



# FLIGHTS OF HOPE

Quarterly newsletter for Angel Flight West's members and friends

## Top 10 Reasons Why We Love Angel Flight West

Aimee L., mom of AFW passenger 7-month-old Christian L., gives us 10 reasons why we do what we do, and reminds us all of what we have to be grateful for. See Christian's story below.

10. Fly with AFW and you will no longer say the word "nine." Instead, you'll become addicted to saying the word niner, and you'll start to learn the rest of the phonetic alphabet.

9. Without a spleen, Christian doesn't have a fully capable immune system. His pediatrician wouldn't okay a commercial flight because of the risk of him getting sick. If it wasn't for AFW we were facing a 15-hour-plus car ride with a sick baby.

8. Unlike commercial airlines, we do not get harassed for carrying a cooler full of fortified breast milk and compounded medications for Christian.

7. We can travel with oxygen tanks, unlike commercial airlines where you can only travel with an oxygen concentrator. What's more, the pilots are flexible with what altitude we fly, so if Christian's oxygen saturation doesn't come up with oxygen,

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Mom Aimee L., dad Tygh and 7-month-old passenger Christian being flown by WA Wing Command Pilot Dale Lamberton from their home in Yakima, WA to Palo Alto, CA so that Christian could receive specialized treatment for a rare condition at Lucile Packard Children's Hospital. It's hard to imagine smiling while dealing with something like this, but as you can see in this picture, that's what AFW and pilots like Dale make families do all the time.

## For Many Things, We Give Thanks

**Cheri Cimmarrusti, Assistant Executive Director**

Christian L. was born a healthy little boy on February 28, 2013. Once home though, his mom worried that his breathing seemed labored and his color wasn't right—not like the other three babies she'd had. She was told several times that if he was eating, he was fine. However, at his two-week check-up, Christian was whisked off to the emergency room after the doctors found his oxygen saturation extremely low. Multiple tests revealed that Christian was

suffering with heterotaxy—a disease so rare that it is diagnosed in only one out of every four million births. Babies born with this condition often have organs that are missing, deformed, reversed in their arrangement or misplaced. They diagnosed Christian with a severe heart condition, a missing spleen, multiple organs reversed in the body and duplicates of these. For example, his left lung was where a left lung should be, but was a duplicate of the right lung.

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## Flight Plan

*Alan M. Dias, Executive Director*

### We Are Thankful

As 2013 draws to a close, AFW can take pride in knowing that we have once again positively

impacted hundreds of lives and perhaps saved a few. Giving back by doing something we are passionate about like aviation is a special blessing, and this opportunity is truly something for which we can be thankful.

As a leading volunteer pilot organization, we work closely with other public benefit flying organizations and especially other Angel Flights. After launching AFIDS 2.0 in October of 2012, we offered it free to other organizations. A user group was formed and today nine organizations are participating in AFIDS' ongoing improvement. This is contributing to enhanced communication between the groups, which in turn, means helping more people. We can be thankful for this ongoing co-operation.

What we do wouldn't be possible without our dedicated staff, consultants, and Board of Directors, but especially the hundreds of volunteer pilots throughout our thirteen states. They represent a level of kindness and generosity that speaks to the best in all of us. In the almost twenty years of involvement with AFW, I am constantly amazed and humbled by their selfless generosity. Many times over I hear pilots say that they get back more from their passengers than they give themselves. The spirit and positive attitudes of our passengers is nothing short of inspiring.

It's not only our pilot volunteers that make us successful, but *all* our volunteers—our Ground Angels (non-pilot volunteers) and our Earth Angels (those who volunteer to drive our passengers to and from their appointments and sometimes called Auto Pilots). We are thankful for all of them, and it's this team effort that sets AFW apart.

We are thankful for our hundreds of patrons—the individuals, corporations, and foundations that support AFW financially. It takes close to 1.3 million dollars a year to arrange the missions, recruit the pilots, and do the outreach to publicize our mission and to cover the overhead of the office. Without the financial support of our patrons we wouldn't be able arrange free air transportation to those in need.

What we do is unique as a non-profit. We utilize a resource called general aviation, and along with our commercial airline partners dramatically and positively impact thousands of lives.

As the year draws to a close, I want to personally thank all those who make our mission possible. It's a privilege to be AFW's Executive Director.

