

# Because of You

## Thank You for Being a Friend

The Friends of VA Puget Sound Fisher House was formed as a 501( c ) ( 3) in 2006. The Board of Directors have been hard at work since then to raise funds and awareness in support of the Fisher House. But that body of 10 individuals is just the tip of the iceberg. If you receive this newsletter it is because YOU are a friend of the VA Puget Sound Fisher House. The simple truth is that the vision of the Board would be just that—a vision—if it were not for the generosity that allows us to implement plans and programs for the House. YOU are the fuel to our fire, the means of our existence and the reason that the VA Puget Sound Fisher House is able to serve the Veteran and active duty families who come to stay. As we move forward through 2014, please know that every day we are grateful to you and every day your gifts are directly touching the lives of deserving families. From the Friends, and our guests, THANK YOU!



## New Year, Big Changes

Cecile Bagrow, Manager of the House since before its opening in 2008, has retired from the VA, after 35 years of government service. Cecile’s passion for the Fisher House program, her heart for Veterans and their families and her unbridled creativity were all instrumental in making this Fisher House the gold standard within the program. We will be forever grateful for the legacy she created. The hiring process for a new Manager is underway but until the perfect person is found we are fortunate to have Michelle Power as Acting Manager. Meet Michelle on page 4.

We are also pleased to report that our end-of-the-year giving in 2013 was the best ever. It put us in a solid position as the year began and allowed us to make plans for some long needed enhancements to the basic programs and services we provide for our guests. THANK YOU!

We have quite a roster of events planned for 2014. Check out the Save the Date(s) listing on page 3 and mark you calendars. We’d especially love to see you at the Birthday Open House on September 10. Knowing about the programs in the House is one thing; seeing it and feeling the peace inside the walls is something else again. We’d be thrilled to see you there!

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### By the Numbers

- Over 3,600 families served since 2008
- Over 32,000 guest nights
- We have served families from 46 states & 7 countries
- 15 buffalo steaks consumed at the Seahawk victory party
- Our youngest guest was 1 day old

## Friends of VA Puget Sound Fisher House

Our mission is to ease the burden on our Veterans and their families during difficult times. The Friends, a 501(c)(3) non-profit, work to raise funds and awareness in support of our local Fisher House. We are grateful for your partnership with us!

### Officers:

Pat Norikane Logerwell & Ellen Martin,  
Co-Presidents

Debbie Skow, Vice President

Chris Blackman, Treasurer

Cathy Dickson, Secretary

### Directors:

Melanie Kreizis

Holly Krejci

Ron Thomas

Mike Winkler

Lorraine Thomas, Development Director

## Volunteer Opportunities

Do you love to garden? This is the time of year when we love to have groups come help with our beautiful gardens. Lunch is provided. If you would like to help email Debbie at [d.sk.1159@gmail.com](mailto:d.sk.1159@gmail.com) or Sue at [suendave\\_163@comcast.net](mailto:suendave_163@comcast.net).

Calling all chefs! We are recruiting folks to prepare dinner for our guests on Easter Sunday (April 20), Thanksgiving (November 27) and Christmas Eve & Christmas Day. You plan and prepare the menu; we buy the groceries. Call the Manager if you would like to help at 206-277-3950.

We keep a supply of hand knitted or crocheted baby blankets for our youngest guests. Let us know if you'd like to contribute something warm and cuddly for our little ones.

## Board Talk

As a board member of the Friends of the VA Puget Sound Fisher House it is my pleasure to welcome you to the first edition of our newsletter for 2014. March speaks of Spring and renewal of life. We on the Board are very excited; we have many new and exciting activities planned to bring awareness to the community about Fisher House and the needs of our guests. For example, we will be having a Garden Party at the Edgewood Gardens in Lakewood, WA in September to introduce potential donors to our Fisher House. Our wine event at NW Cellars was such a huge success we are going to do it again this year! Make sure you check out the Save the Date(s) column for details and stay tuned for more information about events throughout the year.

Our gardens are springing alive with new growth, and of course weeds! We will be planting our vegetable gardens as soon as it warms up. It is a delicious way for our guests to enjoy the bounty of our gardens.

