



Because of *Friends* Like You

Message From the President, Rocco Bagala

The past three years have been challenging for everyone. I took over the presidency in January 2021, looking to build on the incredible work of our previous president, Roxane Rusch. Unexpectedly, the world became immobilized due to COVID-19. The pandemic caused considerable disruptions in our personal lives and in the way we carry out business, including the Fisher Houses. It is with gratitude that I express my sincere thanks to you, our donors, for not losing sight of our shared values and mission to ease the burden of Military and Veteran families while their loved ones receive necessary medical care. We are grateful for your partnership; for bringing us through this unprecedented time. During the past few years, your generosity has supported: electronic guest check-in optimization & security, bathroom renovations, furnishings, equipment, playground repairs and upgrades, a gazebo & garden area, and other operational costs to provide restoration and healing for families. I am proud to serve as president for this organization and look forward to supporting and expanding services. Thank you for creating a 'home away from home.' Your contributions make a profound impact and are deeply appreciated.

Honoring Roxane Rusch, Recognition of Leadership

Friends of Fisher House Puget Sound has been fortunate to have noteworthy presidents leading our organization. Roxane Rusch stands out among them. Roxane has advanced this organization more than any other president, ensuring that Military and Veteran families find "peace, respite, and a place for the entire family to heal together." During her tenure as president of the Friends of the Fisher House Puget Sound, Roxane led us from being responsible for one Fisher House to supporting four Fisher Houses in the beautiful Pacific Northwest. Her untiring leadership increased awareness, generated new sponsorships, and established priorities to direct your donation dollars to support deserving families. Roxane created board policies, by-laws, and recruited new board members. Her cyclical audit to ensure fiduciary responsibility increased the organization's level in the GuideStar Seal of Transparency from Bronze to Silver. Additionally, Roxane understood and valued the importance of developing a social media presence. This was evident in her redesign of the web page and newsletter to keep donors and family members informed of our progress, and to increase the visibility of our organization. A Military retiree, Veteran and VA employee, Roxane's dedication, and leadership to the mission of the Friends of the Fisher House Puget Sound has been inspirational to all who have had the privilege to work alongside her. Roxane is greatly missed but her heart and passion for serving others is always with us. Now retired, Roxane is busy enjoying life. Roxane shares, "There is always a show, concert, or event to attend; many new friends; a passion for pickleball; and working with the Foundation Assisting Seniors." We wish her the best in all her future endeavors.

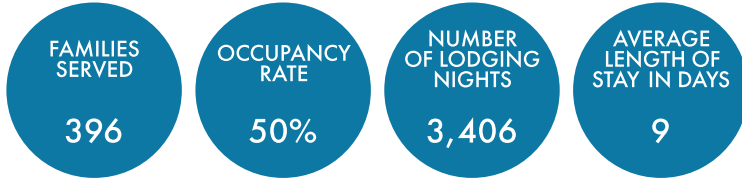


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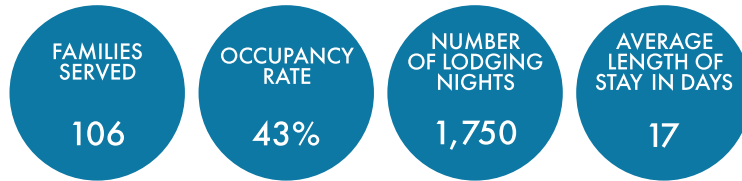
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Because of Friends Like You Donor Impact 2022

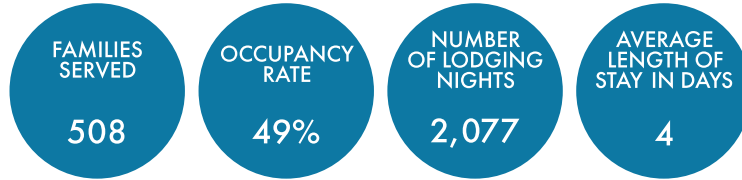
SEATTLE



JBLM



PORTLAND



Friends of Fisher House Puget Sound

Our priorities for guest programs and services:

- Provide the simple assurance of knowing what is for dinner with: well-stocked kitchen for everyday, groceries for holidays & special events
- Provide basic comforts of home: personal bedroom & bathroom, supplies
 - Provide clean, safe, healing indoor and outdoor spaces
- Assure access to transportation to accompany hospitalized loved ones
- Assure access to technology similar to home: internet, satellite TV, computer
- Provide a sense of camaraderie, family, and normalcy; compassionate care

Friends of Fisher House Puget Sound

Our mission is to ease the burden on our active Military, Veterans, and their families during difficult times. As a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization registered in Washington State, the Friends work to raise funds and awareness in support of the Fisher Houses in the Puget Sound region.

