

Because of You

“And the Spring arose”



*“And the Spring arose on the garden fair,
Like the Spirit of Love felt everywhere;
And each flower and herb on Earth’s dark breast
Rose from the dreams of its wintry rest.”*

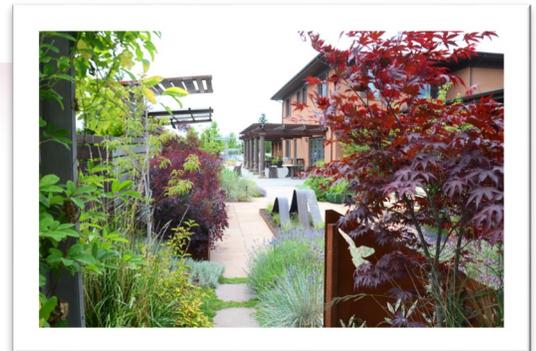
- Percy Bysshe Shelley

March came in like a very wet, chilly lion and so far April hasn’t been much better. Safe to say no one has put away the winter clothes just yet. But Spring *is* coming. You can see it in the budding trees, the forsythia that have gone from pale green to brilliant yellow overnight, the brave little crocuses pushing up their heads through the soggy ground. Here in the Pacific Northwest Spring is sometimes more a hope than a reality.

Guests of Fisher House know a lot about hope. They cling to it every day as they wait for the news of a test or outcome of a surgery. They hold hope close as they meet with a specialist or watch a patient with a spinal cord injury don a robotic vest that enables him to take a step. They offer that hope to each other in their stories, encouragement, and advice.

Because of you, the donors and supporters of Fisher House, these families face the difficult challenges of having an ill or injured loved one from the comfort and safety of a beautiful home. Your love and care for these families is what holds them up and reminds them they are not alone. You are there for them every day, rain or shine, good days and bad, winter, spring, summer, and fall.

Thank you.



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Numbers since 2008

- Families served: over 5,600
- Total guest nights: 49,505
- Average length of stay: 11 days
- Guests have come from 49 states and 13 countries
- Estimated savings to families: over \$9 million
- Total Peeps decorating the front hall: 412

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

Officers:

Chris Blackman, President

Roxane Rusch, Secretary

Directors:

Gail Eck

Melanie Kreizis

Holly Krejci

Lorraine Thomas, Development Director

VA Puget Sound Fisher House is all over the web!



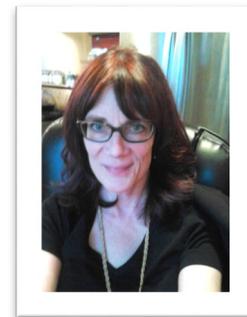
Board Talk

If you ever need perspective the best tonic is being in Fisher House. Tired of the grey skies and rain? Talk to the guest newly arrived from Alaska who left behind two feet of Spring snow. Feeling overwhelmed and underappreciated? Chat with the gentleman who “slept” in a chair for three days while his Veteran wife recovered from surgery and listen to his sheer gratitude for the blessing of Fisher House and a comfortable bed. Not getting along with a family member? Meet the daughter, wife, and ex-wife of a Veteran who are sharing a room so they can all be there to support someone they love.

Part of the magic of Fisher House is how the guests offer perspective to each other. Folks often comment that as they exchange stories with other guests they come to realize they are not alone and that others share the same concerns. The guests bond with each other, look out for each other, and create a home full of warmth and peace. They are able to do that because Fisher House is run by an incredible staff and awesome volunteers who have the gift of hospitality and devote themselves to anticipating the needs, physical and emotional, of the guests.

And it is possible because **you** provide the resources to meet those needs. The ways in which you express your support are myriad. Some are practical: a fully stocked pantry, Orca cards, newly upholstered dining room chairs. Some are more intangible but just as important: dinners out, hair cuts and massage therapy, and Easter baskets full of treats. Every day your financial contributions are translated into kind and nurturing gifts gratefully received by our Veteran and military families.

