



# Because of *Friends* like You

## *We Are Family*

### Honoring Veterans Every Day of the Year

The military experience for most is a transformational one. Members often enter military service early in their adult lives. They are immediately shaped and molded by their unique personal interactions and expectations of service. Responsibility and respect are serious core values and evolve almost organically in young service members, many pushed beyond normal limits early and often. The rich and collective growth experience shared by service members forms the trajectory of their path in life and creates a sense of camaraderie and kinship that remains unmatched after leaving military service. Upon reflection, members recall not only details of critical moments in their assignments but more importantly, the bonds of friendship that endure to present day. Ask any military member and they will say that the best friendships they have are their military brothers and sisters. Meeting up even many years later, they pick up like they never missed a beat. Military members and their families, united by shared sacrifices others might not grasp, remain faithful to Corps values throughout their lives – activating the strength of character that comes from their shared sacrifice. They understand how to hold each other up.

This is so palpable with recent stories of strangers answering the call to honor fallen comrades without family – helping them find their way to a peaceful final resting place. They gather to lay flowers, set a flag, and show America cares deeply about their sacrifice. When asked again and again why they came, they simply answered, “Today we are not strangers, we are family. One woman’s poignant remark resonates with all of us during this season of gratitude. “If Ed were here with us, we would laugh, we would cry, and we would salute”.

Although heavy hearted with these stories of Veterans dying alone, we are inspired by the military family’s natural instinctual response to hold each other up. No matter where or when, they answer the call. Fisher House is proud to be an instrument that military families can use to hold up their loved ones during stressful periods of illness and hospitalization. As we often say, “come as our guests, leave as family”. We don’t just honor our Veterans one day a year; we honor our Veterans every day of the year.

Friends of Fisher House Puget Sound SALUTES all our Military members and their families for their sacrifice and strength and showing us how to hold each other up.



*“Never will I falter” serves as the creed of those who have stood watch over the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. A rare centenarian Sentinel and World War II veteran, Jack Eaton, who guarded the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in 1938 through 1940, is honored in D.C.*



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# Rockin' It At Redfest 2019

## Fun with Friends in the Rain

Cold beer, sausage and loud music in the rain. If that doesn't sound like a good time you might not be from around here. If you want to know where to find this kind of a good time all you have to do is take a short drive to Auburn for the annual "Red Festival" sponsored by KISW, Elysian Brewing and Uli's Famous Sausage. It's an all day, outdoor concert with multiple bands rotating on and off the stage about every 30 minutes. Between or during sets there is no shortage of opportunity to try one of Elysian's many beer offerings and have a sausage or two as well. And this being the Great Northwest, some years it rains.

What does any of this have to do with the Fisher House? Quite a lot actually. For years now Elysian, Uli and KISW have been wonderful supporters of the Fisher

House mission. This year, as in years past, they used Red Fest as an opportunity to highlight their support of our organization with the presentation of a Publisher's Clearing House sized check which represents the total amount of money they have contributed over the years. That amount is \$814,098.64! A check that large, both in size and amount is worth standing in the rain for.

On behalf of the Friends of Fisher House Puget Sound, we want to publicly thank KISW, Elysian Brewing and Uli's Famous Sausage for their support. Donations such as this allow us to support the four different Fisher Houses in the region and make the stays of our guests just a little less stressful. Thank you!



*Thee Ted Smith, Rod Skaar, Miles Montgomery, John Park, Robin Fox, Steve Hill and Mike Hawk Redfest Rockin*

# In Community

## Shining a Spotlight on Crane Aerospace and Electronics



**Deserving Non-profit groups nominated by Crane Employees, embracing the culture of community at Crane**

Crane's founder, Richard Teller Crane was focused on doing business the right way and providing the best quality for the customer when he started Crane in 1855. Like his father before him, Richard Teller Crane, Jr., cared deeply about the welfare of his employees. Under his leadership, the founder's culture of treating employees with trust and respect coalesced. Carrying out the terms of his father's will, he established the Crane Fund in 1914 to aid former employees and their dependents in need of assistance with \$2million in capital stock from the company. Through that original seed money, the Crane Fund continues to thrive and live on as a lesson in the power of individual leadership and responsibility.

Fisher House was recently the recipient of a grant from the Crane Fund for Widows and Children along with 15 other deserving organizations in our community. We are grateful for the community created by all the employees at Crane who are intimately involved in nomination and selecting charitable recipients.



