



# FLIGHTS OF HOPE

Quarterly newsletter for Angel Flight West's members and friends

## Bringing the Joy of Summer Camp to Health-Challenged Kids

Among the missions AFW flies, AFW pilots volunteer their time to fly children and counselors to camps for burn survivors, cancer patients, the hearing- or sight-impaired, and more. Many of these children face significant obstacles in getting to camp. Their families may live a long way from a commercial airport or have limited financial resources because of medical issues. For many of these kids, it's their one week a year when they can be among others facing similar challenges. This experience helps build their self-esteem.



Pictured R: Passengers and siblings Alona Z., Ariella Z., and Elian Z., on their way from Riverside, CA to Merced, CA for Camp Pacifica, a camp for deaf and hearing impaired kids. So. CA Wing pilot and past AFW Board Chair Steve Danz flew the mission.



Pictured L: Dad Ray Lisco, passenger nine-year-old Jayden with mission assistant Sonja Baker on their way home to San Diego area from Lancaster, CA, where Jayden attended Painted Turtle Camp for children with serious medical conditions. So. CA Wing pilot Guy Mangiamele flew the mission and said, "We had a great trip, and Jayden is a fantastic little girl! A very hot day in Lancaster when mission assistant Sonja Baker and I picked up Jayden. They chatted the entire way to San Diego in the back seat while I was busy with the duties up front! Nobody wants to leave The Painted Turtle—including Jayden. Actually, after I heard some of her stories, I wanted to move there! Jayden's father Ray Lisco greeted our flight on the ramp with a large 'Welcome Home Jayden!' sign." Jayden has cerebral palsy and her family is on SSI and Medicaid.



## Flight Plan

**Alan M. Dias, Executive Director**

### Angel Flight

West is on course to fly between 4,800 and 4,900 missions this year. Every first mission we arrange requires approximately

15 communications between the passenger, the pilot, and the requester initiating the flight. In order to *complete* that many missions we will have *arranged* close to 7,800. That is the magnitude of what we will have accomplished.

This success makes the challenges we face more urgent. Our success brings with it increased emphasis on our pilot outreach activities. We are beginning to see an increasing number of missions remaining unfulfilled because there's no available pilot. It's no secret that the cost of flying is going up, the number of pilots is going down, and the general aviation fleet is not getting younger. This reality creates new challenges in continuing to provide our crucial services to those in need.

As we grow, it takes more financial resources to support operations. Several times a month I have conversations with pilots and others who don't understand the synergistic relationship between arranging missions, which is what we raise money to support, and flying missions, which is donated by our generous volunteer pilots. One couldn't exist without the other. A not-for-profit organization in this economy has its own challenges. Our success and the challenges it creates puts increased importance on regularly evaluating the way we do business.

We are always open to considering new ideas and new ways of accomplishing our mission. The organization encourages thinking outside the box and we are continuously looking to make improvements that will allow us to grow and build on our strong foundation. When change costs money we need to move with caution and not invest our limited resources when the return on investment is uncertain.

*Continued on page 3...*

## Air to Air Communication

- AFW is pleased to announce that our long-time volunteer Stephan Fopeano is in remission, back in the world of the healthy, and also as AFW's webmaster!
- AFW sends its heartfelt condolences to the family of Sean McMillan, a long time AFW pilot who was instrumental in establishing the So. CA Earth Angel program in partnership with the Westwood Rotary. He will be missed.
- Our deepest condolences to the family of CO Wing pilot Steve Paul.
- Learn how AFW is committed to a culture of professionalism and safety by going to the Safety Page on AFW's website or click <http://tinyurl.com/8ruea88>
- Watch for upcoming announcement of our expanding relationship with Hawaiian Airlines.
- Learn about the AFW Foundation on our website and find out how you can help support the AFW mission with Planned Giving. Click on <http://bit.ly/QDFaOQ>
- As always, we would like to thank Fred Hulem, AFW pilot, So. CA Wing and Ventura Group's Business Manager, its employees including Brian Farrar, Jennifer Shade and those at Mail Manager, Ventura, for donating their time, materials and expertise to the printing of this and our previous newsletters. We thank them deeply for their continuing generosity in helping to spread the mission of 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](mailto:newsletter@angelflightwest.org) or call us at (310) 390-2958.

## In the Hangar Ivan Martinez



Ivan Martinez is the newest staff member at AFW. He is one of three Mission Coordinators who helps coordinate all missions, but especially those for transporting blood donations. Ivan is one of those young people (he's 28!) who seem to defy the stereotype of some of today's apathetic or solely business-minded youths.