Blue Skies and Tailwinds,

Alan Dias,  
Executive Director ✈

### 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 click on link "Watch AFW Videos" on bottom of the home page, or go to <http://tinyurl.com/7opye7c>.

**Angel Flight West Thanks Our  
Major Contributors**

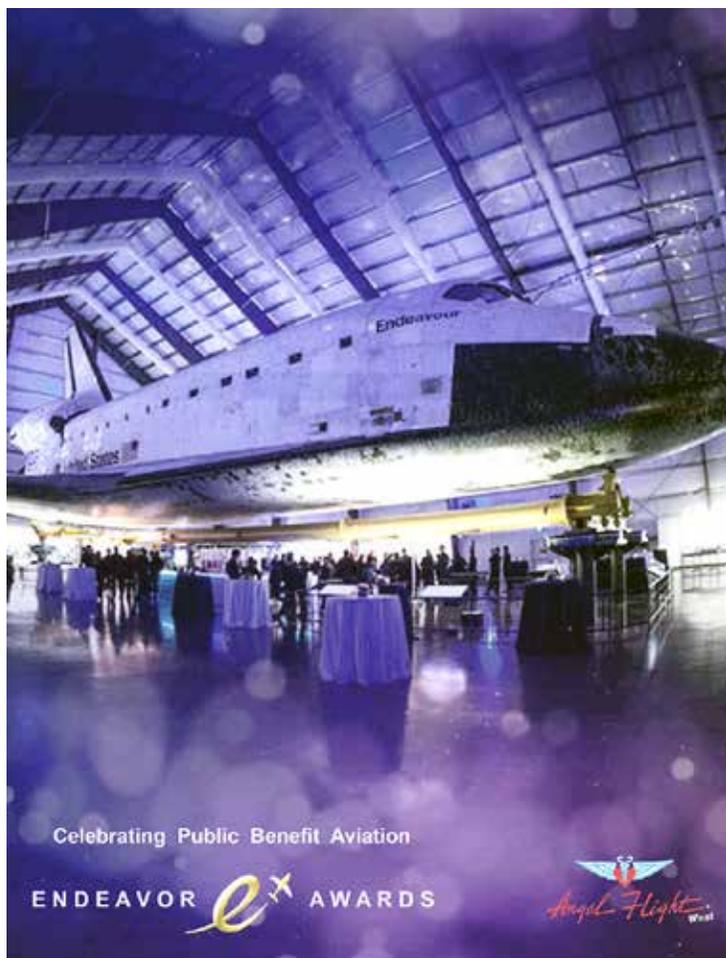


**The Elaine W. and Kevin P. Kauffman  
Family Foundation**

**and**

**The Tom and Mary Kay Gallagher  
Foundation**

## Endeavor Awards Gala on May 4, 2014



Mark your calendars for May 4, 2014 and plan to join us for “the best event of the year” to celebrate the work of volunteer pilots across the country. Join celebrities, astronauts, volunteer pilots, health care providers and others who support public benefit aviation. Angel Flight West is inaugurating the annual Endeavor Awards Gala to recognize individuals and organizations nationwide who utilize aviation to provide access to humanitarian services that save and improve lives. Learn more about the exciting details of the event at [www.endeavorawards.org](http://www.endeavorawards.org). You can sign up to receive updates by email.

Tickets will go on sale to the public in January 2014. Many tickets will be pre-sold at Premium Sponsorship Levels. The AFW community will have an exclusive opportunity in December to buy individual tickets before they go on sale to the public. All proceeds go to Angel Flight West.

This will be a memorable event for all who love aviation and support public benefit flying.



Sapphire V. receives treatment at Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital for pancreatitis. No. CA Wing Command Pilot Shaun Campbell flew Sapphire and her mother Rosa from Fresno to Palo Alto, CA for Sapphire’s procedure before being admitted to the hospital for surgery. Rosa is a single parent raising six children with no reliable vehicle.

New passenger Shane H. flying 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 No. CA Wing Command Pilot Cathy Mendez, and home by No. CA Wing Command Pilot Vincent Wilkins. Looks like Shane enjoyed his flights!



