

PUGET SOUND ON WATCH

Construction kicks-off for \$1.7m Sea-Tac Center



(Left) USO Northwest Sea-Tac Center Manager Bill Baker, United States Coast Guard Rear Admiral Richard Gromlich, USONW Volunteer Doris Spence and USONW Board Member Malcolm McLellan remove a curtain to show over 100 people the design for the new USONW Sea-Tac Center. (Top) Representatives from the Employees Community Fund of Boeing Puget Sound present USO Northwest Board Members and Staff with a \$335k check. (Bottom) Guests and Volunteers who attended the unveiling ceremony view the construction site of the new USONW Sea-Tac Center.

FOR once the crowded Mezzanine level at the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport was not filled with service members waiting for their flights, but with over 150 supporters of the USO Northwest.

On December 11, everyone was there for the construction kick-off of the new \$1.7m Sea-Tac Center spanning 7,700 square feet.

"The community has been incredibly supportive of our efforts in building the new Sea-Tac Center," USONW Board Member Malcolm McLellan said. "Being able to share with them the construction site and the renderings made our opening day that much more of a reality."

Funds have come in various amounts for the center. Top donations being: the Employees

Community Fund of Boeing Puget Sound with \$335k, the Ellison Foundation gave \$275k, and the Norcliffe Foundation donated \$75k.

Individuals have donated such as Ted and Linda Johnson at \$50k, Mark and Tracy Sundberg at \$25k and John and Jean Jessen at \$10,000.

There have been over 50 companies and individuals who have made a donation.

"Every donation brings us closer to our goal of opening the new center," USONW Executive Director Don Leingang said. "From the Port of Seattle making the space available, to companies and individuals giving money, and to others making in-kind donations – it all helps."

After the curtain was drawn by Rear Admiral (lower half) Rick Gromlich, Sea-Tac Center

Manager Bill Baker, Board Member Malcolm McLellan and longtime USONW volunteer Doris Spence, all in attendance were able to view the layout design and renderings for the new center.

PCL Construction made sure the site was safe for guests to tour after the speeches and curtain drop. Sea-Tac Center Manager Bill Baker spoke with supporters pointing to various parts of the construction site explaining where the United Through Reading room will go, the multiple showers, larger family room and theater room.

"I can't wait for the exhilaration of opening our new center to the public, to see the wide eyes of all the volunteers as they first enter, and as the troops and their families are wowed at our 5-Star service 24/7," Bill Baker said.

Continued on Page 2

Brightening the holidays for six military families

IN the Pacific Northwest six military families have been chosen for a memorable Christmas experience only the USO Northwest and Kimpton Hotels and Restaurants can provide.

For the second year in a row they offered military families a chance at a free Christmas Eve dinner, free night's stay and Christmas breakfast at one of six boutique hotels in Seattle and Portland.

"This was an easy decision for us. To be able to help a few military families have a nice Christmas is just a small way for us to thank them for what they do every day. It's actually a gift to us, to be able to do this for them," Tom Waithe, Regional Director of Operations for

Kimpton Hotels of the Pacific Northwest, said.

The six winning families are: Joshua and Starr Trujillo, Shawn and Marci Spray, Shannon Elliot and his family, Elizabeth and Adam Stanton, Joshua and Simone Clark, and Aaron Weslow and his family.

The staff of the USONW and Kimpton Hotels read 30 pages of heart wrenching entries from people nominating their military families and friends for this giveaway.

Here is an excerpt from an entry written by Michelle Schwartz nominating the Spray family:

"Shawn and Marci adopted Cameron a few days after he was born. They knew there was a

family history of cardiomyopathy... Cameron was diagnosed with restrictive cardiomyopathy at age two. It is a serious, often fatal heart condition. There are medications that can help decrease the symptoms, but the only effective treatment is transplant. Cameron is currently in heart failure... They cannot travel more than two hours due to being on the transplant list."

The contest was open to all active duty, National Guard and reservists. Nominations ranged in length from a paragraph to a full page. Precedence was given to those with multiple nominations. Family members and friends from outside of the Pacific Northwest region sent in

Continued on Page 4

Feeling like a Million Bucks Page 3	Snowball Express Page 5	Meet our Portland Volunteers Page 6	Volunteers of the Year Page 8
---	-----------------------------------	---	---

Wish list of items needed for centers

Mobile Canteen

Items: Hot cocoa mix, individual snacks, bananas, hot dogs and buns, cases of juice boxes, hand warmers, toe warmers, and Gift Cards for gasoline (please!)

