

Because of *Friends* Like You

“Freedom is not free”

“Our nation honors her sons and daughters who answered the call to defend a country they never knew and a people they never met”

Spring represents a time of renewal. The explosive expressions of the season reignite our hearts and our consciousness. Spring leaves us refreshed, optimistic, and recommitted to the things we value.

For me, it was during one such spring day that a trip to the nation’s capitol coincided with a military promotion. Contemplating the gravity of my new responsibilities, I visited the War memorials along the National Mall. The symbolic depiction of military men and women, standing resolute to a way of life in a fiercely proud, patriotic and heroic manner, was overwhelmingly humbling. The Korean War Veterans’ Memorial, with its nineteen larger than life statues of soldiers on patrol and 19 reflections in the mural wall to create a 38 member platoon was especially impactful. The powerful words on the ‘wall of faces’ and dedication stone were the reminder:

Today, recalling the significance of that sobering experience, I am reminded of you, the DONOR. You answer the call to comfort and support the families of those sons and daughters who you “never knew” and families you “never met”. You persist with your charitable gifts of spirit, friendship, soothing words, and generous deeds. You pay attention to the small details, fill the gaps left by shattered lives, and expect nothing in return. Along the way, you instill hope and inspire us all by standing behind the families of Fisher House during their most vulnerable moments.

With spring upon us, we hope you will renew your **commitment** to develop ever stronger relationships with the “Friends” in support of Fisher Houses across our region. Continue to **inspire** new generations of benefactors to walk along your path. **Advocate** for Fisher

House whenever you get the chance. **Educate** friends, family, and workplace colleagues about the mission of Friends of Fisher House. **Engage** by hosting a house dinner, working in the garden, or joining the Friends Board of Directors. **Volunteer** with the Friends to support the programs and services so vital to creating a first class experience for families caring for their active duty and veteran loved ones. Above all, we call upon you to **Share** your uniquely personal donor stories and experiences with your Fisher House family!

After all, it is only **Because of Friends Like You** that we can continue to set a course with the forward momentum spring demands of us all!

In gratitude,

Roxane Rusch

Lt. Col., USAFR Nurse Corps Ret

President
Friends of VA Puget Sound Fisher House



Angel Among Friends



Seeking to get to know our Donors in a more personal way, I was lucky enough to arrange a meeting with Betty and her son Joe on a crisp winter morning at her north end home.

I had come to know about Betty through her longtime giving and her official designation as a Fisher House Angel –“recognized for her exceptional dedication to improve the quality of life of our greatest national treasure, our military service members and their loved ones”. Typical of the greatest generation, she quickly brushes off accolades and changes the subject.

It is immediately apparent that she has a heart for Veterans. She eagerly tells me about the love of her life, Jack, who was drafted into service during Korea and a brother-in-law who survived Pearl Harbor. Examining a photo of Jack, I call him handsome and she says “I think he was pretty cool- we were great friends from the start”. With 7 grandchildren and 20 great grandchildren (another due in July) they would have been celebrating their 65th wedding anniversary.

Getting down to business, I ask Betty what drew her family to Fisher House. Philanthropy seems to be a family affair with Betty being a firm believer in ‘Donate your dollars -Donate your time’ to help your local community. Son Joe

agrees and walks the talk. Despite recent medical issues of her own, her family tells me about her experience hosting a dinner for Fisher House families. Joe remembers “she came to share a meal and became the grandma” listening and consoling family members in a way only your grandmother can. One story, that of a little toddler that had moved from Fisher House to Fisher house since birth, struck a real emotional chord with Betty. Fisher House was the only home the baby had ever known. She recalls the experience, working with her own family preparing and serving, as “very gratifying” and one that quickly brought me down to earth! I have nothing to gripe about compared to some of the stories we heard.

As I bid Betty and Joe a fond farewell, I sense their connection to the larger community of family. I am left speechless by their humility and convinced we do have an Angel among Friends!

*No doubt
Jack is smiling!*



Friends of VA Puget Sound Fisher House

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 VA Puget Sound Fisher House. We are grateful for your partnership with us!

Officers

Roxane Rusch, President

John Park, Treasurer

Holly Krejci, Secretary

Directors

Gail Eck, Director

Jan Torell, Director

Melanie Kreizis, Advisory

Garden Advisor

Phyllis Grant

Newsletter Design

Jonathan Hooley, Graphic Designer

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AMANDA'S RAINBOW

At the end of a rainbow You'll find a pot of gold...

Beholding a rainbow is a gift, and when we encounter its beauty, it is the perfect time to be grateful for all the gifts in our lives. Amanda understands that better than most...

