



## FLIGHTS OF HOPE

Quarterly newsletter for Angel Flight West's members and friends

In this issue, we highlight the heart of AFW—our passengers, volunteer members and pilots. With each AFW mission, this team of people unite against the challenges faced by a serious illness.



AZ Wing pilot Dennis Phelan with Katlyn S. flying AZ to Burbank, CA for treatment for cancer of the eye. Her multiple doctor visits are financially draining on her family.

### The Heart of Angel Flight West

**Cheri Cimmarrusti, Associate Executive Director**

Who is an AFW Command Pilot? First, he or she meets the AFW pilot requirements and completes an orientation. But, the two most important qualities that all AFW Command Pilots possess are compassion and a desire to help others. As we all know from our own daily lives, these can manifest in many ways. AFW pilots show these qualities by flying missions. Some pilots may be warm and fuzzy and like to get involved with their passengers.

Others may not exude that same warm and fuzzy demeanor, but still care very much. An AFW pilot may fly one mission per year while another may fly 100 missions per year. Whether it is to fly blood donations in a Cessna 152, or to fly passengers in a Pilatus, every flight is a priceless gift towards bettering someone's health and life.

The following are just a few examples of some of the passion and commitment shown from our

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### Spotlight on an Angel

**Josh Olson, Director of Mission Operations**

Every time we pick up the phone or answer an email at AFW, there is potential for a heart-wrenching story. For some, we are unable to help, but we do our best to find that person or family a resource to assist them. In other instances, AFW becomes a part of that person's story and we play a valuable role in providing help. Such is the case with the following story of a brave teenager, Alisa.

Alisa is from rural Colby,

Kansas. Like many teenagers she loves her friends, school, sports, and driving! When Alisa was 16 she started getting painful headaches and nausea. She was eventually diagnosed with a glioma brain tumor. The closest treatment was at Children's Hospital of Colorado. Alisa and her parents were shocked. It was tough enough to face the fact that they have a teenager with a brain tumor, let alone dealing with how

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L to R: Mom Theresa, daughter and passenger Alisa F. with pilot Kyle Scott, CO Wing, flying from CO to her home in Kansas. Alisa needs to go to CO for weekly chemo treatments for a year to treat a brain tumor. This mission was a joint effort with Angel Flight Central.



## Flight Plan

*Alan M. Dias, Executive Director*

### *First Quarter of 2013*

AFW has entered 2013 positioned to benefit from a number of significant accomplishments completed in 2012.

Last year, we created a five-year strategic plan including the requirement that the Board will meet to review and "tweak" the plan at the beginning of each year. On January 31st and February 1st, 2013, AFW's directors discussed reports concerning finances, fund development, Mission Operations and Wing Operations. We crystallized the challenges AFW faces in continuing to serve more passengers and identified steps to be taken this year to achieve our long-term vision.

In 2012, we formalized our Fund Development Department, employed a Development Director, and drafted a Fund Development Plan. This year, we will continue the AFW Annual Fund, which recognizes individual

giving throughout the calendar year. In addition, we will present a series of "get acquainted" gatherings to promote our mission and familiarize more people with our important service to their communities. Please continue to check the event calendar on the AFW website for a gathering in your area. (Go to <http://tiny.cc/3qjbsw>) For example, on Feb. 26, 2013, at the San Diego Air and Space Museum, AFW hosted a presentation by AFW Command Pilot and astrophysicist Dr. Brian Keating titled "Flying to the Ends of the Earth to Glimpse the Beginning of Time." Guests learned more about AFW. Two similar events are planned for April—one in Seattle and one in Palm Springs. In June, we will hold an expanded Chairman's Cup Golf Outing that includes a round of golf at Pebble Beach, plus a round at the Monterey Peninsula Country Club with overnight accommodations at The Inn at Spanish Bay.

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### Amazon Shoppers!

Each time you shop at Amazon, AFW can receive a contribution. AFW received \$4,738.27 from Amazon in 2012. This is significant because for every dollar raised, AFW provides \$4 worth of service. In order for AFW to receive a portion of your Amazon purchase, you must go to or click on <http://www.amazon.com/?tag=afw-homepage-20>.

## AFW Board Welcomes Five New Directors

*Tom Gallagher*, former President and CEO of Caesars Entertainment and the Merv Griffin Group. Currently a trustee of the UNLV Foundation and the DRI Foundation, and chairs the board of the Black Mountain Institute.

