

Creating Friendships for Peace (CFP) - FAQ

Website - <https://friendships4peace.org>

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What is the Creating Friendships for Peace (CFP) organization?

Creating Friendships for Peace, Inc. (CFP) is a volunteer grassroots 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in the United States. American families host two teens—one from each side of a conflict—to share cultural experiences and participate in leadership workshops and trust building activities. Developing friendships in a neutral, supportive environment has the broader impact of peace building in their communities. CFP evolved from a friendship program for Northern Ireland. CFP currently has student programs in Cyprus and Israel/Palestine. Since 1981, CFP has supported nearly 3,500 teens and their families.

What is the CFP mission?

As intolerance, and conflicting social, political, and cultural agendas deepen in the U.S., we are reminded that finding peaceful solutions is difficult. The CFP team is dedicated to building peace through the patient erosion of stereotypes and fears prompted from an “us vs them” mentality. Our community-based teams in Cyprus and Israel/Palestine demonstrate how individuals and groups from divided communities can and do work together peacefully.

The CFP team believes strongly that lasting peace can be achieved in divided communities when it originates from the communities impacted. Our programs promote and strengthen bonds between teenagers from divided communities. Through dialogue and leadership development, program participants experience personal growth and build lasting relationships. The program teaches that one person can make a difference and that the first courageous step is critical to effect change.

Does CFP have any political or religious affiliations?

No. CFP does not prescribe or advocate for particular political solutions, nor are we affiliated with any political party. We are a secular organization and therefore do not represent any particular religious institution or religious point of view.

How is CFP different from a student exchange program?

CFP's approach provides teenagers from a divided community between the ages of 15-17 with a perspective on what living in a peaceful environment can look like. Two teens are matched and hosted

during the summer by a U.S. family. Through shared routines and activities both the teens and host family are exposed to new experiences and cultures. The teens also develop life skills through structured activities and workshops on conflict resolution, leadership, and community service—activities designed to help connect people and develop empathy and understanding. Many of the program graduates continue their peace building initiatives as engaged alumni.

Where does CFP currently have programs?

CFP currently has student programs in Cyprus and Israel/Palestine. Each community-based team includes adults from both sides of divided communities demonstrating that they can work together. CFP supports the in-country team in solving challenges and managing their program.

Cyprus Friendship Program

Cyprus has been divided by a UN buffer zone since 1974, with Turkish-speaking Muslims on the north and Greek-speaking Christians on the south.

The Cyprus Friendship Program (CFP) launched in 2009. In addition to the home stays offered in the U.S., the program includes an active curriculum in Cyprus led by a Cypriot team of volunteers. The program brings together teenagers from both Cypriot communities to promote peaceful interaction and understanding. It is a two-year peace building and leadership training program in Cyprus, with a four-week component in the U.S. during the summer.

Middle East Friendship Program

Launched in 2018, the CFP Middle East Friendship Program facilitates conflict resolution, promotes leadership skills, and offers opportunities for teenagers from all sides of the conflict to understand their future role in peace building. Israeli and Palestinian teens between the ages of 15-18 are eligible to apply for the program.

In-country coordinators work with the teens in workshops that develop cross-cultural experiences and understanding. During the summer program, the teens are hosted by American families. CFP's home stay experience offers the teens valuable time in a secure, neutral environment to have honest dialogue and develop a deeper understanding of other cultures.

How do American families benefit from the program?

By hosting teens from different cultures, everyone involved benefits from the experience by gaining insight on different cultures and global conflict and conflict resolution. The teens and host families often maintain life-long friendships, and they and their parents stay engaged by attending reunions and other local events.

By creating the opportunity to develop these bonds, CFP reinforces its global volunteer mission of peace building. It also demonstrates that volunteers from the U.S. are strongly committed to the mission of inspiring teamwork and peaceful efforts in conflict areas. Grassroots peacebuilding is about creating personal bonds. But more importantly it has a broader impact by helping to create an environment where communities can learn to coexist and work together peacefully.

How is CFP funded?

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, CFP receives funding from individual donors, family foundations, Rotary Clubs, and supporters. To maintain its neutrality, CFP accepts no government funds.

CFP is committed to the privacy of its donors and will never share or sell donor information.