

# In Their Own Words: Passengers, Pilots, and Requesters Speak



"I was overwhelmed by the service I received from Angel Flight West. From the coordinators who assisted me to the pilots who flew me, **it was one of the best experiences of my life.** I will tell everyone I know what an incredible service AFW is." – James N., Crescent City, CA



"You recently provided your services for James from Helena to Idaho Falls, ID. Jim was severely burned in a propane explosion, and **we cannot thank you enough** for the two flights you provided to the burn center. This greatly increased his recovery, physically and mentally, along with the relief it provided our family. He is recovering remarkably. Thank you!" – Children of James W., Helena, MT



"We now live paycheck to paycheck and are **so grateful for this service.**" – Edward H., Petersburg, AK



"You were the reason I could be part of a clinical trial in Denver for Stage III ovarian cancer. Your hard work and tireless efforts helped me get treatment in the midst of and throughout my fight to live, which continues to this day! **Thank you from a VERY grateful survivor.**" – Susan V., Durango CO



"I can't possibly tell you how much it means to patients when I tell them about your services, when they feel they have nowhere to turn for help. **These flights not only give them access to care, but give them hope for themselves and hope for humanity that such generosity exists.**" – Susan M., Oncology Social Worker, Anchorage, AK



"I am very grateful for finding AFW and being a part of this great organization. **It's very comforting to have the opportunity to make a very rough time in someone else's life just a little easier.**" – John L., AFW pilot, Lander, WY

3161 Donald Douglas Loop South  
Santa Monica, CA 90405



Phone: 310-390-2958  
Web: www.AngelFlightWest.org



Angel Flight  
WEST

WINTER 2020

# FLIGHTS OF HOPE NEWS



## INSIDE

Soaring to new heights in 2020!

Page 2-3

Meet AFW Volunteer Pilot, Michael Burks  
Page 3

In Their Own Words  
Back page



Angel Flight  
WEST

Angel Flight West delivers health and hope using donated flights to serve those with healthcare or other compelling human needs.

Angel Flight West links volunteer pilots and commercial airlines with people whose non-emergency health needs require air transportation to access care.



Your gift is making a difference!



## FROM THE DIRECTOR

Ascend: to go up, climb, or rise through the air. Thanks to our volunteers, donors, staff, and courageous passengers, Angel Flight West continued to ascend in 2019 and now into 2020. While we reached new metric altitudes in people served, flights donated, volunteers involved, funds raised, and safety initiatives, it will always be about the families we serve.



Josh Olson  
Executive Director

We hope you'll enjoy reading about passengers Chance and Whitney, but know that their smiles will tell the real story. Likewise with volunteer Michael Burks, whose passion for volunteering for AFW as a pilot and our new Montana Wing Leader is infectious. These are just individual stories that represent thousands more at AFW that are told through our flights of hope every day throughout the year.

On behalf of all of us at AFW, I want to extend a huge THANK YOU for all you generously give to enable us to serve those in need of care. You'll find enclosed with this newsletter a list of all the supporters who made a gift during the holiday. Thank you, again. We couldn't do it without you!

Gratefully,

# Our Goal in 2020: More Flights, More Access to Healthcare

Thanks to your support, Angel Flight West will fly more missions, helping more people get the care they need



THANKS  
to YOU!

With your help, Chance will receive treatment for renal failure at Lucile Packard Children's Hospital

With help from the generosity of donors like you, Angel Flight West had a remarkable year in 2019, flying 5,090 missions across 12 western states. This adds up to a total of nearly 10,000 hours in the air, covering over 660,000 miles!

While these numbers are impressive, it's the individual flights that mean the most for passengers like Whitney S., of Meridian, ID and Chance J. of McKinleyville, CA, two of many who faced obstacles that could have prevented them from receiving important medical care.

Fourteen-year-old Chance receives twice-monthly dialysis for end-stage renal failure at Stanford, a seven- to eight-hour drive from his home in McKinleyville, CA. Chance's family lost their home in 2018's Camp Fire, and had been making the long commute to Palo Alto for months before a valet at the hospital told them about AFW. When weather conditions kept our volunteer pilots from flying, Chance flew with AFW partner Contour Airlines, who generously donated tickets to make sure he got to the treatment he needed.

(continued next page)

## More Flights Continued...

Whitney was seven months old when she was diagnosed with a congenital defect called ALCAPA, affecting her heart and arteries, that required two surgeries and a two-month stay at Seattle Children's Hospital, 500 miles away from her home in Idaho. Now a year and a half, Whitney still needs treatment, but even with her father working as much overtime as he can to cover their bills, commercial flights can be prohibitively expensive. To complicate matters, the duplex the family was living in was recently sold, and they'll need to find a new place to live by the spring.

"To be honest," Whitney's father told us, "I don't know if we'll be able to recover financially from everything, but we are trying our hardest, and happy that Whitney is getting better! Angel Flight West is amazing, and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts!"

It is our mission to help patients like Whitney and Chance get the care they need by doing what we do best: flying them there! And thanks to your generous support, we'll be able to do just that!

For more passenger stories, visit us on Facebook,



THANKS  
to YOU!

Your gift will help Whitney get to Seattle Children's Hospital for specialized treatment

Instagram, and Twitter! @AngelFlightWest #AngelFlightWest

## Meet an AFW Pilot: Michael Burks, Montana Wing

Missoula-based business owner Michael Burks loves to fly and since becoming an AFW volunteer pilot in 2017, has flown 113 missions in Montana delivering passengers to treatment. Last year, he became our Montana Wing Leader, advocating for AFW and recruiting other pilots. Why does he do it?



Michael, pictured right, flies Wrenli H. and her parents on a leg from Missoula to Spokane en route to Seattle Children's Hospital

"Being part of an organization that reduces a 13-hour car ride into a four-hour plane trip is an amazing feeling, knowing I saved the patients hours of travel time to help make their appointments a little less stressful."

And does he have any advice for pilots thinking about becoming AFW volunteers?

"I guarantee that if you sign up for just one mission a month, your outlook on life will change. Watching families battle life-threatening illnesses with a positive attitude will blindside you like nothing you've ever experienced. Some of these kids have gone through hours of poking, prodding, cutting, and testing. You can be having the worst day, but when you see a smile from one of them, all of that stress melts away."

We couldn't have said it better.