*Benjamin Marcus*, co-founder and partner of JetAVIVA and Aerospace Capital. An AFW member for 17 years, beginning as an office volunteer while in middle school. Also, a volunteer AFW Command Pilot.

*Ms. Patricia McInturff*, Washington State University College of Arts and Science Advisory Committee

*Gene Pope*, retired Vice President of Personalization, Search Experience and Browse for Amazon.com, and a volunteer AFW Command Pilot.

*Joseph Sprague*, Vice President of Marketing at Alaska Airlines

**Angel Flight West Thanks Our Major Contributors**



**The Elaine W. and Kevin P. Kauffman Family Foundation**

**and**

**Tom and Mary Kay Gallagher Foundation**

## More AFW's Treasured Volunteers

We'd like to acknowledge a few of our many generous non-pilot volunteers who are a vital part of the heart of AFW.



Far L photo: Mary Ann Sickle is one of our long-time volunteers who joined in 1995. She has never lost her enthusiasm for AFW, nor has she missed many weeks helping in the office headquarters with anything that needs to be done. Mary Ann is one of the recipients of the 2012 volunteer awards given at the last Christmas party in Santa Monica. (See photo page 5). L photo: Irv Moskovitz, another one of our long-time volunteers who joined AFW in 1994. Irv has flown as a Command Pilot and is known for his sense of humor, and has been responsible for photographing events and creating AFW member photo badges. Lower L photo: AFW AZ Wing volunteer Jeremy Davalos (R in photo) with renown aviation author Rod Machado at AOPA Aviation Summit 2012. Jeremy is 19 years old and one of our youngest members. (More on Jeremy page 7 "The Heart of AFW").



## Flight Plan ...Continued from page 2

In October 2012, we launched our updated Angel Flight Information Data System 2.0 (AFIDS). We are now operating with a system that offers more options to our pilots and enables us to track missions more efficiently both from the pilot and passenger's perspective. It gives us the ability to statistically analyze trends allowing for better decision-making. It is our intent to make this software available to other public benefit flying organizations, and we have already introduced AFIDS 2.0 to eight volunteer pilot organizations including Angel Flight New Zealand. This year, we will continue to build the system, as well as update our web site and work on other technological advancements, to better serve our pilots and passengers

Regardless of how large we grow, our core strength will always be our grass roots and volunteer pilots. This year we will work to improve our pilot recruitment, retention and recognition. To accomplish this we will continue to support

our Wings in every possible way. New initiatives such as local press releases, Adopt-a-Hospital programs, speaker's bureaus, and more fly-ins are only the beginning. For those who want to get more involved, joining a Wing Leadership Team is a great way to support AFW locally.

In 2012, we arranged more than 6,500 flights impacting hundreds of lives and surpassed a milestone of 56,000 total missions flown. In 2013, we will continue to strengthen the organization to meet an increasing demand, recruit and retain pilots with innovative outreach and recognition initiatives, and work to further both public benefit flying and general aviation.

If you are a member of AFW, thank you for all you do. And if you are not a member, please consider joining. Our innovative mission makes a positive difference in people's lives every day and you could be a part of that excitement.

It's a privilege to be AFW's Executive Director.

Blue skies and tailwinds,

Alan M. Dias





Sweet four-year-old Rosa L. with pilot Ray Stratton, So. CA Wing, who flew her and her mom and dad home to Firebaugh, CA, from Santa Monica, CA on Jan 29th. Rosa has profound hearing loss and was able to receive a cochlear implant at UCLA. Rosa's family has very low income, and there are no local treatments available.



So. CA Wing pilot James Michael "Mike" Wade pictured in the middle with passenger William T. right and William's daughter and grandson. William is being treated for non-hodgkins lymphoma at Bicher Cancer Institute in Los Angeles. He lives in Henderson, NV and has no funds for traveling. AFW is sometimes able to provide patients like William with compassion flights home for brief respites from their ongoing cancer care.



L to R: Passenger Madison T. and mom Tina T. on a mission flown by pilot Eric Torgerson, MT Wing, from Great Falls, MT to Seattle, WA for Tina's treatment for macrosystic hydroma, a lymphatic malformation. Madison's family has limited income due to the high cost of Madison's care.

