

### Spotlight on an Angel Passenger Asima M.

by Cheri Cimmarrusti, Associate Executive Director

Longtime AFW passenger Asima M. came to the US in February 1997 as a refugee from Croatia. Her life had been very difficult. At the time, she didn't realize it would only get tougher!

In March 1998, shortly after the birth of her son Harris, Asima was diagnosed with a desmoid tumor, an abnormal growth that arises from the connective tissue that provides strength and flexibility to bones, ligaments and muscles. The doctors surgically and successfully removed the tumor. However, in 2000 she experienced a recurrence. When the doctors operated again, they found it was not treatable since it had entwined around her intestines and pancreas. Her only option was a transplant. Oakland Hospital, where she was being treated, referred her to UCSF. She ended up having a small bowel and pancreas transplant at UCLA. In November of 2000, Asima received her transplant and began the lengthy process of recovery, spending quite a bit of time in the UCLA hospital.

As part of her post-op treatment, Asima was informed that she would need many follow-up appointments. Her social worker at

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**No. CA Wing Command Pilot Chris Bennett** flying **passenger Asima M.** from Santa Monica, CA to Concord, CA after a follow-up appointment for Asima's small bowel transplant.



### Alaska Airlines and AFW Help Disaster Response Workers Reach Haiti



Photos by Thomas Hudson

AFW was able to help the Empact Northwest disaster response workers reach Haiti during hurricane Matthew with the help of miles graciously donated by Alaska Airlines. AFW arranged their Alaska Airlines flight to Florida where they were flown to Haiti as part of the medical teams helping those who have been displaced by the hurricane.

AFW has been working with EMPACT Northwest since 2010 when it was formed in response to the 2010 Haiti Earthquake. A group of paramedic/firefighters from the Pacific Northwest responded to Port Au Prince and worked in a field hospital, treating thousands of patients over the remainder of the year. Since then, EMPACT Northwest has

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## ASK JOSH

by Josh Olson, Executive Director

Question: "How's the Capacity Growth Campaign going?"  
– Member Paul Jacobs

In 2017, Angel Flight West will fly its 70,000th mission in support of those needing donated flights to access health and hope. None of that would be possible without our amazing volunteer pilots, Alaska Airlines, ground volunteers, and our small staff. What a fantastic accomplishment with such a generous, great, and hardworking crew! We are changing lives one flight at a time, 12 times per day, over 4,000 times each year. Yet, we can do so much more!!

According to our partners at UCLA Healthcare and Ronald McDonald House, we are serving less than five percent of the people who qualify for our services. That means that AFW is using only seven percent of our private pilot volunteers, and also underutilizing much of the Charter flight and commercial travel options available to us. Most of that is due to a lack of awareness from those who have not experienced nor heard about our gifts of flight. We want to change all of that. We are way too effective of an organization

to be kept secret. We want to help more families in need.

Last year, AFW volunteer pilot and retired Alaska Airlines CEO Bill Ayer provided a challenge grant of \$300,000 designated for capacity growth initiatives to allow AFW to grow, reach, and serve more people in need of our flights. Because we operate in the blue, we really wanted to reach for the skies and double our missions in the near future with our "Ascent to 8000" campaign to fly 8000 missions/year by 2020. We've nearly matched Bill's gift and have spent the past 12 months investing in technology, people, and processes that will enable us to climb towards that goal.

We've experienced some success, and more importantly, we've learned a lot. In short, we've increased our missions flown by four percent, mission requests by six percent, membership by 18 percent, and the command pilot population by four percent. You can learn all of the details, goals, and metrics at [www.angelflightwest.org/donate/ascent-to-8000](http://www.angelflightwest.org/donate/ascent-to-8000).

