collaborate with my fellow friendship Links Coordinators worldwide, touch base with 'linked' members to see how they are doing, assist requesting and current participants however possible to make their Friendship Link a great experience.

The ACWW Friendship links scheme is the 'pen friend' programme of ACWW. It began in 1936 when mailing a letter through the land based postal service was the only available option. In today's world, communication with a pen friend can be through traditional handwritten letters or any number of Internet and phone based means. I invite the readers of this article to consider becoming a Friendship Links participant and recommending the same to their society members.

To get involved with Friendship Links, contact ACWW Central Office and they will connect you with your local Friendship Links Coordinator. The contact details are here:

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40 Martell Road
London SE21 8EN
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Always remember that ACWW is a network, first and foremost. We connect women all over the world, and Friendship Links is a crucial part of this. We are Out Here for You!

Pat Weitzmann, ACWW Friendship Links Coordinator – USA