**Meet New Member: Mary Blackmon**

*By Sandy Lindberg*

*﻿*

*﻿*Mary Blackmon moved from Ohio to Florida at the age of 32 with her two kids and a dog. She taught computer classes in high schools for 30 years and, as a retiree, volunteers her services as a teacher in her retirement community of Fairway Village in Largo. She lives right on the golf course and admits helping golfers find their errant balls in her yard.

Seven years after moving to Florida, Mary met and married a sailor who also had a child. At the age of 48, she learned to scuba dive. She and her husband both enjoyed scuba diving in many tropical places. Even after her husband passed away, Mary continued her love of scuba diving while on many of her trips. She has been to many foreign destinations, including Bimini, Bermuda, the Bahamas, Greece, Italy, Japan, London, Paris, Rome, Mexico, Canada, and on many cruises. Out of these, Bermuda has been her most favorite place because of its great beauty.

Mary was a home host for foreign exchange students from Japan, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands and Chile. As a matter of fact, she’s spent time at several of her students’ homes in Japan and Greece, learning their cultures as she showed them ours. This is the main reason for Mary to Join FFI – to show our culture and experience to other cultures around the world.

To show her lust for life, Mary also learned to ski at the age of 68 and loved it. However, because of years of softball, her knees no longer allow her to enjoy this sport. Along with being a softball player and coach, Mary also raced quarter horses.

Mary is very active in her community as a singer in their choir, teaching an array of computer classes, and taking on many other jobs as needed. She is also active in the retired teacher's organization and was named Volunteer of the Year in 2020. Congrats! She enjoys her favorite foods of lobster and crab legs and during the pandemic acquired a mini pincher, Maxie, to be her companion. Mary is looking forward to being an active member in our FFI chapter.