Sea-Tac Center

Items: Trial size toothpaste, disposable razors, shaving cream packets, deodorant, snack items such as granola bars, apple sauce, packets of crackers, Pop Tarts, individually packaged chips, baby food, etc.

Shali Center at McChord Field

Items: Large cans of tuna, sliced ham, sliced bologna, sliced turkey, paper towels, cases of bottled water, paper plates, and individually wrapped chips.

From the cockpit of the Executive Director

USO Northwest Supporters -

It is just over one year since we have changed our name to USO Northwest and 2013 has been quite a year!

Our volunteers, staff, and board have unselfishly answered every call asked of us by countless military and their families. We have provided the 5-Star service expected by all of us associated with the USO name.

There were numerous events in 2013 I am very proud to have been associated with. This year's Red, White and Blue Golf tournament saw a record number of sponsors and 336 players. Our 5-Star Gala hosted one of our largest crowds ever, and we were honored to include Medal of Honor recipient, Army Sergeant Ty Carter.

Our three centers have been extremely busy all year. The Sea-Tac Center once again has served 100,000 guests, welcoming a number of units home, including World War II Honor Flight Veterans. Our Shali Center at Joint Base Lewis-McChord has assisted almost 50,000 guests and hosted a delicious "No Dough Dinner" to a new unit before payday each month. The Mobile Canteen supported 150 events, serving over 35,000 military and family members at various venues. Although we are a staff of seven, none of these events would be possible without the assistance and support of our 250 amazing volunteers.

2014 promises to be just as exciting. We are beginning a remodel of our SeaTac Center and will open our first Center in Portland before summer. With the support of all our friends and donors again in 2014, the USO Northwest will continue to always be by the side of those who serve this great nation!

Cheers!

Don Leingang



Building of new Sea-Tac Center begins

There is still time to help be part of the new center's construction. "We have already raised about eighty percent of the funds required, so we are asking the public to help us complete the funding to support the men, women and their families who serve and have served our nation," USONW Chairman of the Board Tom Crawford said. To make your donation, purchase a brick to be mounted on the Patriots Wall, or for more information please visit the website www.usonw.org/campaign.

5-Star Gala shows USO is always by the side of service members



Army Staff Sergeant Ty Carter from Joint Base Lewis-McChord and his wife attended USO Northwest's 5-Star Gala. He spoke about how the USO helped him and others before and during deployments. Photo by Sharalyn Lamb, Luce Bella Photography.

SINCE 1966 the USO Northwest has provided various forms of support to the military and their families here in the Northwest region.

From providing places to rest and retreat, to going wherever the troops are with the Mobile Canteen, to providing the extra twenty minutes of a phone call for deployed spouses and so much more. The USO Northwest is always by their side.

This was the theme for the 5-Star Gala on September 7. Over 350 community members, business leaders and military attended the event held at The Westin Bellevue.

"We are so grateful for the community support of our important mission to serve military and their families," USONW Board Member and Gala Co-Chair Brian Vowinkel said.

Sponsors included America's Credit Union, Ascent Private Capital Management, Boeing, Brown Bear Carwash, Vet Industrial and many more.

The Honorary Chairs were Carol and Spike Anderson, instrumental supporters of the USONW and longtime fans.

Not only were community members there to support the USONW but some familiar faces in the military community as well. Army Specialist Chris Anderson, whom the USONW welcomed in January with a surprise Homecoming, spoke to guests about how meaningful that day was for him.

Anderson was seriously injured from an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) in June, 2012. He'd planned a surprise visit for his unit at Joint Base Lewis-McChord but the USO Northwest had other plans and brought the unit

to the airport. Another special guest was Army Sergeant Ty Carter, a recent Medal of Honor recipient. Carter shared with guests how important the USO's support is for service members at home and deployed.

"Having a Medal of Honor recipient join us made the Gala quite memorable," Brian said.

Todd Beamer High School Air Force JROTC conducted the Prisoner of War & Missing In Action ceremony. USONW Staff members shared personal USO experiences.

Former Office Manager Shannon McManus told the audience about how one morning a service member came into her office looking for a quiet place to Skype with his family. She invited him to share her office.

"His daughter, who was just a toddler, was having breakfast and held up her Cheerios to the camera to share with her daddy," Shannon said. "He leaned into the camera and 'ate' it. It's moments like these that really make you love what you do for the USO Northwest."

The next USONW Gala will be held October 11, 2014, at The Westin Bellevue. Preparations for this event have already begun.

