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USO Puget Sound Area Golf Tournament Hits Record Fundraising Over \$230k raised – triple 2009 level and best in event's 15 year history

SEATTLE – The USO Puget Sound Area (USOPSA) announced today a new record, raising over \$230,000 for the 15th annual Red, White, and Blue golf tournament – the best in the event's history and triple the amount raised in 2009. A total of 180 golfers competed at the Golf Club at Newcastle, Tues. May 25th, including 51 military members. The event also featured the first ever USOPSA Military Cup. The U.S. Air Force team from Joint Base Ft. Lewis McChord took top honors.

"I am humbled by the dedication and commitment of our service members and the work of the USO to ease their burden and lift morale," says Stan Harrelson, president and CEO, Pinnacle Family of Companies, and chairman of the 2010 USOPSA golf tournament. "A heartfelt 'thanks' to the event sponsors and volunteers who contributed so much to the event's success. I am thrilled that USOPSA can now expand its support and mission in the Puget Sound region," Harrelson says.

In addition to the new fundraising records and 8-week advance sell-out of the tournament, former Seattle Mariners Jay Buhner, John Olerud, and Dan Wilson joined the military teams as celebrity golfers.

Tom Jaffa, USOPSA board chairman and president and CEO of The Jaffa Company, says that the former Mariners were eager to show their appreciation and to play with the military teams. "This event far exceeded our expectations on so many levels, and having Buhner, Olerud, and Wilson surprise our military teams was a great way to show how much we appreciate their service to our country," Jaffa says.

The tournament included an awards dinner and auction with sports newscaster Bill Swartz from 710 ESPN Seattle and News Talk 97.3 FM, and well-known Seattle comedian and auctioneer Rod Long. A trip to Acapulco, Mexico sold four-times over at \$6,000 for a total of \$24,000. This was the highest level of corporate support ever for the annual golf event with over 60 corporate and individual sponsors.

Highlights of the tournament included the flyover of a 1940's Grumman Avenger and an 18-gun salute, courtesy of the United States Marine Corps. Only a few Avengers remain out of over 10,000 used as strategic torpedo bombers during World War II. The most famous Avenger pilot is former President,



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George H.W. Bush. He was the youngest naval aviator at the time and was shot down on Sept. 2, 1944 over the Pacific island of Chichi Jima.

A flight in the Avenger and a framed photograph of the historic plane signed by President Bush sold as an auction item for more than \$2,000 and a second flight was sold to Bonnie Dunbar, former astronaut and president and CEO of the Museum of Flight in Seattle.

Dan Wilson added that it was an easy decision to support the USOPSA. "As a former Seattle Mariner, I know what it's like to be on the road and separated from my family. It's hard, but it doesn't come close to what our troops and their families experience during a deployment. It's a great sacrifice and they do it willingly and with honor," Wilson says.

Former Mariner teammate, Jay Buhner, says, "Supporting the USO Puget Sound Area is one small way to give back to those who sacrifice so much for our freedoms. The hundreds of volunteers are the ultimate gratitude team, and make sure that our military members and their families know that we are grateful for their service to our country."

Harrelson added that former Seattle Seahawk Mack Strong has agreed to serve as honorary chair for the 2011 USO Puget Sound Area golf tournament. "Mack is a true community leader and servant, and we're very excited to have him leading the charge for next year's tournament," Harrelson says.

Last year over 439,000 people were served through the USOPSA centers and programs – 54,000 more than in 2008 -- including 30,000 troops deployed from the region. This marks the second consecutive year that the nonprofit has set new records for service to the region's military community in the USOPSA's 44-year history. The USOPSA saw increases in the number of troop care packages, doubling to almost 17,000, and a 4,000 per month, on average, increase in servicemen and women utilizing the Sea-Tac and McChord USO Centers, Mobile Canteen, and Cyber Café on Whidbey Island.

Jaffa added that while troop deployments from the region may decline, "military families continue to travel 24/7, and caring for the home front will take center stage." "We have military members and their families experiencing multiple and extended deployments, and while troops are beginning to return from Iraq, efforts in Afghanistan continue to increase. As the needs have grown, so has the outpouring of support from our organization," Jaffa says.

In addition to troop care packages for deployments and homecoming celebrations, money raised from the golf tournament will be used to extend "Helping Hands" grants that target the needs of military families and support of the Wounded Warrior Battalion at Ft. Lewis' Madigan Hospital.

The USOPSA is a recipient of the 5-Star *Standards of Excellence*, the highest award given to USO centers. The award recognizes centers and operations that "exceed all standards," and places USOPSA among a select number of 135 USO centers serving the U.S. military around the world.

For more information on the USOPSA and the upcoming events, go to www.usopsa.org. The 2010 Red, White, and Blue USO Golf Tournament was made possible by the generous support of our sponsors:



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