Angel Flight West wants to continue our founders' vision of being volunteer-driven, mission-focused, and patient-centered. As we ascend to our desired

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Save the date! *e\**  
**Endeavor Awards Weekend!**  
 Saturday, May 6, 2017  
 The Endeavor Awards celebration  
 will be held at the  
 California Science Center  
 Los Angeles

**Angel Flight West Wishes to Thank Our Top Contributors**  
 September 8, 2016 to November 11, 2016



Jeffrey & Lisa Marie Kellogg  
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**Passenger Patricia A. and NV Wing Command Pilot Ken Kopec** traveling on the first of a 2-leg mission from Carson City, NV to Visalia, CA. She is receiving treatment at UCLA for short bowel syndrome and transplant that requires monthly visits. Patricia's only income is SSI and she has no other resources or support.





## In the Hangar

Ivan Martinez

Director of Outreach and Communication

We introduced Ivan Martinez in a previous “In the Hangar” article when he began as a Mission Coordinator for AFW in 2012. In that article he said, “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.” Since that article, Ivan has been the Associate Director of Mission Operations, and in October, became AFW’s first Director of Outreach and Communication. “One of my biggest inspirations from my five years at AFW has been the dedication and generosity of our AFW pilots and volunteers, and I am continually awed by them. My new role is to increase outreach and send AFW in a new direction to becoming a more proactive service, which coincides with our sprint efforts in doubling our impact by 2020. We want to deepen our engagement at the Wing level

and expand awareness of AFW in the healthcare communities in our Wings by increasing our pilot recruitment efforts, corporate partnerships and sharing the amazing work AFW does on more social media sites.”

To help our AFW Wings achieve our “Ascent to 8000” goal of flying 8000 missions/year by 2020 Ivan says, “We have sometimes lost touch with our Wings in the day-to-day coordination process, so we will be increasing our support in helping them reach more people depending on the specific needs of each Wing.” For example, he mentions that “Colorado has over 100 pilots, but not enough requests, and Hawai’i has more requests and not enough pilots.” In each Wing, Ivan’s goal is to establish a chief orientation/mentor pilot who will guide new pilots through orientation and answer questions to get them flying their first mission promptly after joining. He will also help Wings increase volunteers available

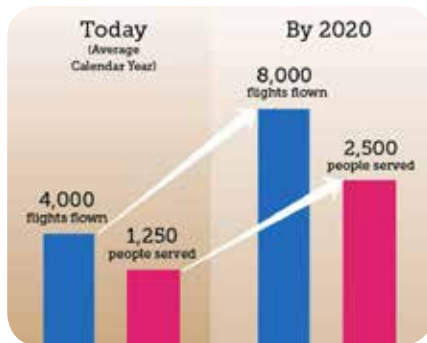
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## ASK JOSH...continued from page 1

altitude, we don’t want to lose power. We want to sustain the growth we’re experiencing and make sure Angel Flight West is endurable for another 35 years when our dream is realized that no one is denied access to healthcare due to lack of transportation.

We invite you to get more involved in our strategic growth and sustainability. Please email or call me if you’re interested in helping us ascend to 8000 at [josho@angelflightwest.org](mailto:josho@angelflightwest.org) or 310-390-2958 X111. You will also receive information to help us sustain our growth through year-end giving. Please give some thought and consideration to how you can significantly impact our mission.

Thank you again for all your help and support! I’m inspired and humbled every day to serve with you as part of the Angel Flight West crew. Let’s take off!



L to R: Grandma Patti, **passenger two-year-old Macy H.** and mom Katie flying from Portland, OR, home to Great Falls, MT with **OR Command Pilot Tom Tormey.** Macey requires multiple trips for treatment for glaucoma. Their one-income family struggles with the heavy costs associated with her medical treatment.