"We start planning the day after the last one!" USONW Events Coordinator Tracy Mann said. "I've already received a few contacts from sponsors, numerous requests to volunteer, and even some offers for potential auction items."

An estimated 100 volunteers are needed to help with the event. Registration is open for sponsors and guests. To be a volunteer or register, visit www.usonw.org/gala. All money raised goes towards the USO Northwest programs and services to help local military and their families.

USO helping families feel like a million bucks

IN 1988 Patricia Nehring stood on the Seattle dock waving goodbye to her husband in the Coast Guard. His six month deployment was unexpected. Patricia didn't want her husband to be concerned, so she did her best to put on a good front. Inside, she felt numb.

Patricia, her husband, their five year old son and a new baby boy were scheduled to move to a small boat station in Maine from Virginia where he had been attending his Marine Science Technician (MST) school. When a fire destroyed the family housing and a good portion of the station everyone was sent scrambling to find new billets.

Her husband was requested immediately to Seattle where he would report to an Alaska Fisheries patrol boat. They were told he would have a few months before going to Alaska. But when they checked into the Seattle base it was not the case, three hours later he was on a ship.

"At first there was just shock," Patricia said. "It took a little time for all of the ramifications to sink in – no place to live, no time to prepare our son for his dad being gone so long, none of the last minute things you do to have a loved one gone for a long time."

Deployments are hard and families go through a lot of mental preparations to balance the hardships. The sailor needs to prep too so they leave without a heavy heart, she said. Having no time to prepare for the deployment added stress to the departure.

"I know that whatever I was thinking and feeling, my husband in many ways was going

through it too –maybe even having a harder time," she said.

At the time communication between the shore and boats was very little. Families mostly relied on mail as the way to communicate during deployments. It would be days, possibly longer, before her husband would know how his family was doing in his sudden absence.

"At first there was just shock. It took a little time for all of the ramifications to sink in - no place to live, no time to prepare our son for his dad being gone so long, none of the last minute things you do to have a loved one gone for a long time."

As Patricia was standing on the dock, she was approached by a USO Northwest volunteer, Louise. The volunteer gave her a huge hug before announcing she was with the USO and they would take care of the Nehring family, Patricia said.

"I just melted into a puddle of tears," she said. "All the emotion and stress of the day just poured out and she held me for as long as I needed it."

The USO arranged for them to live in temporary housing at the Navy Base at Sandpoint and secured food vouchers for the first week. Louise also showed up the next day with a few friends who offered to babysit for the morning so Patricia could find a more permanent place to live.

"At a time when I felt alone and vulnerable she made me feel that I had a family, and

support, who would be there for me, there is nothing on earth that describes the value of this kindness," Patricia said. "She may have not thought it was much but for me it was everything."

Louise was a Navy wife. Patricia suspects Louise's husband, who was a commander, made some calls and arranged for a ship to shore phone call with her husband after she'd settled her family into the permanent housing found at Sandpoint.

"He broke down in tears on the phone when he heard how well we were doing so I know he had been very stressed about leaving," she said.

Today, Patricia volunteers with the USO Northwest. She says her family has never forgotten the help given by Louise and the USO, and wanted to be part of it. It gives her a lot of pride to be able to be part of the USO, she said.

"It is unlikely I would ever be able to do something of the magnitude of Louise but if I can do one small thing, like making a sandwich that makes someone's day better, that's enough for me," Patricia said.

At the USONW Shali Center, she began cutting sandwiches diagonally for presentation. When a young soldier picked up the plate, he paused for a moment looking at the sandwich and then expressed how it reminded him of how his mom used to cut his sandwiches.

"For that moment I think he felt closer to home," she said. "And I felt like a million bucks!"

Red, White & Blue

Golf Classic

Friday, May 16, 2014



Join 300+ golfers, spectators, local celebrities, and military heroes from all five service branches for the largest golf tournament on the West Coast. Spanning two courses at The Golf Club at Newcastle, festivities include an 18-gun salute from the US Marines, a special performance of our National Anthem, an aircraft flyover, delicious food and more!

The USO Northwest Red, White and Blue Golf Classic is the Northwest's premier golf tournament and auction benefiting the USO Northwest, and local military and their families.



Show your support for our local military by becoming a corporate or individual sponsor.

Last year sponsors included Boeing, Lockton, and TriWest.



Active-duty military are able to play in our tournament courtesy of our generous sponsors.

We need volunteers for a variety of positions such as scorekeeping.



www.usonw.org/golf

Christmas Eve giveaway for local military families

entries too.

