



Making Sugar Land Sweeter... One Friendship at a Time

Fort Bend Friends and Neighbors Brings Area Residents Together

“I had only heard of the game Mah Jongg in the movie *Driving Miss Daisy*,” says Fort Bend Friends and Neighbors member Patricia Mulé. But when she was approached by a friend to join a group of ladies who played the game regularly, Mulé decided to give it a try. Five years later, she is an avid player in addition to participating in a number of different activities all through Fort Bend Friends and Neighbors.

Friends and Neighbors in the Beginning

The year was 1983, and Sugar Land was booming. Families were moving into the area from near and far. During this time, new residents or newcomers learned about Fort Bend County through the Welcome Wagon. The organization encouraged newcomers to

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participate in a variety of social and cultural activities in the area. But after two years of residency in the community, newcomers had to leave the group according to Welcome Wagon rules. "There were groups of women who really bonded during those first two years. They didn't want to give up that connection, and those activities. So they broke off, and organized Fort Bend Friends and Neighbors", says Paula O'Rosky Fort Bend Friends and Neighbors President. Soon after Fort Bend Friends and Neighbors (FBFN) was born.

Friends and Neighbors Today

Over twenty years later the women's only social and philanthropic group has grown to just over three hundred members. FBFN's objective is to provide an educational, charitable, and social environment for their members to learn more about Fort Bend while making life long friends. "It's a great opportunity for a new comer to get involved with her community," says Nancy Frank.



Donna, Paul and Pat



Members enjoy the activities and each other's company

Indeed, it is the warm social environment of FBFN that attracts so many newcomers. "I went to that first coffee gathering cold turkey" says Marsha Sachs. She initially learned about FBFN by attending one of their monthly coffee gatherings. Sachs, who had just retired was looking to meet new people, and do some different things. "It was a warm group of women with diversified interests. They made me feel welcome." Frank agrees, "You can meet a member just once-and they will treat you like they've known you for years."

HOW TO JOIN FORT BEND FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS

For more information about Fort Bend Friends and Neighbors please go to fbfn.org. A membership application form can be downloaded from their website.

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 "FBFN is a great way to educate yourself about different cultures and to broaden your knowledge base."
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Friends and Neighbors Share Their Interests

With over thirteen different special interest groups, FBFN has an activity to interest every member. They are also an open environment where the women are encouraged to share their individual interests with others, with the idea of eventually creating a new special interest group. “(FBFN) continues to evolve in terms of the variety of activities available. That is why it is so successful,” says Tina Dusel.

The group has no maximum or minimum participation requirements for its members. “You can be as busy as you want to be or limit your activities to suit your own schedule,” says O’Rosky, “how you participate is entirely up to you.”

Its multi-cultural perspective is also a unique factor. Recalling a recent tour of a local Islamic Worship Centre, O’Rosky says “FBFN is a great way to educate yourself about different cultures and to broaden your knowledge base.” They are proud to include members from a variety of faiths, and from all over the world. All women are welcome.



FORT BEND FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS AND ACTIVITIES

- Antiques/Collectibles Group
- Belles de Cuisine
- Book Worms
- Bridge
- Bunco
- Garden Friends
- Going Places
- Holiday Gala
- Lunch Bunch
- Mah Jongg
- Out and About
- Stitchery
- Wine Tasting



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Friends and Neighbors Giving Back

FBFN is most pleased with their charitable efforts. Over four years ago, an FBFN committee came together to develop a scholarship fund. “At the time there wasn’t much available in terms of scholarship money for Fort Bend high school seniors looking to attend junior college,” recalls O’Rosky. The committee developed the scholarship criteria, and then began raising money for the fund. “A highlight for me was that I got to serve on the committee that developed the scholarship fund,” says Sachs, president at the time the scholarship fund was created.

This past fall, the annual scholarship fundraiser collected just over eleven thousand dollars, almost tripling the amount raised the previous year. “We really pounded the pavement, and beat the bushes trying to raise that money,” says Tina Dusel who spearheaded this year’s record setting fundraiser.

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Pat and Paula

FORT BEND FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS MISSION

- To provide an opportunity for members to become acquainted with others in the community and/or neighborhoods.
- To provide an atmosphere of friendliness, goodwill and helpful information for Club members in the local community.
- To undertake and promote charitable and humanitarian projects within the community.
- To form enduring friendships



The money will be presented in the spring in the form of five, two thousand dollar scholarships to pre-selected Fort Bend Students looking to attend an area junior college. "Education is a passion for us, because so many of us are former teachers," says O'Rosky, a former school principal herself.

Friends Helping Friends

FBFN takes care of its own. "For such a large group we are a very caring group," says Sachs. Whether it is delivering a meal to a member who is ill, or helping another who has lost her husband, "we all pull together, and try to support that person," says O'Rosky.

In essence, that is what Fort Bend Friends and Neighbors is all about, developing, and maintaining friendships. Indeed the saying is true, to make a friend you have to be a friend, and Fort Bend Friends and Neighbors makes it easy for both to occur. "In your lifetime you make high school friends, college friends, and business friends, but at FBFN you make life long friends," says O'Rosky. **SLM**

A new Sugar Land resident herself, JESSICA LAUGHREN is a full-time technical and part-time freelance writer originally from Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Her favorite things about Texas are the snow free winters and the traditional southern iced tea.

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