



Because of *Friends* like You

The Citizen Soldier Sacrifices Made, Promises Kept

When most of us hear the word 'reserve', we think about something held back or saved for future use or special purpose, like a rainy day savings account. For others, the word may conjure up thoughts of a relief hitter or theatrical understudy. But all Americans relate to the 'reserve' concept during national emergencies and military contingencies where 'reserve' represents our ability to respond with expanded capacity during times of need. Enter the thousands of military reservists who serve all over the world. While some might describe the life of a military reservist as part-time, the truth is that being a reservist is often difficult and challenging. As members of a military reserve force, reservists are citizen-soldiers who train part time, close to home, until needed, typically maintaining civilian jobs during the work week. Often caught between competing priorities, they balance civilian work, family life, and the stresses of being mentally fit and physically prepared to be called to perform to the same standards as their active duty counterparts at a moment's notice. Yet, they willingly volunteer countless hours of their lives to prepare to serve if needed, to deploy, and to provide military units that are not in the active military. Their sacrifice often goes unnoticed as they perform training drills on weekends and days off, missing important life events and significant milestones.

But the story of 'Reserve Strength' continues even after members hang up the uniform. "The Reserve Officers Association (ROA) of the United States (ROA.org) serves as America's Advocate for all military services, chartered under President Truman to lobby Congress in military matters. The Department of Washington is part of the National Organization and includes Washington, Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and Wyoming, to recognize their distinguished service", says retired LTC Chad Stoddard, Department Past President and current Secretary/

Treasurer. Leadership on behalf of Veteran causes seems to run in the family. Wife Barbara, of the Evergreen Club and a retired Master Sergeant, explains that the Washington based club is one of many Reserve Officer Association Leagues (ROAL) supporting families of ROA members! "We believe strongly in missions that support our Veterans and their families" she reflects. We support causes like Fisher House and the USO." Retired Col. James Sisco, President of the ROA Chapter of Snohomish County, says his organization advocates for and supports the families of Fisher House to help relieve their burden and stress. Our Association puts "Family above all else – that is why we feel so strongly about our support of Fisher House and other charities that advocate for our military families and children. We try to remove their uncertainty and put them on a solid path." ROA members

continue their work through other organizations in addition to Fisher House like the Hero's Café in Lynnwood. "It's a gathering place for veterans to come and have camaraderie and friendship, to meet new people and share stories".

Today, thanks to the efforts and dedication of thousands of American Citizen Warriors, Reservists and National Guard members hold their heads high, knowing that they served their country proudly and honorably as they stood always ready to protect this Republic. And they continue that service in communities throughout our region today and always!



Fulfilling a Fallen Hero's Wish

Finding Purpose After The Death of a Loved One

Richard "Ric" served in the Army in the Vietnam War. During his life, he was an accomplished carpenter, mechanic, farmer, equipment operator, and ditchwalker. Richard "Ric" passed away just before Christmas after a long battle with leukemia. Hailing from Port Angeles, WA, he and his wife of 48 years, Ethel, were frequent guests at the VA hospital and Fisher House in Seattle. According to his family, "Ric loved woodworking, enjoyed nature and the outdoors and was always fixing or building something. We will all miss him; a good natured, talented man who was an amazing dad, brother and friend. He will live on in the hearts of all who knew and loved him".

Ethel recalls the wonderful and richly complex life she and Ric shared together culminating in a long struggle with his cancer battle. "Numerous infections and a Clinical Trial during the past three years resulted in several hospitalizations, twice in ICU" she recalls. Most recently he underwent a stem cell transplant requiring a lot of appointments and a strict regime of medications-up to six times per day. As a wife and caregiver, this becomes your life. "We basically had to live by the calendar and a clock with our life revolving around his care. After the loss of my husband, my calendar was clear...a strange emptiness with no schedules and appointments."

The loss of someone with whom you have shared a deep emotional connection and supportive relationship often can cause an intense grief reaction. When someone who has held you up in good times and bad, shaped your sense of self, and someone you have deeply loved is now physically removed forever, a person might feel as though they have lost their sense of self or life purpose.

And while professionals tell us that we should not expect our grief to ever end completely, it is possible for us to allow grief to become more integrated so that we are no longer disabled and set adrift in its midst. While each human grief process is unique, mental health professionals tell us success on this path means not only accepting the reality of our loved one's death, but finding new purpose in our life. If you recently experienced the death of a loved



We recognize all the brave members of the Fisher House Family who carry on with purpose after the loss of their Fallen Hero!