“Sadly, I have not seen Shannon or his family in years, aside from Facebook... I would love to see the family for the holidays, but that is not possible. At least I can nominate his family to have something to look forward to. Please consider Shannon and his family for this prize. He has lived up to be so much more than the cards he was dealt. He has given so much to the military. His wife and children have been by his side every step of the way. They all deserve so much more than I can say,” wrote Angelique DeLorme, cousin of Staff Sergeant Shannon Elliot.

The participating hotels: the Hotel Monaco Seattle, Alexis Hotel and Hotel Vintage Park in Seattle, as well as the River Place, the Hotel

Monaco Portland and Hotel Vintage Plaza in Portland.

“With the USO Northwest's expansion to support our military in Oregon, it is wonderful to know that our partner has committed to providing a little Christmas cheer to military families in both Portland and Seattle,” USO Northwest Executive Director Don Leingang said.

Kimpton Hotels will be covering the bill for the Christmas Eve dinners and hotel suites. The USO Northwest will be covering the cost of breakfast for the families as well as providing gifts for the children.

“Last year the staff at the Seattle hotels went above and beyond for the military families and I have no doubt they will all do that again, in both cities,” said Meaghan Cox of USO Northwest.

12th Man, show you support the Seattle Seahawks and the USO Northwest.

For each bottle sold, the USO Northwest will receive \$2. These are the only American made metal water bottles, with 100% recycled aluminum and BPA free. Show you're the best 12th Man the Seahawks & USO Northwest could ever have!





Joy found in everyday items, presence of volunteers

DOUGHNUTS, soda, milk, gum, a couch, toothbrushes, shaving cream, grass. To many these are everyday items. Simple things taken for granted. For USO Volunteers at the Shali Center these are the items they witness bringing the most joy to service members fresh from conflict zones.

“I watched soldiers get very excited about all the doughnuts and then tell me about the real soda they can get in the USO,”

Volunteer Kristie King said. “They just beamed. It’s exciting to see the little things that make them smile.”

A few years ago, Volunteer Jane Hughes was supporting an inbound flight of 900 Oregon National Guard.

“A group of young soldiers got off the plane and ran towards the grass in front of the terminal, threw themselves face down, and just kept saying ‘it’s grass, it’s grass’,” Jane said.

The Shali Center on Joint Base Lewis-McChord has the primary mission of supporting outbound and inbound flights. For the inbound flights the main goal is to welcome home the service members by providing any items needed before they are taken to their awaiting families.

“We figured out people coming home just want water, coffee and maybe some snacks as

they are anxious to get back to the family waiting for them,” Kristie said. “The single guys sometimes eat a little more but I often hear they are going out for beers and steaks.”

Many service members take the opportunity to shave or brush their teeth at the center before reuniting with their families. The Shali Center volunteers wheel out a container full of

center is always upbeat and excited, Jane said.

“We are happier in spirit because we know what is going to happen when they get to Lewis,” Kristie said.

When the plane does land, the volunteers empty out the center. They make their way to the building next door, Troop Holding. Often

the first ones right at the door to the flight line, they eagerly wait for the service members to exit the plane.

“We have sent so many off to war and rarely do we get to be there when they come home as the units don’t always need us there,” Jane said.

Some incoming flights have their service members go straight to the available buses which then drive to the awaiting families.

When volunteers do get to stand at the door to the flight line they clap loudly and flash happy smiles until everyone has come through the door. The volunteers are always joined by other military to form the greeting tunnel. It can be overwhelming to someone who walks in, Kristie said.

“Knowing that not only is their unit there to welcome them home, the USONW volunteers who sent them off care enough to be there even at 4 a.m. to welcome them home,” Jane said.



Volunteers greet returning service members as they enter Troop Holding, then serve them fresh sandwiches at the Shali Center.



“The volunteers are always so nice. If you want to see a smile, go visit the Shali Center.” - Alisa Quimby

these items.

Before the inbound flights arrive, the volunteers also provide support to the Rear Detachment, command, Space A flights from the nearby PAX Terminal, and the airmen who serve the surrounding area.

“We’ll feed the Rear Detachment breakfast, lunch, whatever, while they are waiting as many flights do not come in on schedule and they have to sit there and wait,” Jane said.

Despite any wait, the attitude around the

Supporting Snowball Express in the Northwest

IN the dark, early morning hours of December 12, there was magic happening. USO Northwest volunteers and American Airlines provided a special moment for military children who have lost a loved one while serving. The moment is called Snowball Express.