Traveling alone by train, full of anxiety, and uncertain of her new relationship with her father, Amanda began her trip from Oregon. It was her birthday. She had not been with her father on her birthday for over 20 years. Today

however, she was determined to be at her father's side for his upcoming triple bypass surgery.

Suddenly, and without warning, a rainbow appeared over the mountains. The beauty of this natural phenomenon persisted until her train reached Seattle. She felt a sense of possibility and assurance as she prepared to join her newly reunited family. That night, she took a dive on a dare into a cold hotel pool and watched the expression of joy on her father's face. He had surgery the next day.

Checking into the 'house' on the hospital campus, Amanda later wrote that "If not for Fisher House, I would not have been able to come to be with my dad. I would not have been able to follow the rainbow to my dad on my birthday".

For Amanda the potential the rainbow posed in her life was one of gratitude and love of family. For all our Fisher House families, may your rainbows lead you to your own personal gold.

Thanks Amanda for sharing **YOUR** story.

Come as Our Guest, Leave as *Family*

“I loved the fellowship with other guests!
Everyone is so supportive of each other!”

Sheryl, Tumwater

“Staying in a place like Fisher House makes
me feel that respect for Veterans and their
families is valued in this country”

Jana, Helena

“A place where you
would be safe;
you'd be able to
stay close to your
husband during his
treatment and care”

Pathitta, Bangkok

All in the Family



Hello everyone, after an exciting (and nervous sometimes) 9 months I am happy to let all of you know that we can now welcome a new bundle of joy into the Fisher House family. While at the Multicare Medical Center in Auburn, my wife Mykel gave birth to our beautiful baby boy; Austin James Boje on January 24, 2018 at 9:25 AM, he was 20.5 inches long and a healthy 8 pounds even. He had to spend a little bit of time in the NICU, but we've been home for a couple weeks now and we're all doing great. Austin is my wife and I's first child so we're definitely new to this parenting thing, however we are over the moon thrilled to be taking care of our little angel.

We definitely want to thank everyone for the kind words, and well wishes.

They were truly appreciated.

Glen Boje, Assistant Manager of the VA Puget Sound Fisher House, and his beautiful wife Mykel welcome son Austin to the Fisher House Family! Congratulations to the Boje family! AND Our thanks to Glen for doing a fabulous job leading the House activities during the House Manager Recruitment process!

Hail

Hello Fisher House Supporters – I am very happy to introduce you to our new Fisher House Manager, Carrie Booker.



Carrie Booker

Carrie has worked at VA Puget Sound for over 17 years. As a Recreation Therapist in the Spinal Cord Injury Service, she has been committed to helping Veterans and their families. Carrie's career at VA has included development of a national sports and wellness pilot program to serve Veterans living with PTSD. She knows the impact of injury, disease and illness on Veterans' families and their loved ones, and has seen first-hand how important the VA Puget Sound Fisher House has been for its guests.

Carrie is eager to join the Fisher House family, where she can contribute by ensuring a safe and peaceful environment to meet the needs of our Veterans' families during difficult and stressful times.

Please join me in welcoming Carrie to our terrific Fisher House Team!

Simon Kim, PhD,

Acting Assistant Director

VA Puget Sound Health Care System

& Farewell

Whether it was as a friend, volunteer, as assistant house manager, or our development director, Lorraine has been a part of the Fisher House Family since its very start! As assistant house manager, Lorraine made guests feel at home and helped shape the programs that make our Fisher House to what it is today.

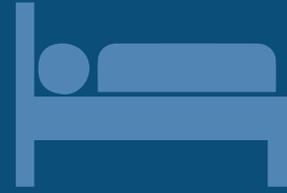
As develop director for the Friends of Fisher House, she was the first to smile and lend a hand and to advocate

and find solutions. She is an articulate storyteller and her tales make us "feel" and "connect" with each other. She described her time at in her roles at the Fisher House as "pure joy" – she is inspired by guests of the house and donors alike. Starting in April, Lorraine will embark on a new course and share her gifts beyond the Fisher House. Please join us in thanking Lorraine for her all she has done for the Fisher House and wishing her the best in her next adventure. Friends always!

By the Numbers



9,508
Individuals served



10 days
Average length of stay

Since
Inception
(2008)



\$11,069,200
Estimated savings to families



6,396
Families served since opening

Puget Sound Fisher House Facts

As of January 2018

Board of Directors – 100% Volunteer, active and independent

Annual Audit - 100% Complete February 2018

IRS Form 990 – 100% Filed prior to February 15th 2018 for period ending September 2017

Fundraising – 100% Volunteer with Community Partnerships and Friends like you

Board Matters

As the Friends of VA Puget Sound Fisher House Board of Directors, we appreciate the trust our stakeholders have placed in us. We are humbled by the opportunity to advance the generous intentions of our donors. We will continue to act as prudent stewards of your gifts with transparency, integrity, and heart!