Friends of Fisher House Puget Sound

Our mission is to ease the burden on our 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!

Officers

Roxane Rusch, President
John Park, Treasurer
Rocco Bagala Secretary

Directors

Gail Eck, Director
Jan Torell, Director
Joel Wirasnik, Director
Rod Skaar, Director

Garden Advisor

Phyllis Grant

Newsletter Designer

Jonathan Hooley

Find us on Facebook

facebook

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Citizen Soldier	1
Fallen Hero's Wish	2
The 'Why' of a House Manager	3
Power of Volunteerism	6
Hail & Farewell	7

one, you may feel grateful just to have survived the first holiday season without them. Focusing on goals and aspirations while your grief still feels so present may seem paradoxical - but doing so, experts say, is an essential part of grief work.

Ethel and her family, like many among our Fisher House 'Family' who have lost loved ones, understand the importance of this process. Described by the Fisher House team that came to know her over the course of many stays as selfless, strong, and positive, Ethel is resisting the crippling effects of loneliness with purpose. "I come from a farm background where the circle of life plays out daily - birth and death are all part of life". She has taken on the mission to fulfill her husband's wish of supporting healthcare hospitality programs like Fisher House and North Olympic Regional Veterans Housing Network. When she recently visited the Fisher House to say hello, she brought gifts of walnuts and frozen apple cider - both produced from their orchard.

House manager Carrie Booker describes Ethel as "one of those guests that made the Fisher House a true home. She is sweet and welcoming to everyone and has been here so much she knows where everything is and how it all happens - such a comfort to others. We are moved that Fisher House is included in the healthcare hospitality programs Ethel and her family are supporting." For her part, Ethel calls Fisher House her "haven of comfort and emotional support during the long days and months of caring. I am forever grateful."

We battle many different things as we get older. Especially as a widow, a person battles the loneliness of losing a spouse. But if we're not careful, what we've lost in life can define us. Ethel teaches us that it is so much better to be defined by what we still have, it's just healthier. We have to



make new memories while keeping our connection to the old ones. So for now, the worn Stars and Stripes of Old Glory can rest assured that a Hero's wish is being fulfilled with courage and grace under the Red, White and Blue- just like Ric intended!

This Memorial Day, We HONOR and REMEMBER All Our Fallen Heroes

Fisher House Team Spotlight

We would like to welcome Kelly Konikow, Acting House Manager of the Vancouver-based Fisher House. She adeptly describes her role so eloquently. "I am blessed to have this role at the Fisher House. So many people and organizations are generous with their donations and time. Our guests are so appreciative of what is shared. What is provided here goes beyond lodging. These guests receive support from staff as well as other guests. We want to do whatever we can to make them feel at home, safe within our care, knowing that we

strive to assist with their needs, and to give them some respite from the reason they are here. Each of you have a part in that gift to our guests. Thank you so much for your support."

Kelly is joined by the talents of Dawn Schultz, Assistant Manager, and the program support of Jodi Fine and Michele Swanson. Dawn adds a 'thanks' to Friends, "Your generosity has allowed us to support our guests and house at a whole new level. Cupboards/refrigerators are always full. Transportation and

meals are readily available and consistently used. It is because of your generosity that we can provide such services above; beyond our guest's expectations. It is what truly makes Fisher House feel like a home and our guests/volunteers' part of the family". Jodi and Michele emphasize the rich reward of working on the Fisher House team with words like supportive, positive, healing, camaraderie, and gratitude.

Perfectly stated TEAM! And Welcome Kelly!

The Why of a House Manager

Holding Families Hearts in their Hands



We caught up with Fisher House Managers from across the country who gathered this spring to compare notes, share stories, and learn about best practices. They were warmly greeted by the inspirational leadership of Coach Lou Holtz as their 'keynoter', as he cleverly shared his take on the keys to a successful and fulfilling life. "The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you discover WHY you were born" he boldly establishes. "There will be one thing that will dominate your life...I strongly suggest it be something you can be proud of" he adds with certainty. Reflecting on the many hats worn by a Fisher House Manager in the backdrop of Coach Holtz's words gives us a bit of insight into their WHY!

