



FLIGHTS OF HOPE

Quarterly newsletter for Angel Flight West's members and friends

Angel Flight West Announces New Executive Director by Steve Danz, Chair, Board of Directors

At the January, 2014 Board of Directors meeting the Board unanimously approved Josh Olson as Angel Flight West's next Executive Director.

Alan Dias' decision to retire as our Executive Director has been accepted with regret. A mainspring in the life of Angel Flight West since 1995, Alan has served as a Command Pilot,

Southern California Wing Leader, member of the Board of Directors, and as Executive Director for the last six years. I've said that "...if Alan hadn't joined us, we would have had to invent him." The Board thanks him for a dedication to Angel Flight West and to public benefit flying beyond the call of duty. Among his accomplishments, Alan has been instrumental in reaching out to our fellow

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The advertisement features a large photograph of the Endeavor space shuttle on display in a museum. The shuttle is white with a black nose cone and a large orange and white wing. It is suspended in the air. In the background, a large screen displays a view of Earth from space. The text 'CELEBRATING PUBLIC BENEFIT AVIATION' is at the top, followed by 'ENDEAVOR e+ AWARDS™' in a large, stylized font. Below the shuttle, the text 'YOU ARE INVITED TO THE LAUNCH PARTY' is written in a bold, serif font. Underneath that, it says 'Inaugural Endeavor Awards Honoring Volunteer Pilots and Public Benefit Aviation' and 'May 4, 2014'. At the bottom, it lists 'Already On Board - Legendary Pilots: Bob Hoover, Clay Lacy, Sean Tucker, Tom Poberezny, John & Martha King' and 'Astronauts: Scott Parazynski, Charlie Precourt, Kent Rominger, Tammy Jernigan'. It also lists 'Hollywood Luminaries: Greg Kinnear, Robert Zemeckis, Ed Asner' and 'Tickets Available Online: www.endeavorawards.org'.



Flight Plan by Alan M. Dias, Executive Director

Six Years Later

On May 5, 2014, I will be stepping down as Angel Flight West's Executive Director. It will be six years to the day that I began.

When I accepted the position, I told the then chair, Doug Griffith, that my wife and I had agreed I would remain in the position for at least three, but no more than five years. So much for that promise.

Last September, I advised the previous board chairman, Laura Long, that it was time to put our succession plan in place. Yes, we actually have a plan! So, on May 5, 2014, Josh Olson, Director of Mission Operations, will take over as Angel Flight West's fifth Executive Director in our more than 30-year history.

Josh has been with AFW for ten years, and chances are you already know him. In Steve Danz's front page editorial of this newsletter announcing the change, you can learn more about him. I've worked with Josh for the last six years. He brings not only a commitment and a vision to the organization that is in keeping with our history and culture, but most importantly, a dedication to our mission.

When I started as executive director, I thought I knew the organization. I had joined AFW in 1995 and have served as a Command Pilot, Mission Orientation Pilot, member on the Board of Directors and Executive Committee for six years, and as Southern California Wing Leader for four years. But, I quickly learned that until you sit in the ED's chair, you really don't know AFW. That chair provides a very accurate

insight into all the moving parts that contribute to the success of our mission—and each part is crucial. It takes all of the parts—staff, volunteers, board, funders, case managers, social workers, passengers, hospitals, summer camp organizers, and others working together to get our passengers from where they are to where they need to be—and do it thousands of times a year.

I am proud and very gratified with what we've accomplished together. We have played an important role in developing safety initiatives that have been endorsed by Air Care Alliance, National Transportation and Safety Board, and Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association. We have worked together to produce, develop, and share AFIDS 2.0—our mission coordination system. We are approaching 60,000 missions flown and have never worked more closely with our sister Angel Flight organizations than we do today. We continue to be the second largest volunteer pilot organization in the country (after the Civil Air Patrol), and on May 4th, 2014, we are producing a major event honoring all of public benefit aviation—the Endeavor Awards (www.endeavorawards.org).

AFW continues to face challenges. We always have. But I am confident that with the talent and resources we have in place, we will meet these challenges. I wish Josh and everyone at AFW blue skies and tailwinds. It's been a privilege to serve as Angel Flight West's Executive Director.

Alan Dias

Executive Director ✈️

Write a Review for AFW

Great NonProfits is an online site that allows people to find, review, and share information about great nonprofits. AFW is continually striving to get the word out about who we are and what we do. This website offers an easy way for those who have experienced the organization to help spread our mission. Click on the link below, read what others have said, and add your own review. It takes only minutes. Go to: <http://greatnonprofits.org/organizations/view/angel-flight-west-inc>



WE'VE DONE A **NUMBER** OF THINGS IN **2013!**

31 YEARS
OF SERVICE

10
FLIGHTS
A DAY

3,533
FLIGHTS
FLOWN

PASSENGERS
1,097
SERVED



FLIGHTS
59,000
SINCE 1983

PASSIONATE
VOLUNTEERS

1,500+

STATES
COVERED

13

PILOT IN-KIND

\$ 2,283,745

DONATIONS

9 PAID STAFF



1,340

FLIGHTS
DONATED BY
ALASKA AIRLINES

NEW **233** MEMBERS

THANKS FOR HELPING US SOAR TO NEW HEIGHTS!

