

# Because of You

*“Every leaf speaks bliss to me; Fluttering from the autumn tree.”*  
- Emily Bronte

## Celebrating Nine Years of Service



The doors of VA Puget Sound Fisher House have been open to Veteran and military families since 2008. On September 7 (three days early) they were literally wide open to welcome a flow of guests in celebration of our ninth birthday. Plates of beautiful cupcakes and vats of lemonade

(made extra fancy with rosemary from our own garden) waited in the kitchen. House staff and representatives from the Friends were on hand to welcome visitors and show them the wonders of Fisher House.

A consistent theme was amazement. New VA employees marveled at the beautiful, spacious rooms. Those who have attended past parties were stunned to see that the House is as beautiful now as it was nine years ago. That is a tribute to the management team, our amazing housekeepers, and your support. Many times there are needs which can't be immediately met by the VA. But because of you, the Friends are able to step up and ensure that the guests of the House have all they need. Check out the numbers to the right. They reflect the myriad stories of healing, friendship, encouragement, and courage that this House has witnessed. As a faithful supporter of Fisher House, you are a key part of that story. You have touched thousands of lives, every day for nine years, with your compassion and contributions. You fill the lives of deserving Veteran families with light, love, and the occasional cupcake. Thank you for engaging in this amazing mission of caring.

*Happy Birthday to us!!!!!!*



### Inside this issue

- Profile of Zachary Fisher.....2,3
- Board Blurbs.....3
- Manager's Musings.....4
- Birthday Scrapbook.....4
- Bears in the Corner.....4
- Part of the Family.....5

### Numbers since 2008

- Families served: over 6,100
- Total guest nights: 53,068
- Average length of stay: 10 days
- Guests have come from 48 states and 13 countries
- Estimated savings to families: over \$6.1 million
- Average bushels of tomatoes harvested from the gardens: 412 (and they're still coming!)

## 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

### Staff:

Lorraine Thomas

VA Puget Sound Fisher House is all over the web!



## Zachary Fisher: Builder, Philanthropist, Patriot

In honor of what would have been his 107th birthday we celebrate the life of our founder, Zachary Fisher. Article reprinted with the kind permission of the Fisher House Foundation.

Zachary Fisher was a prominent figure in the New York real estate community and a major philanthropic benefactor for the men and women in the United States Armed Forces, as well as numerous other



commitment to both the Armed Forces and other philanthropic causes intensified still further through his leadership role in a number of major projects.

In 1978, he founded the Intrepid Museum Foundation to save the historic and battle-scarred aircraft carrier Intrepid from the scrap yard. Four years of involvement with the Foundation resulted in his spearheading the opening of the Intrepid Sea-Air-Space Museum in New York City, now the world's largest naval museum.

In 1982, the same year as the Museum's opening, Mr. Fisher established the Zachary and Elizabeth M. Fisher Armed Services Foundation. Through the Foundation, he made significant contributions to the families of the victims of the bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut in 1983. Since then, the Foundation has made contributions of \$25,000 to numerous military families who have lost loved ones under tragic circumstances.

Mr. Fisher made similar donations to the families of New York City firefighters who lost their lives in the line of duty. His Armed Services Foundation also provides scholarship funds to active and former service members and their families.

In 1990, Mr. and Mrs. Fisher began the Fisher House program, dedicating more than \$20 million to the construction of comfort homes for families of hospitalized military personnel.

In 1994, Mr. Fisher, in partnership with David Rockefeller, established the Fisher Center for Alzheimer's Research Foundation, which funds Alzheimer's disease research with the goal of finding a cause and cure. The Foundation

not-for-profit organizations.

A native of Brooklyn, New York, Mr. Fisher began working in construction at the age of 16. Shortly thereafter, he and his brothers, Martin and Larry, joined forces to form Fisher Brothers, which has grown into one of the real estate industry's premier residential and commercial developers, owning more than five million square feet of office space.

From the earliest days of his construction career, Mr. Fisher was a strong supporter of the U.S. Armed Forces. Prevented from active service in World War II due to a leg injury, Mr. Fisher drew on his building skills to assist the U.S. Coastal Service in the construction of coastal fortifications. His patronage of the Armed Forces became an ongoing concern from that time, evolving to occupy increasing amounts of his energies.

In the 1970s, while remaining active in Fisher Brothers, Mr. Fisher's

## Zachary Fisher, con't

operates the nation's largest and most modern Alzheimer's research laboratory, housed at The Rockefeller University in New York City.

Throughout his life, Mr. Fisher held a number of posts on a variety of charitable and arts organizations and military charities throughout the country. He served as Honorary Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Marine Corps - Law Enforcement Foundation and was a supporter of the Coast Guard Foundation, the Navy League and other military charities. Mr. Fisher also established the annual Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Award for Excellence in Military Medicine.

He was a major supporter of the Metropolitan Opera, Temple Israel, the Jewish Institute of National Security Affairs, the George C. Marshall Foundation, the Margaret Thatcher Foundation, the Reagan Presidential Library, the United Jewish Appeal and many other organizations. Mr. Fisher also served on the boards of Carnegie Hall and several other institutions and received honorary doctorate degrees from the Massachusetts Maritime Academy and the Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences.

