

Winkler feeds Mennonite experience



Steven Sukkau Winkler Times

Suely Elisabeth Desuo and Maria de Lourdes Carnio were two of the Brazilian members who enjoyed the experience.

➤ Brazilian visitors enjoyed a traditional Mennonite meal at the Triangle Oasis.

By Steven Sukkau

Winkler welcomed 23 Brazilians July 9 as part of a larger Southern Manitoba tour highlighting our geography, history and multicultural diversity. “I love Canada, I like the people” visitor Maria de Lourdes Carnio said, adding she felt welcomed the minute they arrived.

Carnio came to Canada once before, visiting Toronto six years ago, explaining Canadians are always very friendly, and was interested in hearing the history of the Mennonites this time around.

The visitors toured several highlights including the National Historic Site Mennonite Street Village in Neuberghthal, the Prairie View Elevator Museum in Plum Coulee and the Canadian Fossil Discovery Centre in Morden. The group spent their evening in Winkler enjoying a traditional Mennonite dinner at the Triangle Oasis.

Exchange Director with Friendship Force Winnipeg, Joe Keenan said the guests were especially impressed with the flat lands of Southern Manitoba, a sharp contrast to the hilly regions of Brazil.

The guests call the city of Piracicaba home, in the North West of Sao Paulo, and are members of the international cultural exchange organization Friendship Force, hosted by the Friendship Force clubs of Winnipeg and Manitoba during their tour from July 4 to 11. The overarching goal of the program is to foster peace and understanding between countries, Keenan explained, adding when you meet people from other countries, you never look at the world the same.

When disaster strikes an area you visited and people you know, it becomes more than just a news story. “Rather than abstract, it becomes much more personal,” Keenan explained. “When you travel you find people are much the same... no matter where you live.” With their motto, “Changing the way you see the world,” Friendship Force helps foster global understanding through visits between club members. Headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, the

organization was started in 1977 with the support of former U.S. President Jimmy Carter. There are now 350 clubs located in ap-

proximately 60 countries around the world.

For more information see friendshipforcewinnipeg.org.

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— *Maria de Lourdes Carnio*