#1 "Do What is Right"

"First do what is right, do it with the proper attitude, and make good decisions. Handle problems head on, lead by example, embrace change, and hold yourself and others accountable" he states. "But if what you did yesterday seems big, you haven't done anything today!" he challenges.

Parallels to the Fisher House Manager are hard to ignore. Daily, the Fisher House Managers make

thousands of decisions that impact the emotional and physical safety, wellbeing, and comfort of Military and Veteran families supporting their loved ones during difficult times. They often operate within bureaucratic complexity to make the impossible happen as they advocate in the best interest of

their guests. They assemble the right resources, negotiate programs and services to meet the ever-changing needs of diverse families, and make snap judgments during periods of crisis and urgent need.

#2 "Do the Best You Can"

Secondly, he advises us to "do the very best you can and be the very best you can be with teamwork, having goals and people in the right roles, and don't be afraid to make changes needed to satisfy your mission even if it involves getting people out of their comfort zone. It's not the load that breaks you down, it's the way you carry it."

With intense passion, Fisher House Managers often work through the complexities of creating a Home Away from Home for guests – guests united by their love for their active duty military or Veteran family member. With many hats, Managers work tirelessly behind the scenes to coordinate meals and restock the house with fresh food and other essentials. They address landscaping needs to create a healing oasis for guests. They manage community relationships and local contracts with savvy and diplomacy. They think

outside the box to create innovative programs that support and provide needed distraction for the often stressed caretakers. They manage transportation in often challenging urban settings. They coordinate in and among health care workers to integrate care and strengthen the voice of the exhausted families.

#3 "Show People You Care"

Third he cautions, "Get to know people, hear about their background, don't pass judgment". Show people that they can trust you, that you are committed to excellence and, above all, that you care about them".

The House Managers not only create a Home Away from Home but make people feel at home and part of a larger family. They think with both their head and their hearts! They ride the emotional rollercoaster of turbulence caused by acute life disruption right along with the families. If you have experienced a loved one in the hospital for an extended period of time, you know it is not unusual for family members to spend the entire day – and most of the night - at their loved one's bedside. "After a long day at the hospital, it is nice to have a place to come back to, where you can prepare a home cooked meal, change clothes, rest...and perhaps comfort –or be comforted by staff and by other families who are experiencing similar challenges." Guest testimonials like these speak volumes. "She took the time to listen to me and let me unload on a strong shoulder and helped me get my bearings back to the floor my husband was on, with kindness and love". "There are arms of comfort, understanding and love wrapped around me when I enter Fisher House". "The feeling of love, help, and peace is here that brings tears to my eyes

when I think how blessed we are to be able to stay here". "When I got bad news and needed to stay for another week, they were right there to support and encourage me". "She kept us sane while going through troubling times". "Without your services, my Dad would have been here alone- we will never forget your kindness".

Coach Holtz closes with a sincere prompt, "always have four things in life- something to do, something to hope for, someone to love, and something to believe in!" For the

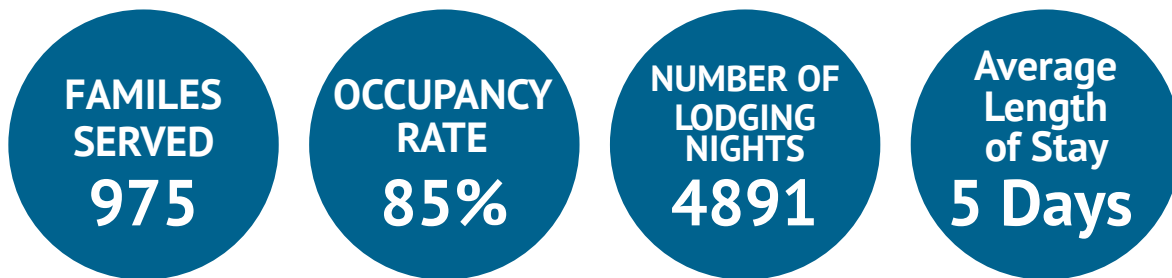
House Managers of Fisher House it is obvious that they have one thing in common, they approach the world and their families at Fisher House with their whole heart. They live the motto "A family's love is good medicine" as they provide a loving

environment that helps 'fill that prescription'. Sounds like a play right out of the playbook of Coach Holtz!