As of January 31st, 2018, the Board of Directors is 100% volunteer. They have assumed the daily operational and fundraising responsibilities. Please allow us to introduce two of our newest board members who have found their way home to "Friends"...



Finding their way *Home*

Jan Torell - Director

building so outpatient veterans traveling from Washington, Alaska, Oregon, and Idaho would have a place to stay. The interior of the building got fresh paint, repairs, furniture, appliances, dishes and other items necessary for the comfort of the veterans and the care attendants that traveled with them.

But, the housing need persisted. In 2006, an email from the Fisher Foundation soliciting VA facilities to apply for new houses was routed across the desk of leadership and then forwarded to me. I filed the regular data reports that caused interest in our site to grow, and the Fisher Foundation visited the Seattle campus to get early "specs". At that time, the most bedrooms that the

Fisher Foundation would build was 11. Convinced of our need for a larger house, the Foundation agreed to build our house with over 17,000 sq ft and 21 bedrooms - all at no cost to the veterans, active duty personnel, and families with more than twice the number of beds in the renovated building! The Fisher House was built according to the Foundation's high standards with the best materials, furniture, appliances, beautiful décor and landscaping.

I feel that my journey has come full circle. I'm glad that the road I took all those years ago led me right back here!

And am pleased to join the Board of Directors of Fisher House to once again serve our veterans and their families.

I'm grateful for a VA career that spanned 38 years with exciting and challenging experiences because in every job and assignment, I could see the benefit to employees, veterans and active duty personnel.

During my tenure at the VA Puget Sound Health Care System, I watched the regional and national mission expand. To address growing patient needs, I advanced the idea to hospital leadership to renovate an empty Seattle one-story

John Park - Director

It is my honor and privilege to serve on the Fisher House Board. When I look back at my life, it is no surprise to me that I found the Fisher House. My journey began over 40 years ago. I come from a long line of service members from my Dad and his brothers to me and my brothers. We were all proud to serve in the Army.

In 1974 I moved to Seattle, took the Federal Service Entrance Exam, and was hired by the VA Regional Office (VARO). For the next several years, I held various jobs.

In 1982 was selected to work in the Director's Office of the Seattle VA Medical Center. I spent the next 29 years at the VA of Puget Sound until my retirement in 2010.

I was there in 2008 when the Fisher House was built on the VA's grounds. I was very impressed by the quality of the facility and service provided to veterans and their families.

I look forward to helping to ensure that the Puget Sound Fisher House continues to meet the needs of veteran's families and care givers.



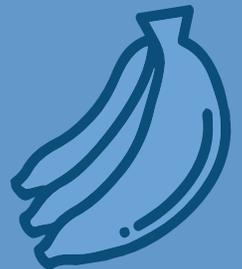
Places People Have Come From to Stay with Us

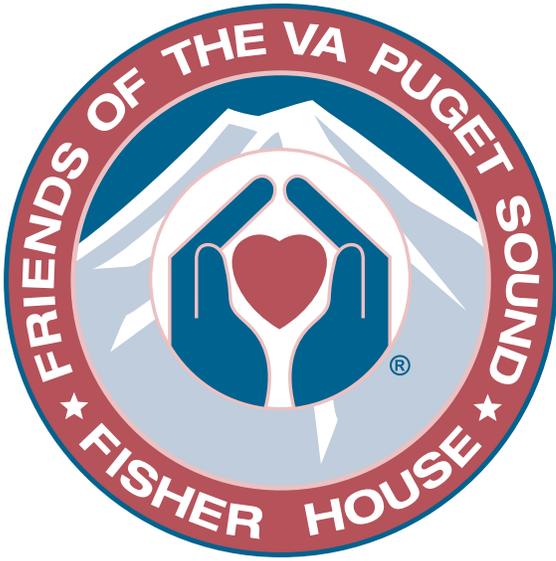


FUN FACTS

Bananas ordered weekly since inception: 12,480

Hugs Supplied: Too many to count!





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Seattle, WA
98118

Friends of VA Puget Sound Fisher House

PO Box 18253
Seattle, Washington 98118
(206) 501 - 8860

Website: www.fisherhousevaps.org
Email: friends@fisherhousevaps.org

VA Puget Sound Fisher House – “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 VA Puget Sound Fisher House

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 VA Puget Sound Fisher House.

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

Please call me at _____

Please mail checks to Friends of VA Puget Sound Fisher House, 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.