

USO Puget Sound Area, American Airlines and Snowball Express.org Send Local Children and Spouses of Fallen Military Heroes on Holiday Adventure to Six Flags

Annual 'Snowball Express' flight departs Sea-Tac Airport on Friday, December 9, after a holiday celebration including entertainment, refreshments and a visit from Santa

SEATTLE, WA – December 7, 2011 – As thousands of local military personnel begin arriving home for the holidays from overseas deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, USO Puget Sound Area (USOPSA) and partners honor the children and spouses of our fallen military heroes through an annual holiday event called Snowball Express.

Snowball Express, a partnership between American Airlines, Snowball Express.org and USOPSA, sends military children (and spouses) who have lost a parent to active-duty military service on an all-expenses paid holiday vacation to Six Flags Amusement Park in Dallas, Texas from December 9 – 13, 2011. Military children and spouses from the Puget Sound region will meet up with families of fallen heroes from across the country in Dallas.

“USO Puget Sound Area is all about supporting our local military families and we are honored to play a role in Snowball Express,” said Don Leingang, USOPSA Executive Director and CDR, USN (Ret.). “Sending these children and spouses to Six Flags for the holidays may in some part help these families escape the pain of missing loved ones.”

When children start arriving at Sea-Tac Airport Gate A9 early Friday morning, they will be greeted by whimsical holiday décor including a large castle display, decorated holiday trees, and American Airlines employees and USOPSA volunteers dressed as elves. A pre-flight celebration includes a ballerina performing a portion of The Nutcracker Suite, refreshments and gifts from Santa and Mrs. Claus, played by Don Leingang and his wife Misty.

“We are thrilled that we will once again be able to count on the support of the USO to assist us with our Snowball Express families,” said Susan Payne-Rao, Seattle Snowball Express Coordinator/American Airlines.

The USO Puget Sound Area now serves more than 500,000 local and traveling active-duty military, dependents, veterans and reservists annually across all five service branches and throughout the Pacific Northwest.

To schedule interviews (press only), please contact:

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About USO Puget Sound Area

For nearly 45 years, the USO Puget Sound Area has provided 'all the comforts of home' to our brave military personnel and their families, via the USOPSA centers at Sea-Tac Airport and Joint Base Lewis-McChord, the USO Mobile Canteen, special events, and deployments and homecomings at military installations throughout the Puget Sound region. The USO Puget Sound Area is a private, non-profit organization, and a chartered center of USO Headquarters in Washington, D.C., not a government agency. We rely on the generosity of our volunteers and donors. We are also supported through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC-15348).

For more information on how to volunteer, or to make a tax-deductible contribution to the USO Puget Sound Area, please visit us online at: <http://www.usopsa.org>. Show your support for our military and follow USOPSA on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#).