

Friendship Force hosting members from Germany

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The local chapter of Friendship Force is preparing to host an exchange program just in time for the Medicine Hat Exhibition and Stampede.

The organization, which hosts exchange trips around the world, will be bringing in 14 members from the Friendship Force club in Varel, Germany to Medicine Hat Sunday for a week-long exchange.

The exchange comes following a trip 24 members of the Medicine Hat club took to Varel two years ago.

"We're excited to see them, they were absolutely wonderful to us," said Cathy Peter, exchange director for the inbound exchange, and a founding member of the local club.

The members from Varel will begin their trip with a stop at the Royal Tyrrell Museum in Drumheller before arriving in Medicine Hat late Sunday. On Monday, they will receive a tour of city hall from Mayor Ted Clugston, with a trip to Fort Walsh scheduled on Tuesday to

see the RCMP Musical Ride. The group will also be taking in events during the Medicine Hat Exhibition and Stampede before driving back to the Calgary International Airport on Sunday.

"We're going to be showing the culture of the city and the surrounding area," said Peter.

Friendship Force was formed in 1977 in Atlanta and now has more than 400 clubs around the world. The local club has 83 members.

"A lot of times, they come back and visit and you become very good friends," she said. "We have friends from Japan and from Australia and New Zealand and Kentucky who still phone us and send us Christmas cards. Sometimes, they come down and see us in California, where we spend the winter time. You get friends all over the world."

In September, the Medicine Hat club will be travelling to Costa Rica, Mexico and Panama.

More information about the club can be found at friendshipforcemedicinehat.org.