## In the Hangar

### Jill Dannis

Jill Dannis is one of our newest mission operations coordinators. She originally came to AFW as an intern in the spring of 2011 after seeing a job post from AFW on the Loyola Marymount University student career services website. As an intern that spring, Jill did general office work while also training to be a mission coordinator to assist with the increase in flights over the busy summer months. She worked at AFW as a mission coordinator during the summers of 2011 and 2012, mostly working on summer camp mission coordination. She was offered a full-time position as a mission coordinator upon graduating in May 2013 with a degree in Sociology.

Jill had been heavily involved in community service in college and interested in nonprofits as a result of her studies in sociology, so she was looking to combine her interests. After graduation she thought she might do a year of post-graduate service abroad, but through her previous work at the organization she had “gotten really attached to AFW, so when the offer came it gave me an opportunity of doing service in a more permanent way.”

AFW has also given Jill a chance to “see what a great impact the organization has on both the passengers and pilots—not only the people who are going to treatment, but it also gives meaning to the pilots and what they like to do.” AFW thanks Jill for helping to continue the service we provide. ➔

## Air to Air Communication

- ➔ Save the Date! May 17, 2014 Wing Leader Retreat and Board Meeting. Van Nuys, CA. For details contact Cheri at [cheric@angelflightwest.com](mailto:cheric@angelflightwest.com)
- ➔ Our heartfelt condolences to Jennie Manders-Dias on the loss of her mom, Valerie.
- ➔ AFW wishes Stephen Bobko-Hillenaar our best after a long term of service as a Wing Leader.
- ➔ Best wishes to recently retired Board Members Warren Wood and Skip Armstrong. They will be missed!
- ➔ 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>
- ➔ Learn about the AFW Foundation on our website and find out how you can help support the AFW mission with Planned Giving.
- ➔ Get great holiday gifts this season on the 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](http://www.angelflightwest.org) then click on the link Land’s End.
- ➔ **Amazon Holiday Shoppers!** AFW will receive a portion of your purchase if you go through [www.angelflightwest.org](http://www.angelflightwest.org) which will take you to the Amazon page for AFW. You can also go to the AFW homepage and click on the Amazon link at the bottom.
- ➔ 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.

# Top 10 Reasons Why We love Angel Flight West

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they'll just fly lower. (editor's note: pilots adjust as allowed by FAA regulations.)

6. If Christian didn't do well for any reason, they could immediately land the plane. The pilots repeatedly told me this and they were willing to do whatever they could to help Christian.

5. The AFW pilot that volunteered to fly us down to CA was actually Christian's grandpa's cardiologist. Neither of us knew this beforehand. Who could be better to fly a sick kid with half a heart to their big open heart surgery than a cardiologist?!

4. The views were incredible. Just breathtaking. The pilots love to look up landmarks for you and it's like a guided tour. Plus in a small plane everyone gets a window seat.

3. Your smart phone still works to send texts



Sweet little eight-month-old Alivia S. with her parents Laura and Lance, and AZ Wing Command Pilot Nader Yassa, who flew them all the way from Santa Ana, CA where Alivia has been receiving specialized laser treatment for a capillary malformation once a month at UCI Medical Center, back to their home in Phoenix, AZ.

## For Many Things, We Give Thanks

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Christian needed very complicated open-heart surgery. While he has great cardiologists near home, the best pediatric cardiac surgeon on the west coast is at Stanford. With limited resources and the inability to fly commercially due to his compromised immune system, the family would have been forced to drive from Yakima, WA to Palo Alto, CA—a long drive under the best of situations.

Mom, Aimee, was directed to AF Georgia,

when you're flying. I was able to send Google map locations and picture texts to my kids as they watched our trip back. They even watched us land.

2. On the day that we were supposed to fly home from the hospital, the two AFW pilots waited on standby for us. When it was clear that it was going to be more than just a quick trip and it would set us too far behind on our itinerary, the pilots offered to fly us home the next day.