We are grateful for your partnership with us!

Charity Navigator 100%

GuideStar Silver



-Charity Navigator, a charity assessment organization has certified Friends of Fisher House Puget Sound highly impactful with a perfect score of 100% in the following categories: fiscal responsibility, financial efficiency, sustainability, trustworthiness, and best practices for accountability and transparency.

-GuideStar is a public charity that collects, organizes and presents information on non-profits. Friends of Fisher House Puget Sound has earned a 'Silver Star' for its mission, legitimacy, impact, reputation, finances, programs, transparency, and governance.

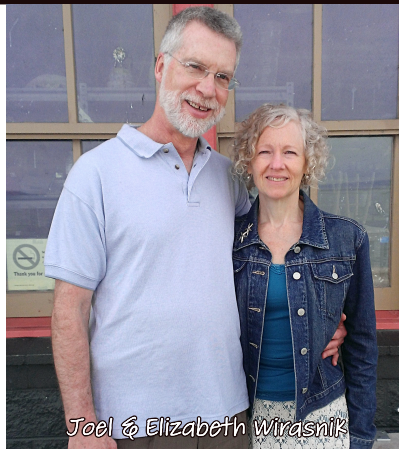


Because a family's love is good medicine.

Board of Directors

- Rocco Bagala - President
- Rod Skaar - Vice President
- John Park - Treasurer
- Joel Wirasnik - Secretary
- Gail Eck - Director

Elizabeth, newsletter & graphic art



Joel & Elizabeth Wirasnik's

Who's New: Elizabeth Wirasnik

I am delighted to support the Friends of Fisher House Puget Sound. With experience as an educator and administrator in public & private schools, work in ministry, and completion of a chaplaincy program at the VA Puget Sound Health Care System hospital, I am committed to making a positive impact in the lives of military families and caregivers. My favorite part of serving these families is listening to their life stories and being a source of comfort. As a caregiver myself, I understand the heartache and practical concerns families face while caring for a loved one who is managing illness. It is a privilege to be a member of this incredible team.



Puget Sound Health Care System
Fisher House Seattle

Meet our Amazing Managers

PSHCS Mgr. Mark Debenport

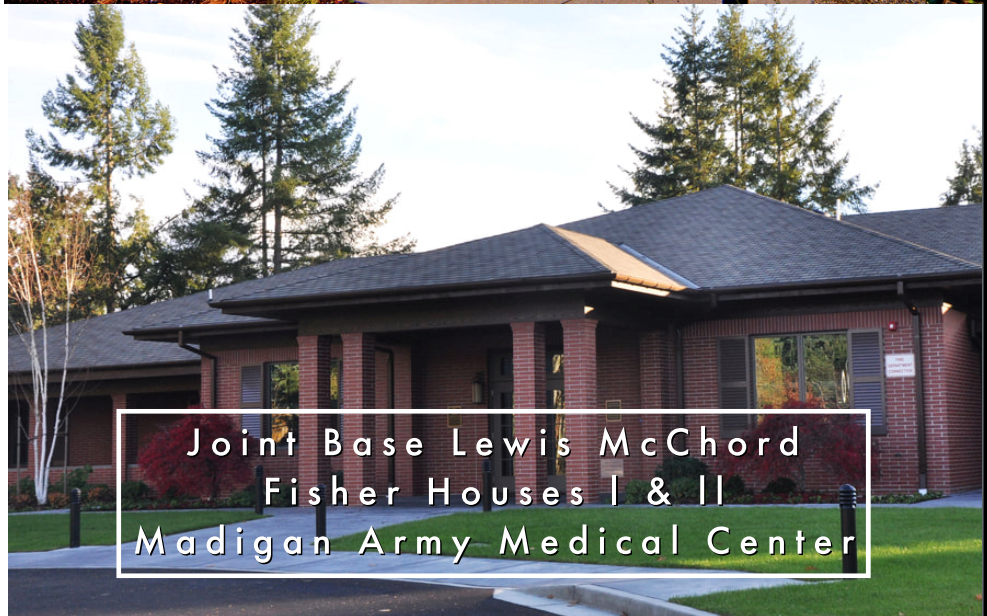


"I enjoy speaking with Veterans and their families about their military experiences and places they have lived around the world."