With the alarm set for 3 a.m. Lonnie Stevenson found herself wide awake at 1 a.m. She was anxious to get to the USONW Sea-Tac Center where she would help escort families through the airport at 4:30 a.m. Volunteers who participated in this event before often described it as a memorable experience, she said.

“The first mom I escorted said ‘I get so emotional’ and was apologizing for the tears,” Lonnie said. “This was their third participating in Snowball Express. We hugged and cried for a moment.”

Families were fast-tracked through security and escorted by USONW volunteers to the gate. American Airlines decorated D7 with balloons, trees, and wreaths. Breakfast items were available and hot chocolate.

Children were invited to pick out a toy from the collection donated by USONW Volunteer Leslie Lewis. Many clung to their stuffed animals as they waited anxiously for Santa and his elves to arrive.

“I really enjoyed walking around the gate area and talking to the children and spouses,” Rear Admiral (lower half) Rick Gromlich, Commander of Thirteenth Coast Guard Division, said. “There was so much excitement in the air!”

The Port of Seattle Police brought two dogs to visit with the children. The dogs were swarmed with hugs. The golden and black labs in return licked happy faces.

The echoes of “Where’s Santa?” could be heard as children asked the elves, who’d arrived to mingle with them and distribute candy canes and more toys.

A child who was previously not feeling well when escorted to the gate found the strength to join the others and sing carols when Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus arrived. Smiles were seen on everyone’s faces.

Santa escorted the children on to the plane after hugging each one and getting their picture taken. The cabin was decorated with wreaths, shiny beads, golden bells, garland and lights.

When the plane was ready to go, it took off for Portland International Airport (PDX), to pick up more military families.

“American Airlines here at PDX contacted us to see if we could provide any assistance with the send-off and gift bags, and we were more than happy to be involved!” USONW PDX Volunteer Christine Vu said. “Snowball Express is such a great program, we loved being there to show support for the children of our fallen heroes.”

This was the first time USONW volunteers participated in the Snowball Express at PDX. While the Seattle flight was in the air, children began arriving at PDX around 7 a.m. to take part in festivities before going to Texas.

American Airlines treats all the families to a day at Six Flags Over Texas.

Children at PDX were greeted by Santa – yes, he flew faster than the plane – and his elves.

“I loved watching as some very brave kids were interviewed by KATU News and KPTV,” Christine said. “They talked about how they enjoyed being part of the program and honoring their fathers’ memories.”

Patriot Guard Riders lined the way to the plane with flags for the Portland military families.

Snowball Express went smoothly for the families at each location. USO Northwest staff, board members, volunteers and USONW supporters helped make it so.

“I just wanted to say thank you to as many of the spouses and children that I could,” Gromlich said.

“They have given so much – it’s the least I could do. It was truly an honor to be there.”



(Top) RDML Rick Gromlich speaks with a military child at the Sea-Tac Airport. (Top left) A child plays with an elf, Robert Harrelson, son of USONW Board Member Stan Harrelson. (Top right) Patriot Guard Riders line the way to the plane at Portland International Airport (PDX). (Bottom left) Children interviewed at PDX. (Bottom right) Girl smiles knowing Santa is near.

Meet the lead volunteers representing USO Northwest in Portland, Oregon

Joe Williams, US Army Colonel (Retired)

Where are you originally from? Junction City, Kansas

Who inspired you to join the military? My sister’s husband was in the local National Guard unit and would take me out to the Armory as a kid. They had jeeps and a tank! I enlisted in Kansas Army National Guard the summer before my senior year of high school, two weeks after turning 17.

How long did you serve? Twenty-two active duty and 32 years total (active, reserve and Guard).

What was your favorite job in the military? Tank Gunnery. Who doesn’t like shooting guns? Especially the big ones.

What aspects of your experience in the military have carried over into being a USO volunteer and project manager for the USONW PDX Center? Mission accomplishment and taking care of the troops.

Do you have a motto you live by? Golden Rule—treat others how you like to be treated.

Three words to describe you. Honesty, integrity, and I guess smart-aleck.

What was your first experience with the USO? It would have been during Desert Storm.

What does your family think about your undertaking this large project of starting a USO Center? My two sons (21 & 16) often say “What the heck is taking you so long to get this project done?”

Why did you approach the USO about opening a center in Portland? I saw a need. My sons have been in Portland since 2000. I was stationed at Fort Lewis from 2000 to 2004; Boston 2004 to 2005; Pentagon 2005 to 2007 when I retired. For the three years on the east coast I flew to PDX every other weekend for my parenting time with my kids. There are no direct flights, so I spent a lot of time at the USOs.

