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Contact: Nate Murphy (206) 618-2790

USO Puget Sound Area 2010 Gala and Auction Raises More Than \$366,000 To Support Local Military Personnel and Their Families

Funds will support advanced communication between overseas military personnel and their families at home, USO centers at Sea-Tac Airport and Joint Base Lewis McChord, and help create a Puget Sound area Camp Erin bereavement camp for military families

SEATTLE, WA – October 6, 2010 – The USO Puget Sound Area (USOPSA) today announced that the 2010 Five-Star Gala and Auction, held at the Museum of Flight in Seattle on October 1, was one of the organization's most successful events ever, raising more than \$366,000 to support local military personnel and their families.

"All of our Gala sponsors and attendees stepped up in a big way this year to ensure the USO mission of providing 'all the comforts of home' to our brave men and women in uniform continues," said Malcolm McLellan, incoming USOPSA board chairman and Partner with Van Ness Feldman PC. "It was also an honor to welcome Rear Admiral Frank Thorp IV (USN, Ret.) from USO Headquarters, and have him here to witness this outpouring of support from the local community."

The top auction item from this year's Gala was a Lear jet weekend excursion package to San Francisco for six, which brought in \$11,000, and was won by Dennis and Barbara Knapp.

The "Raise the Paddle" portion of the Gala auction raised more than \$100,000 to support military families and USOPSA programs throughout the next year. USO Headquarters donated at the \$25,000 level; and Stan and Mary Harrelson, Vic and Mary Odermat, and the Charles Simonyi Fund contributed at the \$10,000 level.

Gala proceeds will help support the local military community in several important ways including improving communication between overseas military personnel and their families at home through USO Operation Phone Home, enhancing video conferencing capabilities with Skype, and continuing the United Through Reading Program, where service members read a story recorded on video for their children back home.

The USOPSA also announced the formation of a partnership with The Moyer Foundation and the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) to create a Puget Sound area Camp Erin bereavement camp for children who have lost a loved one in service to our country.

"The USOPSA is committed to improving the lives of military personnel and their families all across the Puget Sound region and beyond," said Don Leingang, USOPSA

Executive Director and Commander, USN (Ret.). “We consider it our sacred duty and an honor to ensure all of our military families receive the support they need, when and where they need it, until every one comes home.”

The USOPSA Gala also honored the continued service of Joint Base Lewis McChord USO volunteer Herb Schmeling, who was named 2010 USO Volunteer of the Year by USO Headquarters in Arlington, VA. Known affectionately as the “Godfather of Fort Lewis,” Herb routinely volunteers 60 – 80 hours a month, and is often on-call, ready at a moment’s notice to help the USOPSA provide “all of the comforts of home” to our brave military personnel and their families. Herb will also be honored at the USO Headquarters Gala in Washington, D.C. on October 7.

The USOPSA would like to acknowledge the generosity of all of this year’s Gala sponsors and attendees, including The Boeing Company, TriWest Healthcare Alliance, Merrill Gardens, Pinnacle Family of Companies, and KTTH 770 AM Seattle. The USOPSA would also like to thank KMPS 94.1 FM Seattle for arranging a live Gala performance from Country music sensation James Wesley.

To learn more about the USO Puget Sound Area, review the 2010 USOPSA Gala and Auction catalog, and to make a tax-deductible contribution, please visit <http://www.usopsa.org>.