We are welcoming two new board members: Michael Winkler and Ron Thomas. They bring with them experiences which will enhance our board and our ability to continue to

meet the needs of our Veterans and their families.

As with all things in life, we've had our adjustments, too. We have had to bid a fond farewell to Cecile Bagrow, our first and only Fisher House Manager. She was the heart and soul of the House and will be missed by many. We wish her well in her future endeavors.

The Board encourages each of you to keep in touch with us. Please let us know what else we can do to improve how we provide services to our families. We look forward to sharing with you all that is occurring in our Fisher House over the next year. Thank you for your continued support...your donations and volunteer hours make what we do possible!

*Cathy  
Dickson,  
Board  
Secretary*



## Do Si Donors—Dudes & Dolls Square Dancers



Fisher Houses are always well supported by local organizations and service groups such as the VFW, DAR and church and civic groups. But we're pretty sure we're the only House that can count a square dancing club among their supporters! Since 2010 the members of the Dudes & Dolls Square Dancing Club in Lynnwood, Washington have been supporting Fisher House with dollars, desserts and dancing. Every monetary donation it is accompanied by plates of cookies and other treats for the guests. And while they don't dance every time they visit no one will forget the show they put on during the holiday season in 2012. (They even got our Manager out on the floor!) Dudes and Dolls have been wonderful friends to us; providing warmth, humor and genuine care for our guests that makes every visit unforgettable. Thank you, Dudes & Dolls!

## Save the Date(s)!!!

We are very excited to give you a sneak peak at the calendar for 2014. Watch our website, Facebook and Twitter for details about each event.

Friday, August 8—Dine Out For Fisher House at assorted Columbia City and Beacon Hill restaurants.

Saturday, September 6—Snohomish Heroes Mud Run. The Friends will have a booth at the run and this year are fielding our own team to run through the mud and raise money for the House.

Wednesday, September 10—Birthday Open House. We'll be celebrating our 6th birthday with an open house for VA hospital employees and our donors. Come take a tour, meet the staff, members of the Board and guests. See first hand what your generosity makes possible!

Saturday, September 13, 3-5pm— Garden Party. This wine & hors de oeuvres event will give us an opportunity to tell the Fisher House story to first time donors.

Saturday, November 8, 2-4pm— Wine Tasting. This is our second annual event at Northwest Cellars in Kirkland, Washington. \$20/ticket includes a five flight wine tasting, delicious snacks and live music. Signature label Fisher House wine will also be available for purchase.



## Because of You: A Life Enriched

As a young child, were you ever awakened in the middle of the night by a thunder storm or bad dream? Scared and alone you searched for the comfort of your mother's arms. That is much the same feeling experienced when a loved one has to be admitted to the hospital; especially if you are coming from a rural area to a city the size of Seattle. How can you be there for your loved one and still be able to maintain a semblance of daily life for yourself? In Fisher House we found that comfort, of a mother's love and tenderness, that helped to calmed our fears and the feeling of being alone in our struggles.

I was a guest of Fisher House several times when my husband was a patient of the Seattle VA. I was one of the first guests to stay there. There have been a lot of changes over the years but what never changes is the feeling of safety, convenience and comfort offered by the Fisher House and staff. All that is made possible by the generous donations and support of you, who opened your hearts and purse strings to keep this wonderful facility alive and well. I wish I could personally shake your hand and thank you for all you have done, not only for me and my family, but all of the past and future guests of the wonderful Fisher House network. Each of our experiences would have been an added hardship, if not for the Fisher House. My gratitude to you for making such a difference in my past. Each and every one of you is a helping hand extended when it is needed most. To every one of the supporters of Friends of VA Puget Sound Fisher House, my heartfelt thanks.

*Evonne Sullivan. Washington state*

### Board Blurb

At our January 2014 meeting the Friends of VA Puget Sound Fisher House elected Ron Thomas and Mike Winkler to serve on the Board of Directors. Ron and Mike are both Veterans with relationships in the community that will be assets as we work to raise funds and awareness for the Fisher House. They are both passionately committed to the mission of the Fisher House program and we are pleased to welcome them aboard.