★★★★ 4-STAR RATING FROM **CHARITY NAVIGATOR** FOR THE THIRD YEAR IN A ROW

UT Wing's 14th Annual Santa Flight

Fifteen AFW UT Wing Command Pilots—including Command Pilot Santa, Mrs. Claus and two elves—flew to Cedar City, UT last December with toys and supplies donated to nearly 600 children at Monroe Elementary School. This is the UT Wing's 14th annual Santa Flight. The Boy Scouts helped collect the donations and members of the Triple Deuce and ROTC National Guard unloaded each plane and delivered the 5,000 pounds of supplies with their trucks. UT Wing Leader Steve Bollinger (pictured far right) also presented the school with \$6,500.



WA Wing Command Pilot Thomas Ysasi flew nine-year-old Joslynn B. on the first leg from Seattle, WA to Missoula, MT. MT Wing Command Pilot William Vance flew the last leg from Missoula, MT home to Billings, MT. Joslynn is receiving treatment for a brain tumor. The family has limited transportation and cannot afford commercial flights.

New passenger Shane H. flew from his home in Columbia, CA to Palo Alto to participate in a clinic for colon cancer and undergo a surgical procedure at Stanford Hospital. He was flown to treatment by Command Pilot Cathy Mendez, (pictured above) and home by Command Pilot Vincent Wilkins.

CO Wing Command Pilot John Seabury flew three-and-a-half-year-old Xavien C. from Montrose, CO to Denver, CO for treatment at Children's Hospital Colorado. Xavien is seen at their burn center for treatment that is unavailable closer to where he lives.

AFW New Executive Director...continued from page 1

Angel Flight organizations throughout the US, and this year is Chair of the Air Charity Network and a member of the Board of Directors of the Air Care Alliance.

The Board looks forward to working with Josh Olson, our current Director of Mission Operations, when he becomes Angel Flight West's Executive Director on May 5th, 2014. Before joining Angel Flight West, Josh was an account executive at an advertising firm in Dallas, Texas, that represented Angel Flight South Central as a pro-bono client. He came to Angel Flight West in 2004 and has worked in a variety of positions, most recently as the Director of Mission Operations. Josh holds a Bachelor's Degree in Communications from Taylor University and an MBA with a non-profit emphasis from Marylhurst University.

In accepting the position, Josh says, "I am humbled and excited for the opportunity to

serve Angel Flight West as Executive Director as we continue to help more people in need of charitable flights. I feel honored to be selected for this position and I am eager to build on the hard work and generous efforts of so many."

Historically, Angel Flight West has always risen to face challenges. As a relatively small non-profit we take pride in being able to implement a management succession plan from within that will be seamless and transparent. The stakeholders in Angel Flight West—our staff, volunteers, passengers, and patrons—can be assured that our mission will continue to be fulfilled without interruption.

My thanks to the Board and all who support Angel Flight West by providing help in getting people from where they are to where they need to be for non-emergency medical and other compelling human reasons. ✈



L to R: Passenger Martha R., AFW's Chairman of the Board and So. CA Wing Command Pilot Steve Danz, and Martha's daughter Vanessa R. on their way home from Santa Monica, CA to Santa Maria, CA. Martha has a form of leukemia and had consulted with doctors about a bone marrow transplant. She cannot afford the travel expenses due to limited income. AFW's Earth Angel Margot Bernal transported Martha and her daughter to the airport from their doctor's appointment.



Mom Trish D. and her son passenger 10-year-old Jonathan D. flying with OR Wing Command Pilot John Pavlik from Portland to Ashland, OR. Jonathan must go to biweekly appointments and chemotherapy treatment for his brain tumor. Both commercial flights and the cost of driving have become a financial burden on the family.



In Memoriam - Beverly Wertheimer

AFW is saddened to report the passing of long-time AFW member, Command Pilot and Golf Committee member Beverly Wertheimer. She lost her battle with cancer on January 31st surrounded by her loving family. She was 84 years young. Bev joined AFW in 1987 and was one of the organization's most colorful characters. One of the first female pilots to fly missions, she also became a regular fixture at our golf tournaments, playing in all 18 AFW tournaments. Bev's exuberant personality and the colorful wisp of hair she kept long in the back of her head dyed in various colors of purple or pink always made her stand out in a crowd. Bev defied the social conventions of her age and gender. Her photo says it all. Our sincere condolences to her family. She will be missed!

Wing Leaders Welcome and Thank You

AFW wishes to thank all of the following outgoing Wing Leaders who have served the organization for many years: Arizona Wing, Stephen Bobko-Hillenaar; Oregon Wing, Rosemary Pelissier; and Northern California Wing, Kevin Fox. We are very grateful for their leadership, which was instrumental in helping to support and continue our mission.

