



PUGET SOUND AREA

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CONTACT: Carrie Shaw

(425) 344-1787

carrie@VIEcommunication.com

USO Awards Puget Sound Area Highest Honor

SEATTLE – The USO Puget Sound Area (USOPSA) is the proud recipient of a 5-Star *Standards of Excellence* rating, the highest award given to USO centers. The award recognizes centers and operations that “exceed all standards,” and places the USOPSA among a select number of 135 USO centers serving troops around the world.

“The accomplishments of the Puget Sound Area USO are tremendous and I congratulate them on reaching such a high standard of excellence. They exemplify the true heart of our organization, supporting America’s service members by delivering to them the comforts of home whenever they are needed,” said USO president Sloan Gibson.

“This award represents the gold standard for non-profit organizations and I am extremely proud of our staff and volunteers who work with such dedication, making this achievement possible,” said Tom Jaffa, USOPSA board chairman, and president and CEO of The Jaffa Company.

“Our staff and volunteers give their best efforts from the heart each and every day, and they believe our military members and their families deserve no less than the very best in the services and gratitude we offer,” said USOPSA executive director, Commander Don Leingang, US Navy (ret.). “We continue to see needs grow in the community, and while our volunteers made heroic efforts over the past year, more of our service members and their families are being called to greater levels of sacrifice throughout the region. Our mission is to guarantee that each one of them knows how grateful we are for their service.”

The regional service centers include Sea-Tac USO Center, McChord USO Center and the USO Mobile Canteen. The Sea-Tac Airport became a safe haven when the worst storm in more than 12 years hit the region, stranding thousands of holiday travelers. Despite the bad weather, Sea-Tac Center volunteers braved the snow and cold to keep the center open on its 24-hour schedule, seven days a week, feeding more than 250 military members and their families during the weather crisis.

Other notable USOPSA accomplishments in 2008 include a toy drive sponsored by KIRO-TV and Quiznos for the “Marine Corps Toys for Tots” program, an American Airlines sponsored trip to Disneyland for family members of fallen service heroes, holiday meals for 636 military families, and giving \$2,500 in Helping Hands grants.

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All USO centers must undergo a rigorous review of their operations and services, volunteer program and community outreach every three years in order to be in proper standing. Chartered USO centers must maintain at least a 3-Star rating to guarantee their charter status. Many auditors agree that a 5-Star rating is difficult to achieve, thus making the USOPSA achievement even more significant. The USOPSA served more than 154,000 members of the military in 2007. Affectionately called their “army of gratitude,” 250 volunteers logged more than 25,000 service hours, providing around-the-clock services and support at USOPSA centers and special programs throughout the Puget Sound region.

For more information on the USOPSA, please visit www.usopsa.org.

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About the USO Puget Sound Area: *Nationally recognized, the USO Puget Sound Area has served more than 3 million of America’s men and women in uniform and their families for over 40 years. The mission of USO Puget Sound Area is to provide a “home away from home,” family support, and recreation opportunities to the members and families of our Armed Forces. We connect individuals, civic groups and businesses with the region’s military community.*

About the USO: *The USO (United Service Organizations) provides morale, welfare and recreational services to U.S. military personnel and their families. The USO is a nonprofit, charitable organization, relying on the generosity of the American people to support its programs and services. The USO is supported by Worldwide Strategic Partners AT&T Inc., BAE Systems, Blackwater Worldwide, Booz Allen Hamilton, Clear Channel Communications, The Coca-Cola Company, Gallery Furniture, S & K Sales Co. and TriWest Healthcare Alliance. Other corporate donors, including the United Way and Combined Federal Campaign (CFC-11381), have joined thousands of individual donors to support the USO. For more information, please visit our Web site at www.uso.org.*