## Air to Air Communication

- Condolences to the family of AFW passenger Richard P. in February of this year. He will be missed.
- You can Donate Miles to AFW via Alaska Airlines at <http://tinyurl.com/993tk7s>
- Learn about the AFW Foundation on our website and find out how you can help support the AFW mission with Planned Giving.
- If you would prefer to continue to receive the newsletter by snail mail and haven't done so, please send an e-mail to [newsletter@angelflightwest.org](mailto:newsletter@angelflightwest.org) or call us at (310) 390-2958.



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• And we are also on YouTube.  
<http://tinyurl.com/c3vwf48>



R to L: UT Wing pilot Brian Andersen flew Darlene & Bill Horton to Salt Lake City, UT for Bill's check up after recovering from a liver transplant. The couple is struggling financially after treatment and travel costs. Bill will need multiple follow-up appointments. Darlene says that she didn't know what she would have done without AFW, and that she loves the flexibility AFW has given her as her "life was spinning out of control with Bill's health challenge."

## Spotlight on an Angel

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they were going to travel from Colby, Kansas to Denver every month up to a year for treatment. Fortunately, Alisa and her family found our sister organization Angel Flight Central (AFC).

AFW has a great cooperative working relationship with AFC, and we frequently share trips that travel in both of our service areas. Alisa's trips from Kansas (AFC) to Denver (AFW) are a perfect example. When AFW coordinator Erin Gardner took the request from AFC, we entered the missions into AFIDS. Within a couple of days, pilot Kyle Scott, CO Wing, and Jeffrey Siegel, CO Wing had signed up for Alisa's flights. Last November, Kyle flew Alisa and mom after Thanksgiving in his Cessna 310. Jeffrey flew them in December in his Cirrus SR22.

Alisa and her family have a long and brave battle to face. As is characteristic of so many

## 2012 Volunteer Awards



AFW awarded the above volunteers at the 2012 Christmas party recognizing the important work that all AFW's volunteers provide. L to R: Steve Danz, So. CA pilot for 700+ missions, Mary Ann Sickle for her long term dedication, Ann Greenspun for her dedication to the Earth Angel Program and Lounge, volunteer pilot Ali Sufai and wife Lucy for donating their hangar for the festivities, So. CA pilot Vince Giampa for his dedicated work as the So. CA Wing leader and leadership at AFW's Annual Golf Tournament, and Ari Lissauer for his dedication as an AFW office volunteer. Those recipients not pictured are Terry O'Shaughnessy, Leo Tseng, Leah Vriesman, Alan Cohen and Donna Byrd for their dedication as AFW volunteers.

AFW passengers, Alisa is doing it with poise and grace. Her smile and positive attitude are a wonderful reminder not only to how precious are our moments here, but also to why AFW gives hope wings. AFW is privileged to fly alongside Alisa and her family as they continue with chemotherapy treatments as long as Alisa can tolerate. Keep flying high, Alisa!

### TURNING POINT The Angel Flight West Story

Watch the Angel Flight West story on TURNING POINT. Visit our web site [www.angelflightwest.org](http://www.angelflightwest.org) and you'll find the link in the lower right corner of the home page, or go to <http://tinyurl.com/7opye7c>.



## In the Hangar –Stephan Fopeano

AFW owes a debt of gratitude to our longtime member and webmaster, Stephan Fopeano. Stephan joined AFW in 1989. "I was flying at the time, and, like most AFW members I suspect, was looking for a way to combine my desire to fly with my desire to give a little back to the community. Once I reached out to the kind folks who were manning the organization at the time, Kathy Ezemoli, Brian Weiss and Gary Davis, and got to know them, I was hooked."

Stephan has worn many hats as a volunteer for AFW. When he first joined, he was working in the film industry, so he "offered to produce a video. The result was a 10-minute epic called *Flights of Hope* starring John Tesh." Since then, he has "focused more on the technology needs of the organization, as [his] career has shifted in that direction as well." In addition, over the years Stephan has been, as he says, "also privileged" to serve on the board for two terms.

When asked what he thinks has been the biggest challenge AFW has faced since he joined, Stephan says there have been many, "ranging from funding challenges, to managing



AFW's Webmaster, Stephan Fopeano, hard at work in the AFW Santa Monica headquarters.

geographic expansion, to growing from 250 missions my first year to 4,500. The organization has been blessed with outstanding leadership and many dedicated volunteers. AFW seems to engender a level of dedication that allows people to rise above these challenges, keep their eyes on the prize, and keep the organization moving forward."