## AFW Reaches Out to Underserved Imperial County, CA

Gerardo has bilateral hearing loss and is one of a number of Rady Children's Hospital San Diego cochlear implant patients who AFW has recently been flying weekly for continued care. Gerardo lives four hours round-trip by car from Rady's in Imperial County, an underserved rural community with very limited resources and transportation options. Heather Rose, Clinical Coordinator for Rady Children's Cochlear Implant Program says that AFW "is an amazing breakthrough for many of our families who do not have the resources to make on-going weekly post-implant therapy appointments. If they cannot attend, they may not be approved for a cochlear implant. This is a significant financial burden for many families and children who miss an entire day of work and school each week when they are already behind in school due to their hearing loss, speech and language delays. AFW has given several children the opportunity to receive cochlear implants that were previously denied because they now can attend the necessary appointments."

Prior to AFW, Gerardo's grandmother and guardian Maria struggled with making the two-hour drive from Calexico to San Diego for Gerardo's weekly therapy and implant follow-up appointments and many times simply could not afford it. When she was diagnosed with cancer and required chemotherapy treatment, she was not able to make the 117 mile trip and Gerardo missed nearly a year of appointments. The weekly drive took a toll on Gerardo, too, as the long



**Passenger eight-year-old Gerardo V. with his grandmother and guardian Maria on their way from Calexico, CA to San Diego, CA for treatment and therapy at Rady Children's Hospital for Gerardo's bi-lateral hearing loss.**

drives would exhaust and dismay him and he began to dread his much needed trips to treatment.

Gerardo no longer dreads going to his treatments. He has become quite fond of flying and looks forward to it. Maria says, "What you have been doing has been a blessing. We struggled so much to take Gerardo to his treatments, and are very grateful to all the pilots for their time and most of all, for their generosity. It is thanks to AFW being there and providing transportation that his second implant was finally approved after several times being turned down. We are very excited about that." AFW has already completed 42 pilot flown missions with an additional 14 Earth Angel missions for Rady's cochlear implant patients since August 2016.



Far right in photo: **NV Wing Command Pilot Dr. Bill Ramos** flying campers from **Camp Laurel** in San Bernadino, CA home to Las Vegas, NV. Camp Laurel is a camp for families with life-threatening illness. AFW flies many specialty camps every summer. Lauren Franklin, the camp's Director of Volunteers says, "Reflecting on the past year, I was struck again by what an amazing support AFW is to The Laurel Foundation and all the children we serve. It's only thanks to you that we are able to provide services for many of our families. We cannot be more grateful for all that you make possible!"



# AFW Golf Classic Fundraiser a Success!



Volunteers and staff support the AFW Golf Classic. L to R: AFW volunteer Amy Dell; AFW mission coordinators Kortney Davis and Anne Paik; and AFW volunteer Linda Waturski.

It was certainly a day of fun in the sun at Monarch Beach Golf Links on Friday October 21! Nearly 100 golfers gathered to scramble at the beautiful course by the sea. Later, many more sun lovers arrived to enjoy a wine and cuisine reception, silent auction and mission moment with passenger Santiago and his mom Erma. AFW has not presented a golf fundraiser in four years, and this venue was the perfect place to resurrect it. Command Pilot Steve Beck, his wife Jill and daughter Jen, in addition to Ann Rommel were instrumental in getting the

event "teed up" in the OC. Monarch Beach Golf Links marketing manager Jackie Kazarian and team ensured the operations that day went off without a hitch. The Helicopter Ball Drop was an added feature, thanks to Mercy Air 5. Photos were taken by flying drones, courtesy of AirMap. The consensus by attendees? It was a wonderful event for such a worthy cause that should be repeated next year! So, mark your calendars for October 2017!

## End of Year Tax Donation Information



AFW has acknowledged and thanked donors with a letter which may be used for tax purposes. Our Tax ID # which appears on all donation letters is 95-3956297. If you have a question or concerns regarding a donation letter, please send an explanation with your name and donation amount to [info@angelflightwest.org](mailto:info@angelflightwest.org).

Please note, the cost of an opportunity drawing is not considered as a charitable contribution. You can also print your hours of flight time by logging on to **AFIDS**, then on the lower left click on **Year End Reports**. This will bring you to a page that you can enter beginning and end dates for your total flight hours for that period and a brief description of AFW that you can also take to your tax preparer.

