

Because of You



“Warm summer sun, shine kindly here”
- Mark Twain

Fun Fact: The Fisher House you support is owned and operated by the Veterans Administration. If you never made another gift to the Friends of VA Puget Sound Fisher House

the doors would stay open for the Veteran families. Not all Fisher Houses have community groups. So what is the point of this 501(c)(3) and what difference does it make?

Simply, as a non-profit the Friends are able to provide a much more nimble response to the needs that arise. (Fun Fact: it takes 3 months for the VA to purchase and install a new microwave. The Friends can get it done in a day.) As a non-government agency the Friends are not bound by the same restrictions that apply to government funds. If there is a need and money to meet it, the problem is quickly solved. The existence of the Friends is a service to the tax payers as well. The VA’s mission is patient care and that should be the priority for their budget. If the Friends can spare the VA some precious dollars because you support the House, everyone wins.

Every Fisher House is beautiful. All of them are staffed by amazing, caring individuals. But the experience in a community supported House is very different. A recent guest explained it this way, “I’ve stayed in other Fisher Houses. They were great but I couldn’t believe it when I got to Puget Sound. There was food in the cupboards and all sorts of little extra touches that made the experience so different. At the other Houses I had to find time to get to the grocery store if I wanted to eat. Here I can just take care of myself and then get back to my husband. You can’t believe what a difference that makes.”

Puget Sound Fisher House recently welcomed our 6,000th family. Like the 5,999 families before her, Kim came home. None of the families in this Fisher House have to worry about groceries or shampoo or transportation across town. They don’t have to be lonely, afraid, or carry stress-induced knots in their shoulders. They get a welcome break once in a while, whether through a holiday celebration, a dinner out, or a peaceful stroll in verdant gardens. All this and so much more is available because of you. Thank you for making it possible!



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Numbers since 2008

- Families served: over 6,000
- Total guest nights: 51,474
- Average length of stay: 10 days
- Guests have come from 48 states and 13 countries
- Estimated savings to families: over \$10.3 million
- Total green apples ripening in the garden: 83

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

The notion of “self care” is talked about a lot in business circles these days. It’s the idea that you are more productive if you make time for yourself. Self care can be as simple as getting out of the office for lunch rather than eating in front of the computer while you frantically catch up on emails. If the quest for work/life balance is a challenge for professionals, imagine how difficult it can be for Fisher House guests. How do you balance a life that has been disrupted by an illness or injury? How do you even think about self care when someone you love is in the hospital and you are far from the family and friends who sustain you?

There’s a reason flight attendants tell you to put on your oxygen mask before you assist another passenger. You can’t help someone else if you can’t breathe yourself. That’s why all the programs of Puget Sound Fisher

House are designed to “care for the caregivers.” In addition to the comforts and amenities provided in the House and gardens, opportunities are presented to guests nearly every day to allow them to take a break, have a little fun, and recharge their batteries. The staff is always dreaming up new adventures for the families. (They recently added a monthly movie night at the Ark Cinema in Columbia City, for example.) And success is never measured by how many people participate in an activity. If one person takes some time out when he or she needs it, that’s a win. And for that one individual, the deserved break can make all the difference.

Thank you for understanding the mission of Fisher House. Thank you for being part of this family!

“Thank you so much for what you do here at the Fisher House. While I was in the hospital for heart surgery two months ago and again these last four days, knowing my beautiful wife had a beautiful place to stay took all the stress off. Thanks to the VA doctors my heart is in great shape. Thanks to you, my wife of thirty five years was well taken care of. I will forever be grateful!”

-David, WA

“I watered the veggies when it was so hot; [it was] therapy for me to work in the garden since I can’t be home tending mine. Thank you, thank you, thank you!”

- Debi, WA

Part of the Family



The Fisher 5: Sally 1, Annita, Lois, Kathleen, Sally 2

By Glen Boje, Assistant Manager

I know the impact Fisher House has on the families we serve but decided to sit down with one of our current guests and get the scoop “straight from the horse’s mouth.” Sally arrived in May when her husband was admitted to the spinal cord injury unit.

When asked how being in Fisher House made her feel a huge smile came across Sally’s face. “I feel like I’m at home!” she exclaimed. Though she is away from her biological family she has formed a surrogate family with the other guests and that is what she most enjoys about being in Fisher House. She spoke of the strong relationships formed with others, along with the resourcefulness and friendly demeanor of the staff. “The combination of both makes me feel good and not alone. It’s a positive mix that helps cheer me up and brighten my day.” Sally also mentioned how helpful it is to have food provided. “Before I came I worried about being able to afford to eat. Seeing everything that is provided for the families took a big weight off my shoulders.”

Sally told me about four other women she’s met here. The “Fisher Five” gather every evening to eat and “hang out.” They laugh, talk about life until late into the evening, and serve as a support system. “The good company every evening is a cathartic experience,” Sally said. When asked if she thinks they’ll stay in touch after they leave she enthusiastically affirmed that they would.

Sally described Fisher House as “amazing.” She arrived with a preconceived notion about the arrangements. “But Fisher House is a palace and being here has enabled me to be stronger for my husband.” Sally’s experience at Fisher House has made it easier for her to face each day. “I just wish I could hug and thank the Fishers directly for the incredible program they started. It provides such an invaluable service to the families of our country’s Veterans.”

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!

Speakers Bureau

Are you a member of a service organization or church group that would like to have a speaker come share the story of Fisher House? Please call 206-501-8860 to schedule.

Thank You Note

“As I write I find myself shaking so much with love for this place. I can not say thank you enough. In fact, I do not believe saying thank you IS enough! You are all angels forever in our hearts. When treated like royalty, it is real easy to feel overwhelmed with love!”

-Michelle H., WA

Zachary's Corner



Fun Bear Fact: Zachary is beary happy about Stephanie's announcement.

Manager's Musings

Fisher House Manager Stephanie Kocer and Assistant Manager Glen Boje are pleased to announce the engagement of House mascot Zachary Bear to Ms. Elizabeth Ursa.

Mr. Bear was a young cub when an anonymous donor brought him to live at Fisher House. Named for Zachary Fisher, founder of the Fisher House program, he also shares Mr. Fisher's birthday (September twenty-sixth) and affinity for cheesecake. Mr. Bear quickly became a part of the family and delights guests young and old with his gentle smile, quiet manners, and cuddly hugs. Mr. Bear has worked as the mascot for the Puget Sound Fisher House since 2010.

Ms. Ursa was born in Anaheim but found California to be unbearably warm. She dreamed of a life of service and adventure

in a cooler climate. A modern couple, Mr. Bear and Ms. Ursa met on line and began a correspondence which led to a deep friendship. Mr. Bear invited Ms. Ursa to visit him at Fisher House where she was pleased to learn that she shares a name with Zachary Fisher's wife. She took it as a sign; one which was confirmed when she fell in love with the Veteran families and with Mr. Bear himself.

Ms. Ursa currently lives in the management office of the House but looks forward to the day when she will join Mr. Bear on the bench in the front hall under the loving gaze of their namesakes.

A summer wedding is planned. The happy couple are registered with Target and the Friends of VA Puget Sound Fisher House.



House Scrapbook



Cow Appreciation Day



Salad, anyone?



Our volunteers aren't just awesome. They're also incredibly good looking. These fine folks are from UBS Financial.

...you are angels forever in our hearts...



6,000th family— Welcome home, Kim!



June GNO—pasta and good friends

NON-PROFIT ORG
POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT #3865
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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 \$ _____

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 _____.

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 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.