As far as the most rewarding aspect of his involvement with AFW, he says, "It's been wonderful for me to be a part of an organization with so many talented, caring, and dedicated people. I've learned so much, and am continuously inspired to be involved with AFW and the other VPO's around the country. I'm also inspired by our passengers who I've had an opportunity to meet. They are models of the strength of the human spirit."

Stephan sees AFW now as having "a solid foundation and great potential to grow its service to the community, expand resources, and reach more people who need transportation. AFW is also a leader among VPOs, and can use that leadership position to bring assistance to more needy people across the country and even around the world."

He adds that "being a member has been a very special part of my life. I feel so fortunate to have had the opportunity to be a part of this great organization." And we are so grateful to have him.



No. CA Wing pilot Tom Tessier, with passengers Sandie Le Blanc. from Arcata on left and Pamela Lyall. from Novato on right. Both are traveling to Stanford for cancer care. Tom says, "The temperature at 8,000 feet was minus eight degrees C. All the snow on the mountains was absolutely beautiful. We had a great lunch at the restaurant in the Arcata airport. Both women didn't know each other until today. They became instant friends and I'm sure will be in contact."

## Utah Wing Gives Santa a Lift Again!

Ten years ago, AFW's UT Wing started flying Santa at Christmas. Every year since, the UT Wing designates a rural school or an Indian tribe in need, loads AFW member's planes with donations they collect, and Santa and UT Wing leader, AKA Steve Bollinger, along with volunteers deliver the much needed items. This year Monroe Elementary School, located in central UT, was the recipient of the mission. The UT Wing organized 15 airplanes to fly the donations, Santa, Mrs. Claus, two elves and a few Boy Scouts who also helped collect over 5,000 pounds of supplies. The donations included clothes, toys, books, school supplies and a cash donation of \$1500 to be used for the students of Monroe Elementary School. The school has over 650 students—180 went out to the Richfield airport to greet the pilots as they flew in.



## The Heart of Angel Flight West

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AFW Command Pilots: WA pilot Bob Schaper flew 216.9 hours of Hobbs time in 2012, and additionally purchased over \$8,000 in commercial tickets for AFW passengers. With credit for the commercial tickets and actual flown missions, Bob has completed 214 mission legs!

Meanwhile to the south, AZ pilot Dennis Phelan flew 96 mission legs totaling over 420 hours of flying time! Often, Dennis would fly a passenger to Santa Monica Airport, borrow a vehicle from a friend, take the patient to treatment, wait for them, bring them back to the airport, and fly them home. That kind of dedication and compassion deserves extra points!

Pete Bernardin of So. CA and Paul Danis of WA both accrued over 250 hours of AFW flying! That is nearly 5 hours per week. Way to keep those planes in the air! Victor Ninov has developed a wonderful friendship with frequent flyer passenger Roberta V., driving to her home to pick her up in the morning of her flight, flying her from Oakland to Santa Monica, CA, waiting while

she goes to treatment, and then does the reverse trip in the afternoon. They have now flown together 25 times!

But, you don't have to fly tons of missions to be an asset to this organization. Nineteen-year-old Jeremy Davalos, a student at Embry Riddle in Prescott, AZ, is not only a Command Pilot--still waiting to fly his first mission-but Jeremy is the Volunteer Mission Coordinator for AZ assisting Josh and the Mission Operations crew with getting missions filled. Additionally, he has set up displays at air shows to help spread the word about AFW and spent several days at the AFW AOPA booth last October. When you hear grumbling about today's apathetic youth, think of Jeremy and his great work.

This is just a snapshot of the multitude of good works that goes on every day at AFW! Unfortunately, with 1000 pilots flying, there is no way we can mention them all. Please know you are all appreciated so very much, and our deepest gratitude goes to each and every one of you!





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Frequent flyer May L. is pictured in between mission assistant Molly Burger and pilot David Volkmann, NV Wing. The picture was taken by pilot, Craig Burger, So. CA Wing. Craig and David recently flew her from her home in Quincy, CA to El Monte, CA, where she gets chemotherapy treatment at the City of Hope for breast cancer.



Right Pilot Michael Radomsky, NV Wing, with mission assistant Dana Oxley left (in the right seat) flying Ashley K. and Mia B. from Las Vegas to San Bernadino. They are on their way to Camp Laurel—a camp for families with life-threatening illness—where they can enjoy being a kid with others having the same health care challenges.