



# SEMPER FI FUND



Peace. Love. Hope. Wishing you a wonderful holiday season.

*The Semper Fi Fund provides not only assistance, but opportunities to meet others sharing similar experiences.*

Hello, family and friends,

I usually don't write mass emails, but this is a cause worth championing. A few weekends ago, I took part in the Marine Corps Marathon, where I ran the 10K. Todd handcycled the full marathon (26.2 miles). We were able to do this through and in support of a nonprofit organization called Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund (IMSFF). IMSFF has been one of our supporters since a few months after Todd's accident in January 2008.

IMSFF has been an invaluable resource to us since Todd's injury. They have provided medical equipment: a chair lift, a wheelchair, a scooter, a handcycle and money toward our accessible house. They have also sponsored Todd in various activities around the country to encourage physical activity, motivation, and friendship/mentorship with fellow Marines who are also disabled due to an injury.

I am so thankful and blessed to be one of those families. I would like to introduce you to another family in a similar situation, Andy and Sara Robinson. Andy's story, his bravery, his wife Sara's extraordinary support and the heart-wrenching photos really capture the relief this young couple received from IMSFF.

Regards,  
Sara Morand

## HELPING A HERO, HELPING A FAMILY

Andy and Sara Robinson were married in 2004, and within two years their lives were forever changed. Andy was injured in Iraq during his second deployment there. He is a quadriplegic (his C5 vertebra was broken, as well as a few ribs, both tibias and his right fibula, along with his lungs being collapsed), receiving feeling/movement and sensation only above his armpits. Andy was 23 years old when his vehicle struck a roadside bomb in Iraq on that life-changing day in June. Three other Marines were killed. Sara was 21 years old when she found out her husband had survived every military spouse's worst nightmare. Andy retired from the Marines in 2007 and is currently enrolled in college; he also handcycles and plays rugby. Sara just graduated from school, and they are currently working on starting a family together. The Semper Fi Fund has helped them with an adaptive vehicle grant, adaptive housing grant, and financial assistance with travel, medical equipment, and sports equipment and events.



Andy and Sara Robinson (top). Andy, hours after he was injured (left) and Andy on his handcycle (above).



## SEMPER FI FUND

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## A NOTE FROM OUR FOUNDER

Dear Friends, Family and Team,

Season's Greetings and wishing ALL the happiest of holiday seasons for 2010! We hope that you enjoy our newsletter, and are confident the stories and pictures will give you a feel for SFF's extraordinary efforts on behalf of our wounded and their families. We've had an amazing year with many joys, blessings and touching moments that we will never forget.

In 2010 we received an A+ from AIP on our first rating, and a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator—their highest rating. Our spirits and morale soar during this holiday season, as we now face a time of increased needs of newly injured coming back from Afghanistan. Rather than focusing on all the remarkable services and support we've provided (\$44M to date), we are focusing on how we can better serve our young wounded Marines, Sailors, and other service members and their families.

These are critical, historic times, with the severity of injuries arriving stateside from Afghanistan. The needs are in front of us, and we are remaining faithful to our motto of "serving those who preserve our freedom" for as long as it takes! We have only been able to accomplish this amazing amount and depth of support because of YOU—our beautiful donors and our team. Thank you, thank you!!

Happy Holidays and wishing ALL a wonderful 2011!! We are forever grateful for your love, prayers and support!

Warmest Regards,

*Karen Guenther*

Karen Guenther  
President, CEO, Founder

## A WORD FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

As I pen this update, the holiday season is now upon us, with thoughts and activities oriented on family, friends and festivities that allow us all to share what's special about America and our freedom. My recent visits to Bethesda Naval Hospital have revealed the largest number of patients hospitalized since the inception of combat operations in 2001. Even more striking, many of those hospitalized have made several combat deployments.

The upcoming year will be extremely tough for our Marines and Sailors. The intensity of combat in Afghanistan, at its highest level since 2001, promises to continue for the next several months. I only wish that each of you could witness firsthand the breadth of assistance provided—both materially and spiritually. Suffice it to say that I NEVER visit Marines, Sailors and their families at any hospital without hearing countless stories of how the "Angels" of this Fund have brought love to the injured and family members—very often at a MOST critical time for the warrior.