Why should people care about a USONW Center opening in Portland? Oregon Veterans come up to me and tell me they’ve been pushing for a USO at PDX for years. They cannot understand why we don’t have one. While the only active duty bases in Oregon are the U.S. Coast Guard, the Portland Military Entrance Processing Station inducts 4,000 per year. In Oregon and South West Washington, we have over 7,000 active duty; 10,600 in the National Guard and Reserves; and 53,000 military retirees.

That’s a military community over 70,000 and doesn’t include their family members or veterans.

How many volunteers are on the current Oregon roster? We have over 250 people on our roster of volunteers and that is really because of word of mouth.

What is a favorite memory you have from an event you’ve supported this year? The look upon the members of the Oregon Air National Guard’s 142nd Security Forces Squadron faces, upon redeploying after 217 days to Qatar to discover the USONW Portland’s “Army of Gratitude” brought VooDoo Donuts to their de-mob processing site at the Portland Air National Guard Base.

What are you looking forward to most about the future PDX Center? Getting my 16 year old son Brad off my back! During our return to Portland from Washington DC in Oct 2012, we had a mechanical delay causing us to spend five hours in the Houston USO; followed by five hours in the Denver USO. Relaxing in leather recliners and watching Sunday night football on the big screen, my son said, “So Colonel, I thought you were putting one of these at PDX?”

Is there anything you would like to add? I am very humbled by our young men and women in uniform—those who stepped up to serve their country while we were a “nation at war”. Then I see those veterans with their hats reflecting which units they served in during Vietnam, Korea, and WWII, who are becoming fewer and fewer. The USO Northwest Portland Center at PDX is for those who are serving and those who served.



USO Northwest PDX and Mobile Canteen was the Grand Marshal in the Ross Hollywood Chapel Veterans Day Parade in Portland.

Christine Vu

Where are you originally from? Portland, Oregon

What is your current job? I work full-time at an AMC (appraisal management company), Market Appraisals in Clackamas, Oregon.

Do you have any family or friends in the military? My grandfather fought for South Vietnam during the Vietnam War, and most of my friends are in the military or married to it!

Who inspired you to become a USO volunteer? In high school, a friend of mine joined the Army. That inspired me to become involved with the USO and other organizations like Wounded Warrior Project and Soldiers Angels.

Do you have a motto you live by? The motto from my high school, Jesuit High School in Portland, is “Age Quod Agis”, which is Latin for “Do well whatever you do”. I try to implement that in everything I do!

Three words to describe you. Dedicated, caring, and efficient!

What was your first experience with the USO? Living in Portland, I couldn’t be directly involved with a USO Center for the first few years I was volunteering, which mean that I was only a sponsoring member of the USO. My first experience with the Sea-Tac Center was when I followed USO Northwest on Facebook and saw a request for toothpaste one day. I was able to obtain 1500 tubes of travel-sized toothpaste from a hotel in Portland, and I drove it up to Sea-Tac where it was very well received.

How do you feel about the community support in Oregon for a USO Center? The outpour of support we have received is so overwhelming. Even though the center isn’t built yet, we have had hundreds of people contact us to volunteer!

What kind of events have you and the volunteers supported? We have been involved in almost all of the military events that have taken place in the past few months – family days, relay runs/obstacle courses, retirement ceremonies, re-deployments, and there are more to come!

What is a favorite memory you have from of the events you’ve supported? In June we were asked to support a send-off for WWII Veterans headed to Washington D.C. to visit the WWII Memorial. This was to take place directly after an earlier event in the morning, and at that event, we ran into representatives from the Oregon Military Museum who were dressed in WWII attire! We convinced them to join us at the airport, and the expressions on the vets’ faces were absolutely priceless!

What are you looking forward to most about the future USONW PDX Center? I can’t wait to open the doors to the traveling soldiers, airmen, marines, and sailors who are looking for comfort within the airport –they deserve that space, and we need to make sure we give it to them!

VetCorps provides military students advantages

By Brittany Burns

THE second largest renewable pool of students following high school graduates is military veterans. Many of these veterans are unsure how to transition from the military to civilian life. However, they want to take full advantage of their education benefits.

Washington State has become the first state to offer a program called VetCorps.

This is a veterans’ organization funded through an AmeriCorps grant is working to help veterans achieve their higher education goals.