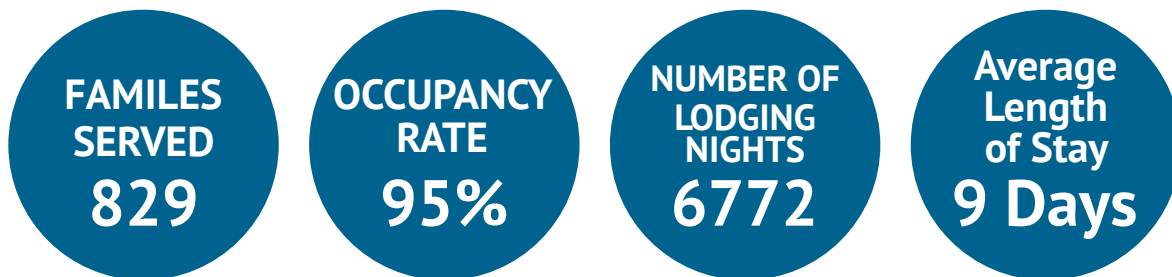
Photo Right: Carrying Guest's Heart in Their Hands are Left to Right Kelly Kuknow, Vancouver Fisher House Manager, Ken Fisher (Fisher House Foundation CEO), Pamela Barrington, JBML House Manager, and Carrie Booker, Puget Sound House Manager



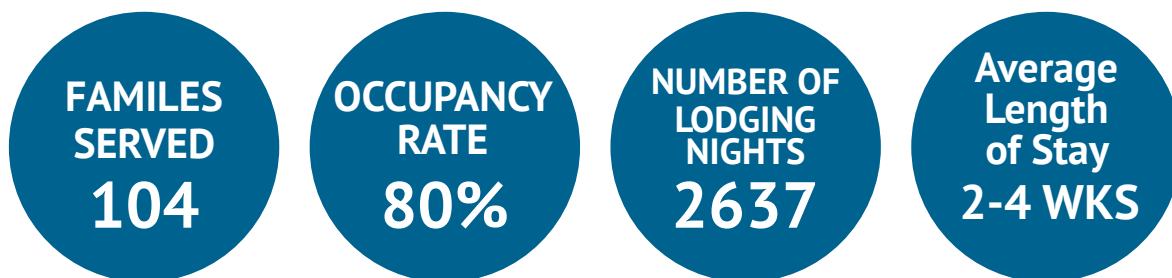
PORTLAND



PUGET SOUND



JBLM



YOUR DONOR IMPACT IN 2018

The Power of Volunteerism

The Happiness-Helping Connection

It is often said that volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart. Volunteerism at its core is a basic expression of human relationships. It is about people's need to participate in their communities and to feel that they matter to others. The ethos of volunteerism is infused with values of community connection, mutual trust and belonging all of which contribute significantly to happiness.

One such Act of Service in the Fisher House Family was recently recognized as Christopher Scott of Salt Lake City accepted the Fisher House National Volunteer of the Year Award. First saluting his loving partner Dolores or "D", he tells the 7 year story of their joint endeavor to cook a community meal at Fisher House. "I will tell you just like any other family, sometimes we quarrel, we have our ups and downs. Sometimes when we come to the Fisher House, we bring all the emotions of the day with us. We call Friday night once a month 'date night'. Some nights are better than others. Some nights we talk to each other and we laugh and giggle as we're cooking and are having a great time and sometimes we're just helping put everything together and I'm talking to other Veterans and she talking to other families. By the end of the night no matter what, just like every other family, we come together and are holding hands, and we enjoy what we do together. It means so much to both of us to continue this journey together".

He is quick to credit Quinn KigerGood as an amazing house manager and friend who helped set the schedule for their dinners. Chris and 'D' donate all the food and labor of love, reassured by seeing the immediate impact of their generosity.

But Research tells us that the full power of volunteering is really about

the emotional boost one gets from giving to others. There is evidence that spending time helping others can make a significant difference in our happiness. The experience makes us a better people. Chris affirms that "some of the most unique times at the Fisher House that we've had are talking with our Veterans and their families.