Have a GREAT holiday, but please spend some energy in spreading the word to others of how a group of Marine wives sat around a kitchen table and built a dream that has now assisted THOUSANDS by sharing MILLIONS. Your mission: encourage others to SACRIFICE by supporting the Semper Fi Fund, allowing the "Angels" of the Fund to continue their unbelievable work!

Take care of yourselves, take care of each other, God bless and Semper Fidelis!

*Al Gray*

General Al Gray, USMC (Ret.)  
29th Commandant of the Marine Corps  
Chairman of the Board of Directors

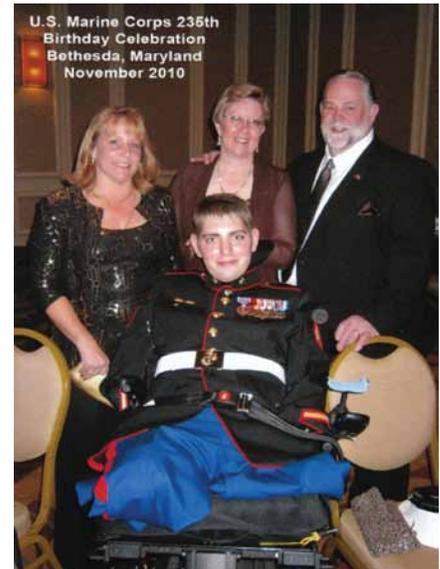
## CORPORAL JOHN PECK'S STORY

My name is Richard Piper, and I am the grandfather of Marine Cpl John Michael Peck. I first became aware of the Semper Fi Fund shortly after my grandson was injured by an IED in Afghanistan on May 24, 2010. We were not aware of the fund; the representative came to us to offer assistance to our family. The help was immediate and eliminated many financial concerns we had. This allowed us to focus our time on John's needs and to understand the doctors' concerns. At that time Cpl Peck had lost all four of his limbs, had a very serious mold infection, and we had been told many times that he was hanging on to life by a thread—a very thin thread. Over the past months our grandson has proven that his will to live is huge, and he is still recovering at Walter Reed Hospital. John's needs are still great, but we will continue to support him. As his

needs have changed we have continued to try to meet his needs, and the Semper Fi Fund has been there to assist in numerous ways. Cpl Peck has been aware of the assistance and has thanked them many times. As he continues to recover, he forwards the care and love given to him to many other sick and injured persons. He has visited fellow Marines in the hospital who were injured after he was, to offer them encouragement and even to take them gifts. John has told me that he believes God left him here for a purpose, and I also truly believe that. I also believe that the purpose may lead to the help and care of others, a road he has already begun to travel. I believe that the love, care and concern of his family, friends and most importantly GOD, has led to Cpl Peck's recovery. Semper Fi Fund has been a huge part of this Marine's recovery, and I will always

be extremely grateful to the Fund and to all the unknown people who have contributed to make all the support possible. I pray that GOD will richly bless all of you.

Sincerely, Deb and Richard Piper



## SERGEANT RENFRO'S STORY

I was in a convoy that was dropping off troops and supplies for the invasion of Fallujah, Iraq, while combat operations had started. Leaving Fallujah, I was hit by two 155 mm artillery rounds, made into an improvised explosive device. I was in the turret of a 7-ton vehicle providing combat support, when suddenly I was blown up. My driver, only 19 years old, had his feet blown off, and I had huge holes in my legs and back, and metal went through my eye.

Once I woke up from being knocked out, I pushed my injured driver down, put a tourniquet from my sleeve around his legs, and started firing at the attackers to save our lives. I ended up having 26 surgeries on my right eye (which I lost sight in), my back, legs, face and arms. My injuries have taken away most of my life. I was medically

retired because I could no longer function normally to be in the Marines, and everyday life is a battle to do even the little things that are easy to most people. I'm always in pain, and every time I open my eyes and I can't see, I feel the chronic pain throughout my body, and I look at the scars and skin grafts, I relive those events every day. You feel hopeless, and life is never the same. Suicide crosses your mind daily because of the pain, and the memories of not only my scars but of other Marines who were killed and suffered injuries like me.

