

Friendship Club Kick Off

By Peggy A. Nelson, Vice President, International Friendship Club

What fun it was to join the **International Friendship Club's (IFC) formal season kickoff** on Sunday, at the always interesting Arte Museo VallARTE in the el Remance neighborhood. Live music, tasty apps, delicious libations. The evening was a chance to relax and enjoy the reunion while making plans for the next few months. The kickoff was a great example of how the IFC pulls people together. Attendees loaded up Santa's bag with Toys for Tots which will be distributed to children around Banderas Bay in time for the Three King's Day celebration on Jan. 6. The IFC Clubhouse has a Toys for Tots bin, in case you missed this event. If you want to spread some holiday cheer and help package and distribute the toys in early January contact Linda at (ifceventscoordinators@gmail.com).

Two days later, my partner and I hopped onto the **IFC Home Tours** bus. This was my fourth or fifth tour, and his second. There was a woman on the tour who had been on 28 tours! Four exceptional homes were on the list, three on the waterfront just south of the Romantic Zone, and one above Rio Cuale in Gringo Gulch. The first villa is owned by a French couple with incredibly good taste in art. Their waterfront home had several sculptures by Sergio Bustamante whose amazing sculpture "The Search for Reason" (aka The Pillowheads on a ladder sculpture) is a great favorite to climb and photograph on the Malecón. There was no shortage of interior design ideas that drew upon local Mexican flavor. The IFC all-volunteer team of guides and docents looked after our safety and filled in details about the homes.

Don't miss out! Our final Home Tour for 2023 is on Tuesday, December 19. Then the team will take a well-deserved break. Twice-weekly tours will resume after the new year. Home Tours are important for IFC as one of the main sources of funding for IFC charitable activities. It

may come as a surprise that even though the Home Tours raise funds for charitable organizations, they are also rated number 10 on Trip Advisor of 400+ tours available in the Vallarta area. Home Tours are pre-ticketed via the IFC website. They will whisk you away on clean air-conditioned buses from the Sea Monkey at 10:15 AM on Tuesday, December 19.

There are several IFC programs I'm looking forward to. IFC's first "Dine Around" was held last Friday at River Café on Isla Rio Cuale. These are groups of about 20 people who get together for an evening out. Keep a look out for Dine Arouns and Meet & Greets on the IFC calendar, on its website ifcvallarta.org

High Tea at Casita & Garden on Thursday, January 11, is a must go! I love being in the garden surrounded by greenery, peaceful sculptures and a pond. This is an opportunity for play, with hats, fascinators, and other dress-up items! Think pink! For me, an even bigger plus is the music provided by Media Luna, my unequaled favorite band in Vallarta. In case you're not familiar with Media Luna, they are virtuoso musicians who enthrall with Spanish, Mexican and universal songs. What an afternoon this will be.

I'm also looking forward to seeing young people who are learning to play jazz. These are Vallarta's **Salty Paw youth jazz orchestra** a group under the umbrella of the Instituto de Artes Musicales de Puerto Vallarta (IAMPV). Tickets for this IFC co-sponsored event, at Oscar's Restaurant on Isla Cuale, on January 21, will soon be available on the IFC website, ifcvallarta.org

Don't forget to renew your annual membership and join us for our Annual General Meeting on Wednesday, January 17, at 5:00 PM at the IFC Clubhouse. The first 20 members registered will be entered in a raffle to win a free Home Tours Ticket, value of \$800 pesos or about \$50 U.S. Come out to elect and meet your new Executive and Advisory Board members.

Signing off from the IFC for this week, dear reader. Wishing you a very happy holiday season!