Thank you for everything you do for VA Puget Sound Fisher House!



Lorraine Thomas
Development Director

“Thank you for all the emotional support. You made a very difficult time in our lives so blessed with your generosity. Thank you. Fisher House is a blessing to Vets and their families. I can never thank you enough for sharing the gift of Fisher House!”

Laura W, ID

“Both my husband and I truly appreciate the generosity you have extended to us. This will remain a special memory for me. You were there with open arms when I needed it.”

Debbie H, WA

Part of the Family

Folks gather on couches with magazines and chat about pets and travels, friends and family. It looks and sounds like any beauty shop in Seattle but this is Sophia's Salon, conveniently located in the living room of the VA Puget Sound Fisher House.

Sophia Blackman has known about Fisher House for eight years, ever since her mom first came to stay while her dad was in the VA hospital. Dad comes every year for annual evaluations so Sophia has had plenty of time to see first hand the difference Fisher House makes in the lives of families. In 2016, her mom suggested that maybe Sophia could offer hair cuts to guests. Manager Stephanie Kocer thought it was a great idea. Guests are here for an extended period of time, they don't know the city, and often have limited resources or transportation. Paid for by donations, the service is offered free to the guests. Sophia takes over a corner of the living room and sets up all the tools of her trade. "Have blow dryer, will travel," she jokes.



"I had a salon for thirteen years and sold it last March. That opened up my life to do other things," Sophia says. She often travels to clients so bringing her styling magic to Fisher House made perfect sense. And what a difference it makes. As guest Peg put it, "I don't have time to go anywhere else; I'm at the hospital with my husband day and night. But you have to keep a little something for yourself; these hair cuts are a great service. Besides, you feel better if you think you look good."

Sophia chats with her clients and their stories resonate with her.

"Fisher House has been huge for my parents. You guys have taken such good care of them." Because of her parents' experience she can empathize with her clients. And she's received a lot from them. "I've met some really amazing people and learned a lot from how they handle the experiences they are going through." She shares the story of a native Alaskan family that stayed during the holiday season. "The patient was dying but witnessing the family's love for each other, how their spirituality informed that transition gave me a whole new perspective. It was really amazing. I'm honored to be here. I love being here."

It shows. As Sophia cuts, styles, and offers tips you see the stress fall away from the guests. They preen in front of the mirror, thrilled with their new look, and they leave, as Lu said, "Ready to take on the world."

Thank you for sharing your gifts, heart, and very warm smile with the families of Fisher House, Sophia. We're glad you're part of the family!

Board Blurbs

Tour Fisher House

To visit the VA Puget Sound Fisher House and see how your donations are put to work please call 206-501-8860 to schedule a tour. Come see firsthand what you make possible!

Monthly Donations

Do you make monthly donations to Fisher House but hate writing checks? We have you covered. Join the growing number of donors who charge their monthly donations to Fisher House. We can bill Visa or Mastercard credit/debit cards in any amount you prefer and on the day of your choice. (We can also set you up for quarterly or annual donations, if you prefer.) Call 206-501-8860 or fill out and mail in the form on the back of the newsletter and we'll contact you. Thank you for supporting the Friends of VA Puget Sound Fisher House!

GiveBig

The Friends of VA Puget Sound Fisher House will again be participating in the Seattle Foundation's annual day of giving on May 10. Last year this online fundraiser netted over \$22 million for area non-profits.

Thank You Note

“My stay was a light, a refuge of warmth and support. I am grateful for all that provided services. It made going through trauma a gentler process. My heart is very full. Thank you!”

Patricia B, WA

Zachary's Corner



Fun Bear Fact: Zachary Bear speaks Irish. *Sláinte mhaith!*

Manager's Musings

What did you do today?