Every day is a fight for a Marine who has been wounded fighting for his country, but I know Americans love their freedom and this country. For such great privileges, Marines and other military personnel sacrifice their lives so that you can enjoy the great country of the United States of America.

The Semper Fi Fund has helped numerous injured Marines transition

from the military and being injured to civilian life. They are helping me purchase a new car after someone hit me and totaled my vehicle so that I can get around, go to my doctor appointments and get an education.

Without the help of the Semper Fi Fund, I would never have been able to get through the mental and physical injuries, or adapt to how hard life is being a regular healthy person. They are an organization of people who work hard to help us get through our problems and injuries, and without them many of us would be defeated by life, and it would have gotten worse.

Thank you, Semper Fi Fund. You continue to do great things and help us injured combat Marines get on the path to living a better life. Thank you so much!

Michael Renfro (Sgt USMC Ret)



## TEAM SEMPER FI

WOW! What a year it's been for Team Semper Fi. 2010 has been the most successful year in the history of this young team. TSF went from 20 team members to 180 in a year and a half! January started the year off strong with a triathlon training camp at the USOC Training Center in Colorado Springs.

In February, Reedley, CA, played host to the Blossom Trail Ride. After the ride the team enjoyed a wonderful trip to Yosemite. And in April it was off to Washington, DC, for the Faces of America Bike Ride. Over 20 team members rode for two days and 110 miles from our nation's capital to the Battle of Gettysburg site. May brought a brand-new event for Team Semper Fi. The United States Olympic Committee played host to an all-military wounded warrior competition called the Warrior Games. Over two weeks, wounded warriors from all over the country gathered in Colorado Springs, first to train and learn paralympic sports, and then to compete in them against each other. Members of Team Semper Fi helped lead the Marine Team to the first Champions Cup!

Memorial Day brought the annual Tri for Our Vets triathlon in New

Jersey. June brought the Endeavor Games in Oklahoma. Here, team members got to compete in various paralympic sports. In July it was time for another USOC training camp. Lake Placid played host this time. World-class coaches and athletes in archery, biathlon and sitting volleyball trained the team members.

The Santa Cruz Triathlon took place on the first weekend in August, and September brought Tunnel to Towers in New York City in which more than 30 members of TSF ran.

Up next in October was the Marine Corps Marathon where we set the record for the most TSF members participating. 75 TSF members, along with 735 community athletes, participated in the 10K and full marathon for the Semper Fi Fund! November saw the Colonel Ripley's Memorial 5K Run in Annapolis, MA, and December will finish up the year in Breckenridge, CO, with the Ski Spectacular. This has been an amazing year for Team Semper Fi. Our athletes have pushed the boundaries in every sport they've competed in. They have shown communities across America that just because you may have an injury doesn't mean you can't compete and succeed in sports.

2010 was amazing, but we are very excited for the events in 2011 and the new team members that we will add this year.

From everyone on Team Semper Fi, we wish you all very happy and safe holidays. Semper Fidelis!





## ANOTHER EXTRAORDINARY MARINE CORPS MARATHON FOR THE SEMPER FI FUND!!!

We had over 800 athletes run for the Fund! Red shirts were everywhere!! Our Community Runners and Sponsors helped to contribute more than \$425,000 to our 2010 MCM!! The United States Olympic Committee also presented Team Semper Fi with a check for \$228,000 on Friday evening. Grand total for the weekend—a record \$653,000!!!!

All in all, it was a fun-filled and extremely heart-moving few days.

1st Day: Friday night kicked off our festivities with a special dinner at 8th and I, Marine Corps Barracks, where General Amos was the guest speaker. It was a night to remember.

2nd Day: Several Team Semper Fi members visited Bethesda to talk with our newly injured who were unable to leave the hospital to attend Friday's dinner. They talked with the Marines and Sailors and their families in an intimate way. It was priceless. The Team was the best possible medicine for both newly injured and their families—showing hope and inspiration in each room we visited.