PSHCS Asst. Mgr. Glen Boje



"I appreciate the chance to reciprocate and gift back the incredible acts of kindness I received."



Joint Base Lewis McChord
Fisher Houses I & II
Madigan Army Medical Center

JBLM Bus Mgr. Vattana Garcia



"This position is much more than a job. I am committed to providing compassionate support for our military families."

JBLM Ops. Asst. Rachael Waters



"I enjoy working in an environment that gives back to the community. The JBLM Army Fisher House is a wonderful fit."

JBLM Ops. Asst. Letauaeletise Hunkin



"As a representative of the JBLM Army Fisher House, I look forward to aiding our military body during times of need and fostering connections with folks as they come to stay."



Portland VA Health Care System
Fisher House Vancouver Division

VA Portland Asst. Mgr. Dawn L. Schultz

Read about what our guests have to say...

"The Fisher House is such a great place to stay when you have to be away from home, while our Veterans receive the services they need. The staff here are amazing, helpful & thorough. If you need help, don't hesitate to ask, they are so very kind & caring. Everything was provided for us: food, bedroom, bathroom, and kitchen. Thank you all so much. We will always be grateful."

To read more about our incredible Fisher House teams, visit our webpage at: www.fisherhousevaps.org



Congratulations

Love blooms at the Fisher House



Gingerbread House Party



Our Children's Garden, a joyful, place to rest

Thank you so much for allowing us to stay here. This has been a haven of rest, home away from home; a place to rest and relax after a stressful day; a place to fix food we enjoy and lay our heads down and rest. Thank you, God Bless you.



Mark and Glen by day, the 'Dynamic Duo' by night!

I came to you broken. I had so much unknown ahead of me, but my main concern was "how my family would be if sideways." The Fisher House staff let me worry go away. The care of myself and stopped to give me comfort. Just knowing, if things went sideways that family would have her new load your staff took off my shoulders.

The property was immaculate! The amenities were over the top! All of the Fisher House staff were kind, caring, and professional. Everyone we encountered was friendly and helpful. Thank you all for the phenomenal job you do taking care of our Veterans!



My name is Maria. I came to Fisher House due to my daughter Briana, this young lady is one brave soldier, she is the light that never goes out, a force to reckon with. ♡

Briana is a daughter every mother would wish for and even call her my daughter. She is in the Air Force and has some obstacles in her way now and it's not stopping her from being the cheerful, witty and has the biggest smile she always has.

Fisher House has given a place to lay our heads time at stress, our stay amazing, the staff is as the atmosphere was be

match over Briana
Thank you

Thankful for the Fisher House. November 2022

Flw from Texas not knowing where we were going to stay. All here for our son. Didn't have to stress on where to stay or what to stress. Our son had all of our attention so nice from the hospital crew to the Fisher House staff. We have been so blessed. Our son has had major improvements and he's off to rehab after almost three weeks at hospital. Again... thank you... thank you.

01-03-23

Hello (Again)

The (Antoine) family would like to thank each and everyone here that made our stay enjoyable, meaningful and worry-free. Our first time here was wonderful and this time again was great.

Our reason for being here was because of our daughter (Briana) being diagnose with stage 2 lung cancer. Now that we are back it was for better news she "ring-the-bell". That was the most wonderful news.

We will forever be grateful Thank You for welcoming us into the "Fisher House". There is no words that can say how much we appreciate the staff. Thank You All The Antoine family ♡



Marianne's Garden at Puget Sound Health Care System



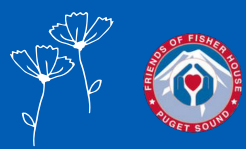
THANK YOU FOR MAKING LIFE BETTER ♡ -Jo (Zoe)

At one of the hardest times in our lives they have given us a place to call home, a place to rest our heads after a long day and have care above and beyond. I know people say this but I truly believe the staff are angels on earth. Without their help we wouldn't have made it through this Christmas.