Even as young as second grade, Ivan remembers volunteering to help disadvantaged kids in his school. He says, "I was raised to find satisfaction and happiness in helping people. It's clear to see the need and the service that nonprofits provide that can otherwise be overlooked."

While attending college, Ivan had been working in the nonprofit sector for Child Sight, part of the Helen Keller International nonprofit organization. After cutbacks in that organization and graduation from college left him open for something new, he found AFW in March 2012. He's already been on five missions and says, "Every time I fly, my knowledge and interest have grown...It just gets better and better."

Born in Santa Monica, he remembers playing in the park near the airport. Now he says, "The sound of the airplanes reminds me of being a kid." Lucky for AFW, this kid's part of the team that helps those engines carry our precious cargo.

## Flight Plan ...*Continued from page 2*

And therein lies another challenge—managing change across an organization serving 13 states with 1,500 volunteer members. We must be sure that any future changes will respect our culture, our history, our sister volunteer pilot organizations, and all of our members—those who fly single engine planes and those who fly jets.

AFW is positioned to deal with all these challenges and changes. But our primary consideration must always be towards changes that support our core mission—arranging free air transportation in response to non-emergency medical and other compelling human needs.

Blue skies and tailwinds,

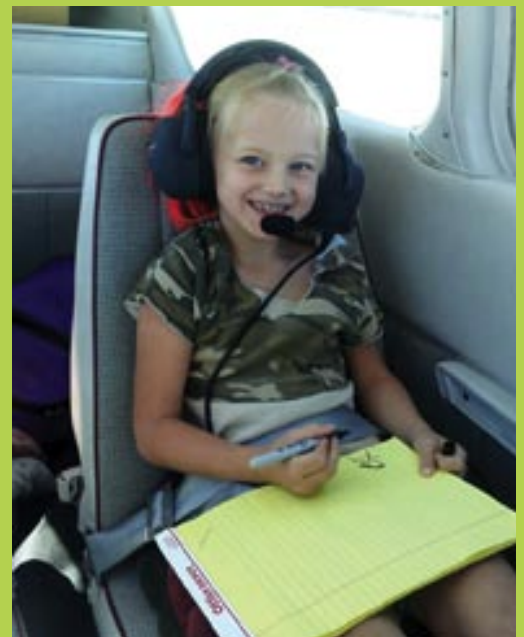


Alan M. Dias  
Executive Director

## More Staff News



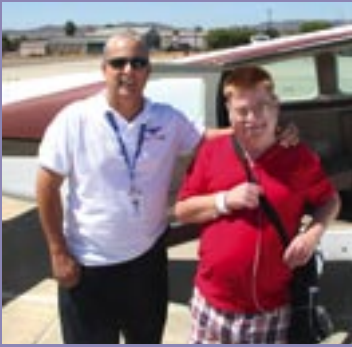
Pictured above are two of AFW's summer interns who provide support to the office during the busy summer camp season. Left is Annecarin (Ann) Brueckner from Germany, who is with AFW from June through October and assists Gillian (Jill) Danis. Gillian returns as a summer camp specialist intern for AFW. She is a student at Loyola Marymount spending her second summer with AFW.



Artist and passenger seven-year-old Schendle S., creating art on her way home to Chico, CA from a week spent in Fresno at a camp for young burn survivors. As you can see she really enjoyed the flight!

## An Unlikely Friendship – Part Deux

*Cheri Cimmarrusti, Associate Executive Director*



Many of you may remember my story of two years ago titled “An Unlikely Friendship.” For a reminder click on <http://bit.ly/bAa6az> then come back and read the heartwarming follow-up.

Two years have passed and the AFW-born friendship between So. CA Command Pilot Marty Wymond and passenger Lonnie S. (pictured above) has grown stronger. As Lonnie will tell you in his own special way, he and Marty have just celebrated their “fourth anniversary as best friends.” While one of Lonnie’s challenges is developmental delay, he was also recently admitted to UCLA Medical Center for treatment of serious cardiac issues.

For Lonnie’s medical treatment, there was no question that Marty would drive him to the hospital and stay with him during Lonnie’s groundbreaking mitral valve surgery. Marty continued to stay by Lonnie’s side during his recovery—a very touching sign of their bond.

Josh and I visited Lonnie during his recovery and were amazed at the depth of commitment they have to each other. When we arrived that day, we found Lonnie munching on his lunch watching TV with Marty at his side.

Lonnie said he was doing well and felt pretty good. Trying unsuccessfully to open his carton of milk, Marty intervened by asking, “Do you want me to open that for you?” Lonnie smiled and said, “Yes.” Marty joked, “You like all this attention and being waited on, don’t you?” Lonnie just grinned and said, “Yes, I do!” We all laughed (including Lonnie) at his directness and honesty.