By providing training and support to college faculty, staff, and administration there will be an increase in awareness of student veterans’ needs. There will also be networks established for veterans for easy access to federal, state, and local benefits. Veterans will also be provided with a peer connection to help them settle into the college life.

The USO Northwest is actively helping veterans and their families navigate Washington’s higher education and training programs through partnering with VetCorps members at colleges across the state. Twenty percent of schools nationwide are providing additional financial, educational, and transitional support for military students.

Literature aiming to educate our veterans on schools providing veteran support, extended scholarship opportunities and flexible classroom options, can now be found in the USO Northwest’s Sea-Tac Center.

In working with military friendly colleges, USO Northwest hopes the exposure will attract students

for volunteer opportunities and internships.

“Our outreach has expanded tremendously in the last year and we’re finding we’re exhausting our volunteers because so many of them are working multiple events or shifts in one day,” USO Northwest Events Coordinator Tracy Mann said. “Having more volunteers will help improve the support we provide.”

While the USO Northwest’s main focus is providing support for active duty military, their dependents and our retired veterans, these organizations are helping veterans go beyond military life and into the classroom.

It is with the support and partnership of organizations like VetCorps, military friendly schools, and other student veteran organizations, the USO Northwest can extend its reach in the community.

Recently, Pacific Lutheran University and its VetCorps navigators created a weeklong event where their students could sign holiday cards during their lunch breaks. Over a hundred cards were sent to disabled veterans at the VA in Lakewood. More cards will be distributed to active duty at Joint Base Lewis-McChord.

At Bates Technical College and Clover Park Community College, students and VetCorps members filled hundreds of Christmas stockings donated to the USO Northwest. Bursting with sunglasses, earphones and other wonderful presents, these colleges are delivering them throughout the season to disabled and homeless veterans all across the Seattle-Tacoma area.



The Husky United Military Veterans (HUMV) invited the USO Northwest to join them for a tailgate at University of Washington’s campus for the Nov. 9 football game. The event raised over \$600 for the USONW’s Enduring Support Campaign.

Mark, circle, scribble, the events are here

Applebee’s Dining to Donate

January 6, 11:00AM-9:00PM, 10004 NE Halsey, Portland, OR 97220. Applebee’s will donate 15 percent of each parties check to the USO Northwest.

Resource Fair

February 7, 9:00AM-6:00PM, Joint Base Lewis-McChord. The USO Northwest will be sharing information about our programs and services for our local military and their families.

Yakima Symphony Chorus USO Show

March 8, Yakima Valley Museum. The Yakima Symphony Chorus is hosting a fundraiser for the USO Northwest! Join us for a wonderful USO Show with Leonard Piggee.

Red, White, and Blue Golf Classic

May 16, 10:00AM-9:00PM, The Golf Club at Newcastle. Join the USONW for an exciting day of golf! Teams are made up of service members and community members.

Visit USO Northwest at www.usonw.org for more information

Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers –

One of the joys of my job is I attend USO Northwest events as a photographer. Behind the lens I’ve seen sailors propose to their significant other. I’ve seen soldiers dusty from training show a bright white smile as they reach for a freshly grilled hot dog. I’ve managed to keep myself disconnected just enough from the moment so I can focus on everything going on.

Until I took pictures of Trevor Romain interacting with military children.

He is the creator of the With You All the Way program. The USO distributes special kits to children who have a family member deployed. The kits include a journal, post cards they can send, dog tags, a teddy bear named Cuzzie and other items. Trevor then travels all over the globe meeting kids to talk to them about being a military child with a family member deployed.

It was amazing to watch Trevor gain the trust of the children he was presenting in front of. He had them laughing constantly during the assembly. He shared personal stories from his life in a way that connected with them. After sharing a cartoon show where the main characters discuss being a child with a family member deployed he then turned to more serious topics.

To see these children show how much they were hurting made being behind the lens so hard. All I wanted to do was hug every single one of them. They shared their personal stories with him, in front of teachers and administrators who they would never have spoken to about these matters.

Trevor and the Comfort Crew pulled aside certain students after the assemblies to meet one on one with Trevor. In just a matter of moments and after a few hugs, these kids looked so much happier and the weight of the world a little lighter on their shoulders.

The struggles of being a child with a family member deployed was absorbed by Trevor and the group exercise which took place.

For me the With You All the Way kits and program are so much more now. It’s not just a box with items to give to kids but a support system. I’m extremely glad the USO Northwest ranks number one in distributing these to our military families. It’s so important for the children to know they aren’t alone.

