

What the Wally Byam Foundation is all About

Getting to know each other better is what it's all about. Wally Byam, pioneer travel trailer manufacturer, believed people were essentially the same the world over, and set out to prove it. After World War II, he led trailer tours to Canada, Central America, Mexico, Europe, Asia, and Africa to promote "understanding at the common man's level." His people-to-people policy inspired new ideas for expanding international good will.

Edward R. Murrow, Director of the U. S. Information Agency, urged a refamiliarization program for American diplomats returning from foreign service. With the chartering

of the Wally Byam Foundation in 1962, ideas like Murrow's soon became realities. Gleaming Airstream trailers towed by new automobiles took to the open road, as foreign service officers and their families rediscovered America.

Since the early '60's, returning American diplomats have rolled up more than half a million miles in Rediscover America programs.

In 1967 the curtain went up on another Wally Byam Foundation production—Caravan America. At Dulles International Airport outside Washington, D. C., Foundation representatives in blue berets escorted British caravanners to a waiting fleet of Airstreams. This marked the beginning of a get-acquainted program that has won worldwide acclaim. In seven years, Caravan America has taken a dozen curtain calls, each time spanning the nation with different groups of foreign visitors. More than 600 of them, representing 67 countries, have caravanned from sea to shining sea. Americans "tell you they are glad you came," remarked one awed visitor, "and I really think they mean it."

Introducing peoples of other countries to American hospitality harks back to Wally Byam's credo: "The bond of fellowship is the only factor that can insure peace." In this spirit, the Foundation's Chairman, Carolyn Bennett Patterson, conceived a plan for "the largest migration of people for peaceful purposes that the world has ever seen"—Open House U. S. A.

The centerpiece of America's Bicentennial, Open House U. S. A. invites the world "to come, stay in our homes, see our country and our way of life, and let us get to know one another better." Last year, visitors from 23 foreign countries accepted the invitation. In a "Caravan America — Open House U. S. A." pilot project, they toured the United States in a spirited preview of '76.

As the moving force behind Open House U. S. A., the Wally Byam Foundation again leads the way in promoting good will on a person-to-person basis. The Foundation receives no public funds to underwrite its projects. They are financed entirely by donations from individuals and industry. Of course, all contributions are tax-deductible.

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WALLY BYAM FOUNDATION

2725 39th STREET, NORTHWEST #511

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20007

Jeriann Cotton, Executive Secretary
Telephone [202] 965-0411