For in-kind donations of flights, AFW is designated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization registered with the Internal Revenue Service. In-kind contributions including the cost of AFW missions are tax deductible. Includable costs would be plane rental charges, fuel, oil, tie down fees, ground transportation charges, meals and lodging. You should consult your tax professional if necessary. The FAA has also ruled that claiming tax deductions is not considered compensation.

## AFW Helps Disaster Response Workers Reach Haiti ...Continued from page 1

been established as a Washington State nonprofit corporation and a federal 501(c)3 organization.

EMPACT's Executive Director Jake Gillanders says their mission is one that they share with AFW. "It's been an amazing opportunity to work with like-minded humanitarians. We also place a high priority on assisting underserved populations and areas that are socioeconomically depressed. From rural communities in the US to rural communities in Haiti, we will respond when called upon. The one common thread that each of our volunteers shares, however,

is a commitment to their community and commitment to humanity." EMPACT Northwest is 100% volunteer operated. The EMPACT mission is accomplished with credentialed responders and educators who, like AFW volunteers, maintain the highest degree of professional integrity. Gillanders says, "Thank you for all of Angel Flight's help and support!" For more information, visit their website: <http://www.empactnorthwest.org/>

## Air to Air

- Our condolences to the Dewey family for the loss of our longtime **No. CA pilot Harry Dewey**. Harry was 90 years old and joined AFW in 1991.
- AFW also sends condolences to **No. CA Command Pilot** and member since 2000 **Steve Magee** on the loss of his **wife Melissa**.
- In addition, AFW sends its condolences to the family of **passenger Gerald Pokuta**.
- You can donate miles to **AFW via Alaska Airlines** at: <http://tinyurl.com/993tk7s>
- **AFW Store! Great Gifts!** In conjunction with Land's End, AFW is offering a variety of men's and women's clothing and other merchandise for purchase. Click on: <http://tinyurl.com/lq27xg2>
- **glassybaby**, a private Seattle company of handmade glass votive candle holders, donates a percentage of profits to charities that help cancer patients. AFW is one of these fortunate charities. Go to website at <http://glassybaby.com/power-of-giving>
- **Phillips 66®** has agreed to provide AFW pilots a \$1-per-gallon avgas rebate. Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/ha2gxyv>
- The aviation-focused company **Scheyden** offers a 50% discount to AFW members on their eyewear products. Use the promo code ANGEL on checkout at: <http://scheyden.com/>
- **ZuluLog**, a professional, cloud-based online pilot logbook system, is offering 10% discount to all AFW members and a donation back to AFW with every purchase! Use code ZULUAFW when ordering. <https://www.zululog.com/>



L to R: **Mission Assistant and So. CA Command Pilot Jeff Hsiao**, **So. CA Command Pilot and past AFW Board President Steve Danz**, **passenger Noah R.** and mom **Misty**, flying from Fresno, CA to Santa Monica, CA. Noah is going for a post-surgical follow-up appointment for liver and small bowel transplant due to lupus. The family lives on a single-income and their travel resources are limited.

## Friends and family are honored and remembered through donations made to AFW in their names.

September 8, 2016 ~ November 11, 2016

### In Memory Of

Terry Cobb  
Sherm Congdon  
David DePaolo  
Sherry Brink Hood  
William Merrill

Ken Nemeroff  
Kaitlynn Oliver  
Peter and Kathleen Tomarken  
Carl P. Walter

### In Honor Of

Tom Poberezny



## Run/Walk the LA Big 5K for AFW

As part of the LA Marathon, you can support AFW this coming March by running or walking the LA Big 5K. Everyone running for AFW needs to register through our unique link: <http://tinyurl.com/pggxpgf> or contact Ivan Maritnez for more details at: [IvanM@angelflightwest.org](mailto:IvanM@angelflightwest.org)

## In the Hangar Ivan Martinez...continued from page 3

for outreach, which includes raising awareness of AFW by contacting medical facilities, specialty camps, nonprofits, aviation and other organizations through presentations, manning AFW information booths, helping with social media, and/or delivering brochures to name a few. In addition, he will also be supporting the Wings in establishing a contact Earth Angel coordinator who will help patients with ground transportation for every mission so AFW can provide a seamless traveling experience.