'Dancing with our Heroes'

We will always be grateful





DEEPLY GRATEFUL FOR ALL OF YOU



The tears fall, as Roxane Ramos-Suarez shares her family's powerful story. Roxane is Riccardo Ramos-Suarez's mother and caregiver. Riccardo, Petty Officer 3rd Class (MA3), is stationed at Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor in Washington. He is currently assigned to the Marine Corps Security Forces Battalion. Riccardo's commitment to serve others is a testament to his selflessness and character. Roxane has graciously allowed Friends of Fisher House Puget Sound to share their story, and for that, we are honored and grateful.

To read Roxane & Riccardo's full story, visit our webpage at: www.fisherhousevaps.org Houses, Family Profiles



A first responder at heart, Riccardo's motivation to serve is simple: "It's the right thing to do."



Riccardo lives out the values taught by his father. Life, liberty, justice, and leading a life of service to others. At 13 years young, Riccardo began his official training with the Peekskill Volunteer Fire Department. As a trainee, he practiced firefighting techniques, communication, first aid, maintaining gear, drills, and responding to emergency calls. Riccardo excelled. While working towards his dream of becoming a firefighter, he also trained to work as a certified Emergency Medical Technician. In 2018, a senior in high school, Riccardo was sworn in as a Peekskill City Volunteer Firefighter.

A first responder at heart, Riccardo wanted to do more. In 2019, he followed in the footsteps of five generations of the Ramos-Suarez family members who had served in various branches of the military: Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, and Navy. Riccardo enlisted with the United States Navy, in honor of his father, brother, and uncle. Riccardo's motivation to serve is simple: "It's the right thing to do."



Petty Officer Riccardo, San Antonio, Texas

On January 19, 2023, Riccardo's mother, Roxane, received a phone call at 2:30am that changed their lives. "There has been a terrible accident." While on patrol, Riccardo and two other Navy responders were injured when the vessel sank at Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor.

Roxane shares, "When you hear those words, your whole life changes." She responded the way any Ramos-Suarez family member would, "I am 3000 miles away, but I'm on my way." Roxane did not even consider that she had nowhere to stay once she arrived.

Roxane describes feeling exhausted, overwhelmed, and homeless while caring for Riccardo around the clock. Kelly Fulks, "A true blessing," from Navy Wounded Warrior Bremerton visited Riccardo and arranged for Roxane to stay at the Joint Base Lewis McCord Fisher House.

Arriving at Fisher House, Roxane felt peaceful for the first time since she received the call. "The stay at Fisher House continues to be nothing short of miraculous. All of our needs are taken care of before we ask: food, bedroom, bathroom, kitchen, supplies, everything. You can always find someone to talk to and listen for support.

We don't pay for anything. There is absolutely no cost to us. I am in awe of the tremendous generosity of this organization. Nothing else matters to me except caring for my son. The provision brings peace and the opportunity for me to focus on my Riccardo. Even in the pain, and the hurting, the future uncertain, I know we'll make it."

What's next for Riccardo?

Riccardo has several months of recovery ahead of him. For now, he will take each day as it comes. "Having a close call with death changes a person." Riccardo's gifts of service and commitment to others remain steadfast. In closing, Riccardo, true to himself, insists, "Mom, we have to do something. We have to stay close to Fisher House."

Roxane echoes his sentiments and plans to volunteer for anything Fisher House or Friends of Fisher House needs. "I can never repay you enough for taking care of mi familia."



"A proud moment, Charles is with us."

To read Roxane & Riccardo's full story, visit our webpage at: www.fisherhousevaps.org Houses, Family Profiles Interview & writing by Elizabeth Wirasnik

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98118

FRIENDS OF FISHER HOUSE PUGET SOUND

Friends of Fisher House Puget Sound – “Because a Family’s Love is Good Medicine”



Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Enclosed is my donation for \$ _____

Please make checks payable to: Friends of Fisher House Puget Sound

This gift is in honor of:

This gift is in memory of: _____

This gift is anonymous. Please do not list my name in any published texts.

I was a guest of Fisher House (VA) (JBLM).

I would like to make a recurring gift using a VISA or MASTERCARD.

If you would like us to notify someone that you have made an honorary or memorial gift, please provide the name(s) and address(es) so we can send them a note:

Please call me at _____

Please mail checks to Friends of Fisher House Puget Sound, PO Box 18253, Seattle, Washington 98118.

You may also give online. Visit www.fisherhousevaps.org and click on the “Donate” button.