One highlight was a Marine who had lost his leg 10 days earlier in Afghanistan. One of our TSF members, "Gu," was also an above-the-knee amputee. At one point I looked over and Gu had taken off his leg with tennis shoe to hand to the Marine. The Marine picked it up, checking it out and poignantly stated,

"You know, the last week I've been wheeling around and seeing pain ... pain. Right now you are the light at the end of the tunnel. I'm going to run the marathon with you next year!" Just priceless! What instant validation for Team Semper Fi's mission!!!

After the hospital, we joined our Community Athletes for a special pre-race pasta dinner sponsored by Flir, HP, New Balance, and Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP, along with special guests the Honorable Wallace "Chip" Gregson and General Gray. Our special guest was Ronny Porta, formerly of the 2nd Marine Division, who was injured in 2007 with burns covering 80% of his body and a right arm amputation. Ronny gave an amazingly inspirational speech to the group. There was truly not a dry eye in the room. Ronny spoke of his 110 surgeries, with more pending. But it

was his positive energy and spirit that touched every person in that room. The highlight of his speech, and what sent those who weren't already crying to join the rest of us, was his tribute to his mom and the standing ovation that followed by the entire room to his mom. All present showed their admiration for Ronny at the end of his speech with a standing ovation.

3rd Day: RACE DAY: Morning began at 0445 to assemble hand cycles and get ready for the marathon. The air was abuzz with excitement, camaraderie—ribbing, laughter and some trepidation—with 26.2 miles waiting for many of them, and 10 kilometers waiting for others!! By 0800 the starting line was the place to be, with General Amos up above on the podium encouraging the racers. Our 10K runners were located across the mall, ramping up for their race—for some their first competitive event since their injuries!! No words can describe the excitement and pride visible across the athletes' faces this special morning!

For all of our SFF staff, volunteers and supporters who helped to make the 2010 MCM weekend the BEST to date, a heartfelt thank you, and know that our wounded and their families are forever grateful. They will never be alone or forgotten as long as we have a breath!!

Much love,  
Karen Guenther  
Founder, President  
Semper Fi Fund



## SERGEANT "JOEY" JONES

If you look up the word "motivation" you just may see the name Johnny Jones. This young man has the spirit and determination of an entire company of Marines. Johnny, "Joey," as his family calls him, is from Georgia, where the town of Dalton proudly honors and supports this local hero. His family has spent more of their time in Maryland than Georgia for the last several months, though. Sgt Jones was in Afghanistan with the 1st EOD out of California when an IED blast caused the loss of both of his legs and broke both of his arms. The blast occurred in early August 2010. He went through multiple surgeries with his entire family at his bedside to support his recovery. Semper Fi Fund was able to assist this family with expenses to allow them this priceless time with their wounded warrior. Sgt Jones said, "Semper Fi Fund has been there for my family and girlfriend throughout my entire recovery, offering a helping hand of financial relief in times of great stress. When swift, unforeseen decisions had to be made, Semper Fi Fund was there to help supply the resources." Johnny is now at Walter Reed, where he is working with his prosthetics to return to the athlete he once was. He reports, "I have been working with my prosthetic legs for two months and just started walking independently with my shorties. I have a long road ahead of me but am taking it one day at a time. Before I was injured, I enjoyed



more than anything to get out and run or lift weights. I also loved to ride my motorcycles. I hope to one day return to both wonderful activities." His new passion is the handcycle. He was able to try one at the training center and is determined to get his own. He went to the Marine Corps Marathon to visit with other athletes and see the handcycles in action. Only three

months after his injury, Sgt Jones has joined Team Semper Fi and will be working toward his first event with the team. His determination and positive spirit have inspired all those around him. When asked if he would mind if we put an article about him on our website he said, "I would enjoy knowing I'm helping to inspire some people to help out such a wonderful organization."

Keep up with the Semper Fi Fund! Follow us on these social media sites:



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## SERGEANT STEPHEN COCHRAN

Stephen was born in Pikeville, KY, and raised in Nashville in the business of country music. With a father who played and wrote music, it was inevitable he would follow suit. On his way to a country music career of his own, 9/11 halted his career and changed the course of his plans. Following 9/11, Stephen joined the Marine Corps and became part of Reconnaissance Division and headed to Iraq and Afghanistan.