While discussing the surgery, which involved replacing his mitral valve with the mitral valve of a cow, Josh joked with Lonnie that maybe he wouldn’t be eating hamburgers anymore now that he had a cow part in him. Lonnie laughed again and said, “Nope! Only chicken!” During this time, Marty rustled through paperwork preparing for Lonnie’s release and flight home with AFW. Marty said he was taking care of the necessary paperwork for him. They made plans for Marty to pick Lonnie up at the airport when he flies home and he will also get him settled in to finish recuperating.

We could sense that Lonnie was getting tired so Josh and I got ready to leave. Although tired, Lonnie still grinned and said goodbye enthusiastically. On our way out, Josh and I commented on the remarkable friendship that came from one single flight four years ago, and feel blessed to be part of such a wonderful organization that allowed this friendship to bloom.

Ciao...

*Cheri Cimmarrusti*

## Oregon Wing - Hero of the Year Award

*Rosemary Pelissier, Oregon Wing Leader*

The OR Wing has been awarded the **Hero of the Year** award for 2012 by the OR Office of Rural Health. This award honors an outstanding person, program or organization that has been responsible for improving the quality and availability of health care in rural OR communities.

Phil Schwimmer, a long time OR AFW passenger, and his wife Merrell were kind enough to nominate the OR Wing for this award. In the nomination, Merrell states, “AFW gave my

husband Phil the opportunity, very frankly, to live life longer. He was accepted in a clinical trial for pancreatic cancer at Virginia Mason in Seattle, but we knew that if he had to be there once a week or even every two weeks, we could not afford to fly there. The patient facilitator told us about AFW. What they do is a gift.”

Congratulations to everyone in the OR Wing! It is the contribution from each one of us that comes together and allows us to make impacts such as this on so many Oregonians!



So. CA Wing pilot Angel Colon and passenger Bertha. Bertha calls our AFW pilots “beautiful people.” AFW has relieved much of the stress from driving the long distance to her treatments for lymphoma, which was diagnosed in 2006. She flies from Victorville, CA to Santa Monica. Bertha says, “Without AFW I would be lost. It was too hard on my family driving me back and forth all the time. They have jobs and are busy with their own lives. The pilots are wonderful. They are so beautiful. I always have to tell people about this. AFW is amazing!”



Passenger Melinda and No. CA Wing pilot Thomas J. Tessier flying from Oakland, CA, home to Crescent City, CA. Thomas says, "She's been traveling every other week for chemo at UCSF in San Francisco for breast cancer. She only has one more treatment to go! She started treatment last year and originally would spend at least seven hours on the road each way. We get her down there in about two hours each way. This is one of our success stories."

[WWW.ANGELFLIGHTWEST.ORG](http://WWW.ANGELFLIGHTWEST.ORG)



Sister Chloe, passenger 10-year-old Trevor and So. CA Wing pilot Kent Allebrand on a mission from Trevor's home in Tucson, AZ to Burbank, CA, where he is receiving treatment at Shriners's Hospital for Children for Prader-Willi syndrome. As a result of the treatment, his mother Skye reports that it is only a matter of time before Trevor is able to walk. The following is a thank you note from Skye:

*Hi Erin!*

*Trevor and Chloe had a blast on the two trips. We really appreciated the pilots [including So. CA Wing pilot Scott Grant] and your kind help coordinating the evaluation trip to LA Shriners for us.*

*I hope we can fly again with AFW when we have to return to CA or TX. The treatment now will be in Philly for Trevor for his feet and legs. I will keep you posted but everything looks very positive for a very successful outcome.*

*Be well and thank you again SO MUCH!  
–Skye, Trevor and Chloe*

### **Cheri Cimmarrusti Speaks on AFW's Behalf to The World's Premier Independent Aviation News Resource**

A press release from So. CA member Colleen Kendall resulted in the recruitment of 22 new members and a podcast interview with Cheri by AVWeb. To listen to this informative and compelling podcast about AFW click on <http://bit.ly/MIHHGg>



WA Wing pilot Bill Webber, who is 88 years old, received The Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award from the FAA. The award recognizes airmen with at least 50 years of safe flying experience. Bill has been flying missions for AFW since 1999.

No. CA pilot Robert Brahm, passenger Teresa and mom Lenore flying from Oakland, CA to San Luis Obispo, CA. Teresa flies monthly for treatment of gastroparesis, which is a syndrome that paralyzes part of the stomach. She says, "AFW saves me time." Her condition would make the drive time of six hours a physical hardship as opposed to the one-hour flight time. This makes her life, as well as her mom's, a lot easier. She says, "I'm so glad there's people out there who help other people like me. I'm grateful for all of them. It is a great organization and I thank God that I have them."