We would like to give a warm welcome to the in-coming new Wing Leaders: Arizona Wing, Jeremy Davalos; Oregon Wing, Jim Origliosso; and Northern California, Bob Strawn. We are looking forward to having them on board and thank them for carrying on the work of the Wings.

Air To Air Communication

- Save the Date! The Wing Leader Retreat and Board meeting originally scheduled for May 17th at Van Nuys airport has been re-scheduled to September 12 and 13, 2014. For details contact Cheri at cheric@angelflightwest.org
- AFW thanks our new partners at Penair for their support of AFW passengers in Alaska.
- You can donate miles to AFW via Alaska Airlines at <http://tinyurl.com/993tk7s>
- AFW Merchandise Page! In conjunction with Land's End, AFW is offering a variety of men's and women's clothing and other merchandise for purchase. To use the service, click on the "Shop" tab on the AFW Home Page at www.angelflightwest.org then click on the link Land's End.
- **Amazon Shoppers!** AFW will receive a portion of your purchase if you first click on the AFW homepage www.angelflightwest.org, which will take you to the Amazon page for AFW.
- 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 or call us at (310) 390-2958.



Spotlight on an Angel - *Rosa L.*

When five-year-old Rosa L. was about a year old, her parents became worried that she wasn't reacting to them when they would talk to her. Rosa's mom says that when they finally "took her to a doctor in our hometown in Mexico," the doctor confirmed their worst

fears—"that Rosa was deaf." Rosa is her parents' first child. They were devastated. The family had to learn to communicate with each other through sign language. Soon after the diagnosis, they moved to Firebaugh, CA near Fresno where an audiologist continued Rosa's care.

It was from her audiologist that Rosa's parents learned about a cochlear implant that would allow Rosa to hear. Cochlear implants, coupled with intensive post-implantation therapy, can help young children to acquire speech, language, and social skills. Most children who receive implants are between two and six years old, so Rosa was the perfect age.

Rosa's parents were now hopeful that their daughter would be able to be like every other little girl. They were referred to UCLA and within seven months the operation was done. Her mom

says, "The first time Rosa reacted to sound was at home. Someone knocked and it wasn't even really a loud knock, but she turned to me and pointed to her ear. She was telling me that she could hear the door."

Hearing through a cochlear implant is different from normal hearing and takes time to learn with therapy. Rosa's mom said that reacting to sound is "a big change for her and requires several doctor [and therapy] visits. Our biggest worry was how we were going to be able to make the numerous trips, which are a minimum six-hour drive each way without traffic—but usually there is always traffic. Our car wouldn't be able to make the numerous trips to L.A. Also, my husband is the only one who drives, and he would have to take the day off work, which is not always possible at his job.

"A social worker at UCLA Audiology department told us about your services. It's helped us very much and we are so thankful for all the pilots. Although we can't communicate in English with them very well, we have been treated with such kindness. Rosa is always so excited to fly! When I would tell her we would be going to UCLA, she'd be asking to leave days before our trip. One of the pilots, Tom Carlyle, gave Rosa some books and she loves them—especially the gorilla one. We thank everyone so much for all of your help!" [Thank you to Ivan Martinez who acted as translator for this article.]



Shared mission with Angel Flight Central, AFW CO Wing Command Pilot Stan VanderWerf flew seven-year-old passenger Emily C. (pictured with dad Paul) from her home in Scott City, Kansas to Denver, CO, and back for a neurology consultation at Denver Children's Hospital for severe headaches.

Angel Flight West Thanks Our Major Contributors

Alaska Airlines

The Elaine W. and Kevin P. Kauffman Family Foundation

and

The Tom and Mary Kay Gallagher Foundation



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The Magic of Angel Flight West

So. CA Command Pilot Tom Close took this photo of passenger Lawrence G. and flew him on his first AFW flight from Santa Monica, CA to his home in San Diego for treatment of lung cancer.

Erin Gardner, AFW Mission Operations Coordinator, says, "Lawrence came into the AFW office to wait for his flight home. He was understandably tired and feeling sick from his treatment, so to see this picture of him, taken just a short while after leaving here looking literally like a new man, is just amazing. This image, to me, is the perfect example of the magic of AFW."

Tom sent this comment about the flight: "I'm reminded of the old adage about feeling down and complaining about not having shoes until we meet the fellow without feet. Pretty extreme jump on my part, maybe, but here's the point. Lawrence



is facing a terrible illness, and he nonetheless appreciates the good in his life where he finds it. A ride to and from medical treatment? Nice, in and of itself, but more to the point, it is the nexus of need and caring by others. He's not alone in his fight. That's a smile producer, for sure. And, quite, so. Lawrence is a man engaged with life, and naturally upbeat and happy.

"The events around Lawrence and this flight, are, indeed, emblematic of AFW. It's the venue where your wonderful organization puts in touch those in need, and those of us with the luxury of putting back, using the opportunities, and capabilities in our lives where they can have the biggest impact. If the camera had been turned around, you'd have seen as big a smile on my face. It's that human element, made possible by an organization that cares, and people who care."



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<http://bit.ly/PpNNkM>



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