If you know of a child who could use a kit, please contact our Center Managers whose information is listed at www.usonw.org. There is also a guide



for the parent and/or guardian to help address the struggles the child may be facing.

All the best,
Meaghan Cox
Communications
and IT Lead

USONW Executive Committee

- Tom Crawford**
Chair, Vice President, Business Development,
Greenpoint Aerospace
- Malcolm McLellan**
Vice Chairman
Van Ness Feldman PC
- Greg Zanetti**
Treasurer
Registered Investment Advisor, Talbot Financial
- Stan Harrelson, CPM**
President and CEO,
Pinnacle Family of Companies
- Kimberley Kemper**
Director, Expert Counsel, Starbucks Corporation
- Terry Oxley**
Executive Director, Community Services,
Puget Sound Energy
- Joan Shalikashvili**
Professional Business Woman
- Nancy Strom**
Professional Business Woman

USONW Board of Directors

- Thomas F. Cole**
Major General, US Army (Ret)
- Mike Flood**
Vice President, Community Relations
The Seattle Seahawks
- Thomas E. Jaffa, CTP**
President & CEO of The Jaffa Company
- Hossein Khorram**
Owner of Khorram Properties LLC
- Richard A. Kottke**
Solicitor and Attorney at Law
- Kenneth Leonard**
CEO of America’s Credit Union
- Laura McCloud Mathers**
Non Profit Consulting &
Veterans Employment Advocacy
- Joe McDonagh**
Deputy Director, Content Strategy
Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- Joseph Myhra**
Director of Engineering and Maintenance
The Seattle Mariners
- Daniel D. Park**
Director, Consumer Electronics
Amazon.com INC
- Dean Proffitt**
KC-46A Training Systems Management
The Boeing Company
- Pamela P. Valdez**
KC-46 Support & Training Director
The Boeing Company
- Brian Vowinkel**
Regional Managing Director
Ascent

Emeritus College

- RADM Herbert M. Bridge, USNR (Ret)**
Chairman Emeritus, Chairman,
Ben Bridge Jewelers
- BG Howard J. Ingersoll, USAF (Ret)**
Director of C17 Field Services
The Boeing Company
- Michael O’Byrne**
Chairman Emeritus



Center Managers name their Volunteer of Year



Doug Hoople
Sea-Tac Center

DOUG HOOPLER actively volunteers with the USO Northwest. Not only does he work a shift on Tuesdays at the SeaTac Center but he also participates in events and helps with the Mobile Canteen.

“Doug advocated on our behalf with the Redmond Veterans of Foreign War and Ladies Auxiliary. Due to his steadfast dedication, they donated over \$12,000 towards the new center,” USONW Sea-Tac Center Manager Bill Baker said. “Furthermore, he challenged both groups to buy commemorative coins in which he would match each purchase. He singlehandedly sold 55 coins and raised an additional \$2,750 towards the Capital Campaign.”

Bill knows when he gives Doug a task it will be completed flawlessly and with dignity, he said. Doug embodies the USO Core Values of Excellence in everything he does, whether advocating for the USO Northwest or for various veteran organizations with which he also volunteers.

Patty Bert
Mobile Canteen

PATTY BERT was chosen as the Mobile Canteen Volunteer of the Year because of her dedication.

“She volunteers at the majority of Mobile Canteen events, no matter where they are,” USO Northwest Mobile Canteen Manager Samantha Lingad said. “She makes my job easier and has helped build the great reputation of the Mobile Canteen program.”

Not only has Patty provided support at most Mobile events, but she also helped organize a Mobile cleaning and organizing day during the height of summer’s busy schedule. It allowed the Mobile events to run much smoother, Samantha said.

“Patty is always a bright shining face,” she said. “She always makes each and every service member feel welcome.”



Wayne Jackson
Shali Center



WAYNE JACKSON is the Shali Center go-to volunteer. Meaning one can count on him to fill in a shift at short notice or work unusual hours.

“His tireless efforts of serving our guests during deployments and regular shifts at the Shali Center have led to him volunteering over 1,000 hours,” USONW Shali Center Manager Andrew Oczkewicz said.

Wayne not only helps around the center but also assists with Mobile Canteen events. He will drive the vehicle all over the region, most recently a trip to Portland for the Ross Hollywood Chapel Veterans Day parade.

USO Northwest CFC # 15348

Every dollar donated through the Combined Federal Campaign to the USO Northwest goes towards our Helping Hands Grant. The grant provides cash awards for recreation and events for all military commands.

Race For A Soldier

September 28, 2014 - Gig Harbor, Wash.