*"I am resolved to conduct my business in the strictest honesty and fairness;*

*to avoid all deception and trickery;*

*to deal fairly with both customers and competitors;*

*to be liberal and just toward employees;*

*and to put my whole mind upon the business."*

**Richard Teller Crane, July 4, 1855**

## 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  
Rod Skaar, Vice-President  
John Park, Treasurer  
Rocco Bagala, Secretary

### Directors

Gail Eck, Director  
Jan Torell, Director  
Joel Wirasnik, Director  
Billy Ray King, Director

### Garden Advisor

Phyllis Grant

### Newsletter Designers

Jonathan Hooley  
Pearl Almberg

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# Home Together

## Reconnecting with Lost Love at Fisher House

We've all experienced it at one time or another...that lingering memory of a young love, that feeling of connection to someone we used to know, persistent thoughts we just can't shake, love here and then gone - the one that got away. But in the era of social networking, re-connecting with a past love is becoming commonplace. In fact, psychologists have coined the phrase 'Rekindlers' for this very special group of people who choose to seek out reunions. According to the experts, Rekindlers often grew up together and have a shared history, shared roots. They are similar in background, and they were friends years ago - a good start for any long-term romance. But often separated for situational reasons, these couples never got the chance to finish their love.

But what is it about young love's imprint on the brain and the need to reconnect with a lost love? Just ask Louise and Clifford whose decades-long dedication to reigniting their timeless connection serves as a testament to the enduring nature of true love. They met for the first time in the late 70's but ended up going their separate ways. Regretfully, they lost touch. If you ask Louise, she relates their ongoing story with her own term of endearment - "We always had a connection. Over the years, I just remembered him and missed the connection having lost it".

In the meantime, Clifford, an Army Airborne Vietnam Veteran, moved through a full life. However, in 2018, he was plagued by progressive weakness and shortness of breath. He spent months seeing various doctors trying to find out why his mysterious symptoms were worsening. With the prompting and support of several Veteran friends, he finally sought care within the Portland VA System where he was admitted and a diagnosis of ALS was confirmed.

Unbeknownst to Clifford, Louise had started to search for him in earnest nearly four years ago, only to meet a dead end. However, with Louise's persistence, their paths finally converged shortly after his diagnosis. Together once again, they joyfully reflect that "time and distance didn't stop our connection - we are finally home together!" Today they are determined to face Clifford's diagnosis united and strong even if it means that their sense of 'home together' is a bit unconventional.



*Clifford and Louise*

Frequent hospitalizations for Clifford meant regular and prolonged stays at Fisher House for Louise. The families and staff at the Fisher House have come to know her as an advocate, friend, and a wonderful person who often helped others find their way. "I commuted 260 miles from southern Oregon to be here for long weekends. I took a leave of absence at times, and worked virtually when possible. Fisher House on the Vancouver campus was there to make my visits at Fisher House safe, secure and productive while allowing me to be close to Clifford" now in the VA Community Living Center (CLC) on the same grounds. "The fellowship of people is so amazing" she says. Her background as an EMT Administrator and in Fire and Rescue certainly gives her the confidence to tackle the challenges ahead and

advocate for Clifford with the medical community.

Clifford for his part is also adjusting to the joys of rekindled love and challenges of his diagnosis. "Clifford is funny, supportive, and so wonderful to be with - He communicates with electronic eye gaze technology to activate a keyboard to Chat, Facebook and use the internet so we stay in constant touch". With the breathing support via a tracheotomy and a permanent feeding tube, he does not let his multiple challenges faze him Louise says fondly. She relates a short story of a fleeting thought she had during one of her road trips to see Clifford. "It crossed my mind that I should go back to school to become a Respiratory Therapist. When I arrived at Clifford's side that trip, he offered the same suggestion without any prompting on my behalf. I think it was more than a coincidence" she reflects.

We are convinced maybe it is just two soul mates in synchrony.

Clifford and Louise happily (and finally) tied the knot in a hospital bedside ceremony on July 20. With witnesses and a judge, they describe the ceremony as perfect. The Fisher House team welcomed them 'Home Together' in celebration and of course with cake. They say that the couples that are meant to be are the ones who go through everything that's designed to tear them apart and come out even stronger. If you ask, Louise and Clifford, they have no regrets about lost time and what could have been. "We are just here today - home together. We have this time and we are making the most of it."

*We honor Clifford for his service to our country and his enduring strength and courage. Fisher House is honored to be part of creating their home together!*

# Another Birthday

## Another Chance to Raise Awareness

While most of us after a certain age avoid mention of our birthday, here at Fisher House, we embrace birthdays as an opportunity to raise community awareness of our mission.