**Angel Flight West Thanks  
Our Major Contributors**

*Alaska Airlines*

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

## TURNING POINT The Video of the Angel Flight West Story

During the nearly 30 years AFW has been arranging flights in response to non-emergency medical and other compelling human needs, we have received much positive press. However, it has been a challenge to have our story accurately and effectively told.

On April 9, 2012, a 30-minute segment of the TV series TURNING POINT aired on BYUTV. And now our story has been told accurately and effectively.

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

*"What an awesome show and what an awesome program AFW is!"*

*–Lisa S., Mother of AFW Passenger*

*"What a great video. It really makes one happy to be part of such an organization."*

*–Bob McGregor, AFW Pilot*

*"Congratulations to you and Alan and the entire organization. A wonderful production!"*

*–Alan Sheiness, Treasurer,  
Patient AirLift Services*



Passenger Trina C. and her daughter Karina on a 2-leg mission from No. CA to AZ for treatment of Trina's stage 4 breast cancer. AFW is the only way she has been able to maintain her finances and receive treatment due to the cost of travel for multiple visits. Trina says, "Without AFW I wouldn't be able to keep up with treatments. All the pilots are amazing and wonderful. Some pilots have even brought lunch for my daughter. And I remember when another pilot not only flew me to my destination, but also drove me in his personal vehicle all the way to my clinic." Some of the pilots that have flown Trina are Randy Henry, So. CA Wing; Dennis Phelan, AZ Wing; Craig Lutz, No. CA Wing; Jeffrey Gidley, So. CA Wing; Zoltan Azary, No. CA Wing; and Stephen Bobko-Hillenaar, AZ Wing.



No. CA pilot Curt Taylor, passenger Linda S. and mission assistant Christine Taylor flying from Concord, CA to Eureka, CA for Linda's chemotherapy treatments for endometrial cancer. Linda lives in a rural area and her otherwise six-hour drive would be very difficult to endure after the physical side effects of chemotherapy.



## 18TH ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

**Don't just play around. Play a round that matters.**

**Monday, October 8, 2012**

**We will be holding the 18th Annual Angel Flight West Golf Tournament. Over the years this event has evolved into an anticipated gathering for supporters of our mission and has consistently sold out.**

**This year the venue is the Oak Creek Golf Club in Irvine (pictured). This Tom Fazio-designed course carefully and cleverly integrates natural topography, heritage flora, and dramatic views, creating a unique and compelling round of golf. The event provides an excellent opportunity to socialize with friends and/or entertain business associates, all in support of Angel Flight West.**

**We are happy to announce that Chairman's and President's Cup sponsors will again have the opportunity to play Pebble Beach. Get details at [www.angelflightwest.org/golf](http://www.angelflightwest.org/golf).**

**We always welcome items to be included in the live and silent auction. If you have a resource for an item, please contact Cheri at (310) 390-2958. For information on sponsoring, playing, and/or volunteering to help out at the event, please visit [www.angelflightwest.org/golf](http://www.angelflightwest.org/golf).**

**Join us on October 8th, 2012 for an enjoyable day of golf and socializing in support of AFW.**



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#### ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

The mission of Angel Flight West is to arrange free air transportation in response to health care and other compelling human needs.

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Questions? [info@angelflightwest.org](mailto:info@angelflightwest.org)  
Website [www.angelflightwest.org](http://www.angelflightwest.org)

## Did you know?

You can donate 10% of your ebay auction to AFW.

You can donate Miles to AFW via Alaska Airlines.

<http://tinyurl.com/993tk7s>

Each time you shop at Amazon, AFW can receive a contribution.

<http://tinyurl.com/8avek5h>

We are on YouTube.   
<http://tinyurl.com/c3vwf48>

You can find us on Facebook.

<http://on.fb.me/N1r92o> 

You can also find us on Twitter.

<http://bit.ly/PpNNkM> 



Pictured L to R: wife Neela, No. CA Wing pilot Robert Brahm and passenger Noorudin B. on a mission from their home in No. CA to So. CA for his treatment of prostate cancer. They are living on a very limited income of SSI and have no resources for travel for treatment. They are both very grateful for AFW's help.



Passenger Teija M. enjoying her flight from Hayward, CA to Merced, CA to Camp Pacifica, a summer camp for hearing impaired children. No. CA Wing pilot Carol Healey flew the mission.