In 1998, Mr. Fisher received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Bill Clinton in honor of his wide-ranging contributions on behalf of the young men and women in the US Armed Forces. He also received the Horatio Alger Award, the Volunteer Action Award, the Presidential Citizens Medal, the Senior Civilian Award from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of Defense, as well as the top awards a civilian can receive from each branch of the military.

Separately, Presidents Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George Bush and Bill Clinton, as well as Margaret Thatcher and the late Yitzak Rabin, recognized Mr. Fisher for his support of charitable organizations throughout the United States.

In December, 1999, President Clinton signed Public Law 106-161 conferring upon Zachary Fisher the status of an honorary veteran in the U. S. Armed Forces. He was recommended for this honor prior to his death on June 4, 1999.

Three words, etched in the marble of Zachary Fisher's tomb, speak to his legacy:

**Builder ... Philanthropist ... Patriot**

**ZACHARY FISHER**

**FOUNDER**

**FISHER HOUSE PROGRAM**

**September 26, 1910 -- June 4, 1999**



## Board Blurbs

### THANK YOU!

We are grateful to Proliance Surgeons Foundation for their continued partnership with Fisher House. For the last three years the foundation has selected the Friends of Puget Sound Fisher House as beneficiaries of the proceeds from their annual golf tournament. This year's gift is \$40,000! Thank you, Proliance Surgeons Foundation!

### 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!

## Thank You Note

*"I appreciate the healing potential an atmosphere like this has. It can't help but provide more support for our loved ones in the hospital as we, the caregivers, are healed and supported."*

- Patty, WA

## Bears in the Corner



Fun Bear Fact: It was a beautiful wedding.

## Manager's Musings

What a summer! Heat, fifty plus days without rain, the wedding of Zachary and Elizabeth Bear, an eclipse (how awesome was that?), back surgery for the Manager (I'm doing great!), and now the smoke and ash in the air from so much of the Northwest battling wildfires (safe thoughts go out to all those impacted and involved).

With the start of football season (GO HAWKS!), the crisping of the leaves, and the giant zucchini in our Fisher House gardens it's obvious the transition to fall has begun. Another sure sign of fall? Our annual Birthday Open House!

We ecstatically celebrated our 9<sup>th</sup> birthday on September 7 just a few days ahead of our official September 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We opened our doors and served three hundred cupcakes and gallons of lemonade to employees and volunteers of VA Puget

Sound. We talked to them about Fisher House and our mission, and provided tours. In general, we got to "show off" our home for three hours. It's always a delight to see people react with awe and gratitude about what we, **with your help**, provide to our families. Knowledge is power, and with our open houses, we're able to share that with fellow VA employees. A win-win for sure.

Our feet might be a little tired after three hours of showing off but the reward outweighs the fatigue. We can't wait for our Holiday Open House in December!

Happy

Autumn!



Stephanie Kocer  
Manager

## Birthday Party Scrapbook



## Part of the Family



Meet Lois, currently our longest tenured guest at Fisher House. She has been here nearly nine months while her husband recuperates in the spinal cord injury unit. Based on her previous experience with lodging, Lois expected less than stellar accommodations when she came to Fisher House. She was surprised to discover a place “way beyond expectations” and is grateful to be here. With warmth in her eyes, Lois shared, “It’s made such a traumatic journey a lot easier and I appreciate the little things you provide”. Beyond food and sodas, the small gestures, like an eye patch on National Pirate Day, bring smiles to people’s faces and that’s what Lois cherishes most.

Lois shared that the best part of being in Fisher House is “the camaraderie among the families here”. She explained how Fisher House provides a chance for people to share experiences and serve as a support structure for one another. “For many this is the first time they’ve had to experience any kind of long term hospital care and Fisher House makes that much more bearable.”

When asked to name an experience that has stood out during her time here she decided it was “the number of long lasting friendships” she’s made; bonds that have and will carry on past the Fisher House. She marvels that these are individuals who likely would have never crossed paths but meet here and form friendships that will last forever.

Lois says that she would “definitely recommend Fisher House” because it’s gone out of the way to help eliminate many burdens that she has experienced during her husband’s lengthy hospital stay. “People come to Fisher House as strangers but it doesn’t stay that way for very long. Everybody here goes out of their way, despite their own struggles, to make that person feel at home.” Fisher House is a truly incredible place. People like Lois are the reason why.

- Contributed by Assistant Manager Glen Boje

---

## *...caregivers are healed and supported...*

---



Redfest '17— Elysian Brewing & the Mens Room have raised \$630,000 for the Puget Sound and JBLM Fisher Houses since 2009!



National Eat Outside Day was celebrated indoors. It was the one day this summer that it rained!

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

Friends of VA Puget Sound Fisher House

PO Box 18253  
Seattle, Washington 98118

(206) 501-8860

Website: [www.fisherhousevaps.org](http://www.fisherhousevaps.org)

Email: [friends@fisherhousevaps.org](mailto:friends@fisherhousevaps.org)

Development Office:  
[development.director@fisherhousevaps.org](mailto: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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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](http://www.fisherhousevaps.org) and click on the “Donate” button.