1. When we were at one of the most stressful moments in our lives, AFW stepped in to show us that good people are still out there. People who share their talents to make the world a better place. It was both literally and figuratively the lift we needed to take care of Christian. ✈



No. CA Command Pilot James Courtney flew five-year-old Tanner R. and his parents Nicole and Robert to Lucile Packard Children's Hospital in Palo Alto, CA from Yreka, CA for outpatient chemotherapy treatment for leukemia. Nicole says how grateful she is to pilot James for being so great, and giving them such a nice flight to treatment. Many thanks to James for giving Tanner's family this wonderful gift.

and then to AFW from a heterotaxy support page on Facebook. With a number of challenges both pre- and post-surgery, AFW was able to transport the family. While we can debate the merits of social media, there isn't a more meaningful way to use it than the way this family has done. Aimee's Facebook post is the front page article of this newsletter, *10 Reasons We Why We Love AFW*. To find out more about Christian and his battle, see his Facebook page at "Christian's Soldiers." ✈



L to R: WY Wing Command Pilot Jack Schulte, passenger Scott S., CO Wing Command Pilot Mike Forney and Scott's companion, Joel Price flying from Bozeman, MT to Scott's treatment in Denver, CO. The photo was taken in Lander, WY, the hand-off point for this two-leg mission. Jack Schulte flew Scott from Bozeman, MT to Lander, WY, and Mike Forney flew him on to Denver, CO. Scott receives cancer treatment at the University of Colorado Cancer Center. Thanks to Mike and Jack, who make Scott's trip more comfortable and possible from his home in Belgrade, MT all the way to Denver, CO.



No. CA Wing Command Pilot Bob McGregor flew passenger Tiffani B. and her mom Faith from their home in Carson City, NV to Lucile Packard Children's Hospital in Palo Alto, CA. Tiffani is receiving specialty treatment for her glioblastoma, an aggressive brain tumor. She would not be able to afford to get herself to and from all her life-saving cancer treatments without volunteer pilots like Bob.



Left photo: Another important service that AFW pilots provide is transporting life-saving blood for blood banks. So, CA Wing Command Pilot David Hightower shared this picture from his most recent mission for the San Diego Blood Bank.

## 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—one that takes only minutes—for those who have experienced the organization to help spread our mission. Click on the site below, read what others have said, and add your own review. Go to: <http://greatnonprofits.org/organizations/view/angel-flight-west-inc>



OR Wing Command Pilot Kerrick Philleo flew the first leg from CA to OR of passenger Gigi L.'s trip to treatment, and WA Wing Command Pilot Norm Rittenhouse (who also took the photo) flew the second leg from OR to WA. Gigi lives in Santa Maria, CA and must travel to Renton, WA to receive specialized treatment at Seattle Cancer Treatment and Wellness Center. She is retired with a fixed income and on Medicare. Despite all she is going through, Gigi still has a beautiful smile on her face. Many thanks to our generous AFW volunteer pilots like Norm and Kerrick for giving our passengers a reason to smile.



No. CA Wing Command Pilot Curtis Taylor on a mission flying passenger Lee C. What a beautiful flight that must have been! Lee lives in Chico, CA with her husband William, and has to travel to Palo Alto, CA to receive treatment at Stanford Hospital for her liver cancer. Due to her illness and treatment schedule Lee is unable to work, so travel costs have become an extreme financial burden to the couple. AFW helps Lee to get to and from her life-saving cancer treatments without the added stress of paying for travel expenses.



Mom Rebecca, little brother Chris Jr., and four-year-old passenger Alisha C. being flown by UT Wing Command Pilot Stephen Booth from Salt Lake City, UT to Boise, ID for the first leg of her two-leg mission home to WA from treatment, and WA Wing Command Pilot Don Nelson flew the second leg. Alisha has early-onset scoliosis, and goes to Shriners Hospital for Children in Salt Lake City, UT for specialized casting and bracing. Frequent travel for her treatment has become a financial hardship for her family.

### **A Thank You from an AFW Passenger**

*4 Things You Cannot Recover*

*The stone...after the throw!*

*The word...after it is said!*

*The occasion...after the loss!*

*The time...after it is gone!*

*Thank you for your kindness  
and care of Philip.*

*He is 'here' because of your  
extraordinary efforts.*



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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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*Angel Flight West wishes all of you and yours a very happy, healthy holiday and new year.*

This very sweet picture of passenger Jodi G. was sent to AZ Wing Command Pilot Dennis Phelan by Jodi and her husband Andrew after having flown two of their missions this year. Dennis flew Jodi and her husband from their home in Carlsbad, CA to the Cancer Treatment Centers of America in Goodyear, AZ so that Jodi could access experimental chemotherapy treatment for her Stage 4 metastatic ovarian cancer. This is such a beautiful reminder of the need for AFW pilots like Dennis, the amazing gift they give to passengers, and a reminder for all that we have to be thankful for. ✈



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