We also want to express our immense thanks to outgoing past president State Representative Zack Hudgins, who has served on the board since its creation. Serving as president the last 3 years, Zack provided calm and steady leadership during a time of transition and we will forever be grateful to him for all his efforts.



Thanks to the talents of Karen Millstein Weber and her generous in-kind donation we have launched a fresh, fun and (though we say it ourselves) gorgeous site that is easy to read and navigate. One of the new features of the site is a blog that will be updated at least once a week with stories & news from the House. The blog is another way for us to share with you how your generosity is translated into so much good for our guests. We hope the stories and information will help you feel even more connected to the work we are doing together. The success of our Fisher House is the direct result of your commitment and faithful support.

## From a Guest

“A heart felt thank you for the Fisher House. I had worn the same clothes for four days. The first night’s shower was a God send. I didn’t realize how stressed and tired I was until I climbed into a clean, comfortable bed. I wasn’t taking care of myself; all of my energy and focus was in helping my husband. Thank you for caring and comfort. Everyone has been great. Thank you for keeping me safe during uncertain times. This has been quite a journey!”

*Deb*

## Zachary’s Corner



### Fun Bear Fact:

Zachary is part Irish.

## (Acting) Manager’s Musings

Hello Fisher House Supporters - I’m Michelle Power, Health Systems Specialist and Executive Assistant to Eric Leal, VA Puget Sound Health Care System’s Assistant Director. Spring means new beginnings and exciting changes are in the forecast for Fisher House management over the next few months. I’ve been temporarily assigned as your “acting” Fisher House Manager while we search for someone permanent to lead this wonderful and important program. As a member of the Executive Office staff, I’ve been involved with our Fisher House since its conception. Mr. Leal is the senior executive in charge of this program and together our goal is to promote the Fisher House program to the hospital and the community. We are dedicated to finding a new manager that will maintain the high standard set by Cecile and continue to support efforts to keep the VA Puget Sound Fisher House a high quality, engaging, and comforting home-away-from-home for our Veterans’ families.

We are engaging in a nationwide search for our new manager. The process is complex (this is the government after all!) but thorough. We anticipate conducting interviews by the end of March through mid-April. Once we select a candidate and they arrive “on station,” I’ll be working with them for a few weeks until they are ready to function independently and fully take over the program.

I know the Friends of VA Puget Sound Fisher House are anxious to implement

some fantastic new programs for our guests as well as enhancing those that are on-going. These include regularly scheduled yoga classes, weekly massage therapists, and other programs designed to maximize the families’ experience during their stay at our Fisher House. I look forward to assisting in implementing these programs during my tenure here and doing whatever else I can to further this healing and supportive environment.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank our Assistant Manager, Carrie Barnhart, for her time and patience getting me oriented to the many processes and procedures involved with running this program. My time with her was short—she’s taken early maternity leave as her twins are due in May -so I had to get up to speed quickly! We anticipate our new manager will be on board by the end of May, so until then, stop by and say ‘Hi’ if you have a minute. Any friend of the Fisher House is a friend of mine!



*Michelle*

## Get Social!

The newsletter goes out four times a year. Meanwhile, there are other ways to keep up on activities in the House! Like us on Facebook (Friends of VAPS Fisher House), follow us on Twitter (@THEVAPSFH), pin us on Pinterest (Friends2008) and make sure to bookmark our website: [fisherhousevaps.org](http://fisherhousevaps.org)!

Our big social media project for 2014 is launching YouTube channel. Stay tuned!

## House Scrapbook



Super Bowl Party



Craft Corner Piggy Banks

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*"Thank you for caring and comfort...for keeping me safe during uncertain times".*

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## We'll Take that Bet!

12th Man Fever ran high all season long at Fisher House, with staff in jerseys on Blue Friday and blue & green donuts during the post-season. The 43-8 Seahawk victory was made all the sweeter because we had a bet with the board of the Denver Fisher House. Thank you, Denver, for the delicious buffalo steak dinner you provided for our guests! Delish!



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CFD# 1480897  
CFC# 45650



**VA Puget Sound Fisher House—because a family's love is good medicine**

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Enclosed is my donation for \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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

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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:

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

You may also donate online through PayPal. Just go to <http://fisherhousevaps.org/donate.asp>