Ivan is a unique candidate for this job having the perspective from his various AFW roles. "I will continue to work closely with the coordination team; my position will be the bridge that connects the

coordination staff and our amazing volunteers which are the boots on the ground. I look forward to AFW's vision of the 8000 missions/year by 2020. It just takes the right efforts to gather the resources to reach out to more and more people." Ivan says he is grateful "for this opportunity given to me. I am excited to work closer with all the volunteers. We'd like to emphasize that we need help. There are many opportunities to get involved other than flying and I am the person to talk to." If you or anyone you know would like to volunteer for any of these opportunities, contact Ivan at 310-398-6123 x102 or IvanM@angelflightwest.org.

### Amazon Shoppers! Did you know?



AFW receives a portion of your Amazon purchase all year if you click on: <http://tinyurl.com/jchjv3m>, which will take you to the Amazon page for AFW. Gift giving season is upon us! Why not order from Amazon and give in two ways at once this year—or all year?

### AFW Calendar of Events 2017

- |                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| 21-22<br><b>JAN</b> | Planning Retreat and Planning Day, Bay Area, CA, for details email <a href="mailto:info@angelflightwest.org">info@angelflightwest.org</a> or call 310-390-2958 |
| 18<br><b>MAR</b>    | LA Big 5K - Run for AFW! 8AM Dodger Stadium  |
| 06<br><b>MAY</b>    | 2017 Endeavor Awards, California Science Center  |

Contact Wings for local information or click on: <http://tinyurl.com/pxv6cxc>

## Spotlight ...continued from first page

UCLA told her about AFW in January 2001 and, as they say, the rest is history!

For nearly a year her health was stable. But sadly, Asima had another recurrence in December 2001. She returned to UCLA for another surgery in January 2002. This time one of her main arteries was nicked and she hemorrhaged almost fatally. I still remember receiving the phone call from her social worker pleading with us to fly her husband from Oakland to Santa Monica as they didn't think she would survive! To the rescue was Command Pilot Ken Adelman and his Citation. He was able to get her husband Jared to the hospital before she was out of surgery hours later. Due to the large amount of blood loss and other medical issues, Asima also lost a kidney. Fortunately, she recovered and has been flying to her treatments ever since.

In a bizarre event not related to any previous health issue, Asima swallowed a fish bone while

eating, which punctured her small intestine requiring yet *another* surgery in 2004. (Some people have all the luck!) She recovered once again and it has been a delight to watch Asima grow from the frail patient she was to a strong and healthy passenger today! She has now flown with us on 125 mission legs with 75 different pilots!!!

Asima says that AFW has made a huge difference in her life, saving her a five to six hour drive each way to treatments. She says AFW has become like a family to her as she and her husband reflect on how grateful they are for flying him to her side during that life-threatening episode many years ago. Raising a young son during this time, Asima says that without the generosity of the pilots who have helped her throughout the years her and her family's life would have been much more difficult. To all of you who have helped Asima and others like her, you truly are the angels that keep this organization going!



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Santa Monica, CA 90405

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Passenger Christina H. with WA Wing Command Pilot Dale Terwedo flying from Pasco, WA to Tacoma, WA for mental health treatment stemming from early trauma. Christina's mom is single and a nurse with two special needs kids. The family is living on one income and their insurance does not cover all costs of treatments.

*Wishing you  
and yours a very  
happy, healthy,  
and safe  
holiday season!  
From the AFW Staff*



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