From Left to Right: Ken Fisher, Wife Tammy, Christopher Scott, Quinn KigerGood, and Dolores Scott

He recalls one dinners-it was a great day and we were cooking and laughing with one family while we were cutting up vegetables. Then we ate dinner with them and had a great conversation. As we got towards the end of the meal, the Veteran's spouse looked at us both asking the Veteran, "Did you tell him?" He responded, "Why are you bringing that up?" She repeated, "Did you tell him?" He said I really don't want to do that. She said you need to tell him. He solemnly looked at me and told me he had bladder cancer and that he had probably only 3 months to live. I remember telling him how sorry I was, and the lesson I learned as I left dinner that night. Here's a Veteran who sat with me and my wife, who laughed and was so positive, and so overwhelmingly loving and caring and not once did he allude to the fact that his days were numbered. That's a lesson I will never forget about

how we (Fisher House) hold people's hands. We help them through, it's an honor to help them through this life and be a part of their life."

Chris goes on to recall countless other stories, including the story of a young Veteran, who after a prolonged illness, succumbed to respiratory disease. "One day, I showed up to find the Veteran's spouse in tears. Panicked, she wrapped her arms around me and began to cry. She told me that her husband passed away and now what was she going to do? As I comforted her, we began to walk around the hospital. She looked at me and said, "Chris I just want to go home". I said, "I know, I know, but your home is about 3 hours away". She looked back at me and said 'no Chris I want to go back to the Fisher House, that's my home'.

Chris says stories like this are his driving force all these years. "I will tell you that for me, the most important thing in life is the people who hold your hand when you come into this world, those who hold your hand as you go through this world, and those who hold your hand as you leave this world.

At the Fisher House, we may not hold their hands at the beginning of life, but we certainly hold the hands of Military and Veteran families as they go through life in some of the worst times that you can imagine.

Chris accepts his award in the backdrop of the Fisher House logo. "Two hands -around a heart -around a house. How Fitting!

We are proud to recognize Christopher and all the Volunteers who proudly serve our Military and Veteran Members and their Deserving Families.

Hail

Rod Skaar Returns Home

We are so proud to announce the appointment of Rod Skaar to the Friends of Fisher House Puget Sound board. As a founding member of Friends, he recalls his previous leadership role on the Fisher House board with affection.

“When news first came out that the Seattle VA hospital was designated to receive a Fisher House, a small group came together to help raise money for the project. It quickly became apparent that the best way to do this was to form a new 501(c)(3). With the help of a number of people, we formed a new non-profit and I became the first President of the newly formed organization. Ground-breaking was in 2007 and the house opened the next year. Like any new organization, there were growing pains and we worked through a number of issues in order to ensure our support of the Seattle Fisher House and the national organization as well. After two years as board president, new officers were



elected and I moved on to other challenges.”

“This January, I was reunited with the board while spending part of a Saturday putting away holiday decorations at the Fisher House. One conversation led to another and now about 10 years later, I have rejoined the Board of Directors.”

“I have always believed in service as a value and in the mission of the Fisher House. The people served by the Fisher House have one thing in common - they and their families have sacrificed in service to their country. As a twenty year veteran of the Air Force and Air National Guard, I have a keen awareness of how significant that sacrifice can be. While I have been retired from the armed forces for 20 years now, the opportunity to help others in difficult times is my form of continued service. And, I can't think of a better group of people to serve than Veterans and their families!”

Welcome on Board Rod!

Farewell

Holly Krejci

After almost ten years serving in one way or another with Friends, Holly Krejci is moving on.

Holly started with Friends in 2009, when original Puget Sound House founders Zack Hudgins and Pat Norikane Logerwell hired her part-time to tackle administrative tasks for the Board.

As she notes, “It's been a decade of growth both for me and for Friends.”

Some of Holly's favorite moments: tiny hat day with Cecile and Lorraine; planting a camellia in the garden to honor my father's passing (he was a full bird in the Army); creating a Friends of Puget Sound logo in 2013;



decorating the Puget Sound House for Christmas; proofreading newsletters; and the many dedicated and caring people she has met along the way.

Holly has learned so much from Friends - especially the true meaning of service. And she leaves the Board knowing it's in a great place to continue for years to come.

We Wish Holly Much Success...thanks for the memories!

Friends of Fisher House Puget Sound

PO Box 18253

Seattle, Washington 98118

(206) 501 - 8860

Website: www.fisherhousevaps.org

Email: friends@fisherhousevaps.org

Non-Profit ORG

Postage Paid

Permit #3865

Seattle, WA

98118



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.

Please call me at _____

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



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:

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