On July 14, 2004, he was injured while on his security patrol outside of Kandahar in Afghanistan when he was thrown from a vehicle, as a result of enemy action, and left with five broken vertebrae in his lower back. The bone and cartilage were severely damaged and were pulling on his spinal cord; he was told he would never walk again.

However, he had the opportunity to undergo a special surgery, kyphoplasty, which essentially used four pounds of cement to fix the crushed vertebrae in his back. After a long recovery, he is back to fulfilling his dreams of being a country music artist.

When Stephen was injured, Semper Fi Fund assisted in the travel of his family members to be at his bedside.

Last year, Stephen Cochran and his Kentucky buddy, Mark Melloan, wrote a song, "Alone on Christmas." The song was not only to give to our service men and women, but also to their families who are waiting stateside for their return.

This year the song has been released on iTunes as well as many other download sites for \$.99 for families to send to their missed loved ones. All proceeds from the song will go to the Semper Fi Fund.



## WAYS TO GIVE

While you can always give online or by writing a check, here are other ways people are supporting injured service members through the Semper Fi Fund's assistance programs.

**Host a Fundraiser:** Events can be a special way to celebrate a loved one's memory or to rally the community to help support those who preserve our freedom. We welcome the support of businesses, schools, community organizations, clubs and other groups or individuals who would like to host a fundraiser to benefit the Semper Fi Fund's mission.

**Memorial and Tribute Gifts:** Contribute to the Semper Fi Fund in memory or honor of a loved one to remember or acknowledge their heroism, birthday, promotion or special occasion. We will send you an acknowledgement of your charitable gift, and a card informing the honoree or anyone you designate.

**Monthly Giving:** Over time, even small monthly gifts add up and make a big difference! Monthly giving is easy and convenient for you. You may begin your recurring gift by donating online today. Or if you would prefer to set up a monthly donation over the phone, our staff is available to assist you.

**Corporate Support Opportunities:** Your company can be a part of the solution in helping our injured men and women recover, regain their independence and thrive in their home communities. A company can host an event, become a general sponsor, sponsor our Team Semper Fi, or be one of our Marine Corps Marathon sponsors.

**Planned Giving:** When you include the Fund in your will or other estate plans, you help strengthen our long-term ability to remain an important force in continuing our mission. Please contact your estate planner and the Semper Fi Fund for more information.

**Become a Community Athlete:** Join our Community Semper Fi Team! Choose your own athletic event to participate in, or join us for one of our scheduled events: Cooper River Bridge Run, Marine Corps Historic Half or 2011 Marine Corps Marathon.

For more information on these or other ways to give, email [info@semperfund.org](mailto:info@semperfund.org) or call our office at 760-725-3680.

A Special Thanks to our 2010 MCM Sponsors



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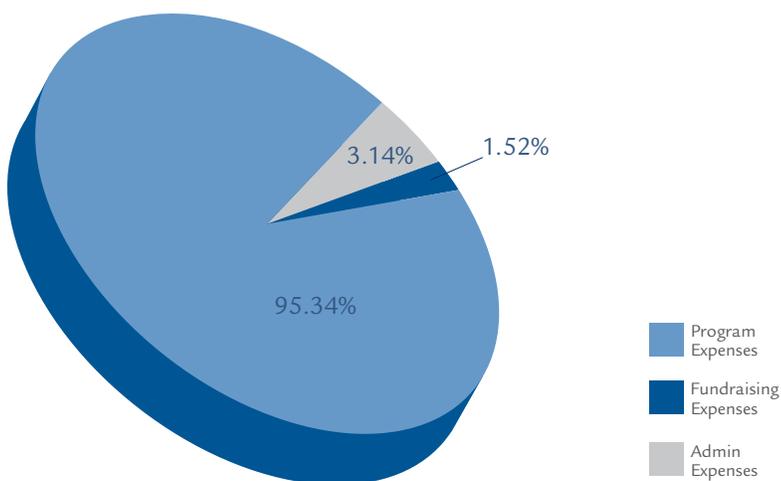
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Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund  
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A+ ranking from the American Institute of Philanthropy (AIP)  
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### DONATION AND SUPPORT INFORMATION

Donations may be made online:  
[SemperFiFund.org](http://SemperFiFund.org)

Please send check donations to:

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