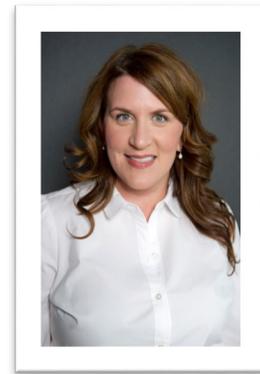
When I was a teenager my parents always asked this question as we sat around the dinner table. And I said what most teenagers say: “Nothing.” Or better yet, “indistinguishable mumble.” Funny how that changes as we get older...we appreciate when people ask us what we've been up to. It shows they care.

As the population in Fisher House changes, so does the time of day when the House is bustling. Right now, guests seem to be around more from mid-morning to noon time, which gives me an opportunity to hear about what everyone is doing (we have a chatty group in the House!) And it's far from “nothing.” Some families are learning how to provide care to their loved one once they return home, others are anxiously awaiting surgical outcomes, and still others are just waiting for a diagnosis. Everyone is in a different space and situation but by actively sharing what's going on with each other they're able to provide support and even some guidance about getting through, even if sometimes that is just to put one foot in front of the other. (I know this to be good advice.)

And it also helps to lessen their own emotional burden by providing assistance and kindness to others. As Robert Ingersoll once said, “We rise by lifting others.” I know it's true; I see it every day in Fisher House.

So, thanks to all the parents who ask about their teenager's day and get the resounding eye roll. They'll be old enough to appreciate it soon. I promise.

-A former eye-rolling, mumbling teenager.



Stephanie Kocer,
Fisher House Manager

Help Our Gardens Grow

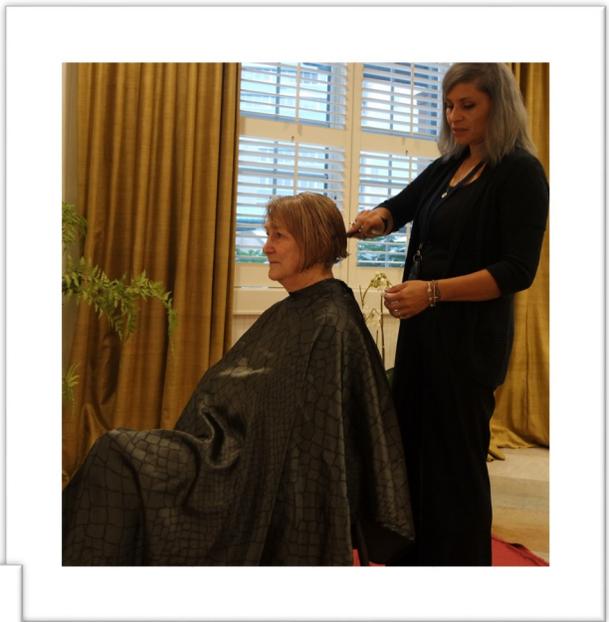
Do you wile away the winter months leafing through seed catalogs? Are you out in your garden on the first mild day of the season? We'd love to have you join one of our garden parties. Throughout the year Board Director Melanie Kreizis and House gardener Phyllis Grant organize volunteers to tend the gardens that surround Fisher House. It's a unique opportunity to provide service to the families who go to the gardens for quiet reflection, play, and strawberries! Lunch is provided. If you'd like to volunteer or receive more information about this fun and rewarding opportunity please email

friends@fisherhousevaps.org. We'd love to have your green thumb! Thank you!





Lu loves her new bob.



Peg enjoying the benefits of Sophia's Salon



...a refuge of warmth and support...



Glen, give back Zachary's hat!



Valentine's Day—Fisher House style



A special cake for National Pig Day

NON-PROFIT ORG
POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT #3865
SEATTLE, WA
98118

Friends of VA Puget Sound Fisher House

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Seattle, Washington 98118

(206) 501-8860

Website: www.fisherhousevaps.org

Email: friends@fisherhousevaps.org

Development Office:
development.director@fisherhousevaps.org

Combined Fund Drive# 1480897
Combined Federal Campaign# 45650
King County Employee Giving# 9504



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 \$ _____

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 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.

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