Rocco Bagala, Secretary of Friends, had the opportunity to attend the third annual open house at the VA Portland Fisher House in Vancouver, Washington. The event was highly attended, over 75 Veterans, families and Service Organizations staff. The Fisher House staff had done a great job in providing information about the Fisher House as well as tours for the attendees. The Medical Center Director, Mr. Darwin Godspeed and Assistant Director Bernie Deazley, met with staff, volunteers and attendees. Ms. Anne McEnery-Ogle, Mayor, City of Vancouver also attended.

“I was impressed by the dedication of the staff and the volunteers in making it a very welcoming experience. Manager Kelly Kronikow and Assistant Manager Dawn Schultz were particularly instrumental in making the event a big success. In speaking with family members, I was taken by how they really appreciate the Fisher House staff and the mission” Rocco reflects.

The VA Portland Fisher House is Located on the Vancouver Campus. The house has 16 suites for families and provides shuttle services to families residing at the house to Portland VA Medical Center in Portland Oregon.

Friends is so honored to support all the Fisher Houses in the State of Washington.



**Bernie Deazley Asst, Director,  
Darwin Godspeed, Director,  
Kelly Konikow, FH Manger,  
Rocco Bagala, Secretary,  
Friends of Fisher House**

**Open House Group Photo**



**Cake from Event**



**Volunteers**



*“I was impressed by the dedication of the staff and the volunteers in making it a very welcoming experience... In speaking with family members, I was taken by how they really appreciate the Fisher House staff and the mission”*

# Growing the Family

## Practicing the Habit of Volunteer Appreciation

We are often told, “Make it a habit to tell people thank you and to express your appreciation, sincerely and without the expectation of anything in return. If you truly appreciate those around you, you’ll soon find many others around you.” For the Fisher House team in Vancouver, this appears to be second nature – they held their first Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon. Kelly, House Manager prepared 3 HUGE

pots of soup - A chicken noodle, vegetable beef and a vegetable soup with fresh bread, Caesar and Cobb salads and a delicious chocolate cake. “Not all of our volunteers were able to attend, but we had a good turnout and felt blessed to be able to thank them for all they do for the guests of Fisher House!” she joyfully relates.



*During this Season of Giving and Appreciation, we thank all the volunteers who help create a Home Away From Home for our deserving Military and Veteran families!*

# Hail

## Billy King Becomes a Friend

We are so pleased to announce the appointment of the newest Board Member of the Friends of Fisher House Puget Sound. Billy King, in his own words:

First let me say what an honor and privilege it is to be part of this amazing organization. I want to thank the board for giving me this opportunity to help Service members, Veterans and their families in their time of need.

I have had the pleasure of directly working with and assisting two Fisher Houses both at Landstuhl, Germany and Joint Base Lewis McCord, Washington. I have seen firsthand the dedication of the staff and importance of volunteers, whether it be through monetary donations or people donating their time to assist family members staying at the Fisher House.

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*“I have seen firsthand the dedication of the staff and **importance of volunteers**”*

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I was blessed to spend 30 years on active duty in an Army uniform. I served another eight years assisting Warriors and their Families as an Ombudsman for the Army. In both of these capacities, all I could do was my best to complete the mission in a professional and respectful manner, and in a way that my Great Grandparents would have been proud of.

I promise to do the same in my capacity as one of the Directors for this amazing organization, and always remember “Our mission is to ease the burden of our Service members, Veterans, and their families during difficult times”.



**We welcome Billy to the Board and we stand proud to count Billy among Friends!**

## *Come As Our Guest, Leave as Family*

*“Thank you for everything... it was nice not to have to worry about where I was going to sleep or what I was going to eat while my husband was in the hospital.”*

*“You never feel alone...It’s like a big family. Just go down to the kitchen and people show up to talk!”*

*“I didn’t feel so isolated since there are so many in the same situation...”*

*“I met another loved one in the waiting room that I knew from a previous stay... I felt peace immediately.”*

*“We have been blessed several times by the generosity of the Fisher House Family... the ability not to worry about “just one more thing” helps the entire family heal... Bless You ALL!”*

**Friends of Fisher House Puget Sound**

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

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Email: \_\_\_\_\_

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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:

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**You may also give online. Visit [www.fisherhousevaps.org](http://www.fisherhousevaps.org) and click on the “Donate” button.**