A Message from our Founder

We are excited to announce General James F. Amos, 35th Commandant of the Marine Corps, as our new Chairman of our Board of Directors. We bid fond farewell and express our deep gratitude to General Al Gray, 29th Commandant of the Marine Corps and our Chairman for the last 11 years.

Thanks to people like you, the Semper Fi Fund has grown far beyond the hopes and dreams we had back in 2003—here we are off to a great start for our second decade with assistance to 15,000 service members and their families with over $120 million in grants! The collection of stories and photos from our service members and their families will awe and inspire you. Each one is a vivid example of the personal growth that takes place when one faces profoundly difficult circumstances with courage and determination to emerge stronger than ever before. The Semper Fi Fund is proud to stand alongside these service members today and for the rest of their lives.

As always, please share your newsletter with a friend. You keep us growing by empowering us to serve those who preserve our freedom. Your ongoing support makes the impossible happen!

Karen Guenther
President, CEO and Founder

A Note from the Chairman of the Board

My message is heartfelt and simple—I’m honored to join your great effort as its new Chairman. I know of no more relevant, or more care-giving institution than the one that we all now serve and support. I’ve watched it from the sidelines, spoken about it at bedside, heard about it from Marines and their families, and smiled as I watched the Semper Fi Fund restore HOPE in the lives of those who had all but given up.

The stories of lives saved and hope renewed are many. Each one is personal and real—they come to us one at a time, they always have. Brought from the most honorable of intentions some 11 years ago, the Semper Fi Fund is a living testimony of fidelity. To our Team—thank you—thank you for your faithfulness, your energy, your valuable time… and most of all, thank you for your heart. Ours is a mission founded and nurtured on heart. I am honored to serve among you.

The needs of our community are changing. In some cases, wounds, once thought healed, are returning years later to plague our men and women. As such, we must evolve. Together we will continue to adapt to the realities of our wounded’s changing needs—you’ve figured it out well over the past eleven years, we will continue to do just that over the next eleven.

Thank you again for your great fidelity. I remain… Semper Fidelis.

Chairman of the Board

10 Makes 20!

Double the power of your donation! From now through December 31, 2015, every dollar of your donation to the Semper Fi Fund works twice as hard to help our wounded, critically ill and injured service members and their families. Simply indicate “10 makes 20” with your donation, and The Bob & Renee Parsons Foundation will match it—up to a total match of $10 million.

What is the Bob & Renee Parsons Foundation?
The Bob & Renee Parsons Foundation was established in 2012 by Bob Parsons, founder of GoDaddy and his wife Renee. Bob has a soft spot in his heart for the Semper Fi Fund: He’s a U.S. Marine Corps Vietnam veteran and a recipient of the Combat Action Ribbon, Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry and Purple Heart Medal. “The matching challenge is a significant opportunity for all of us to step up and strengthen our commitment to our country’s wounded veterans,” said Renee Parsons. “If you can’t give a lot, give a little; no amount is too small. Together we will make a difference.”

This means a potential $20 million for the Semper Fi Fund!

“Grateful beyond words! We are stunned and humbled by the generosity of Bob and Renee Parsons,” said CEO Karen Guenther. “The impact this campaign will have on our ability to serve those who have served us all goes far beyond anything we can imagine. All of us at the Semper Fi Fund are grateful beyond words. Thank you, Bob and Renee—you generosity is simply awesome!”

10 becomes 20 when you give now—double your assistance with the $10 Million Match Challenge

Semper Fi Fund donation page: semperfifund.org/donate
The Bob & Renee Parsons Foundation: tbrpf.org
Teamwork is how we make it through obstacles whether it’s on the high ropes or in life.

The Semper Fi Fund Kids Camp is celebrating its fifth anniversary. The annual week-long camp hosts children ages 8–13 who have a parent being assisted by the Fund. Campers are matched up with high school mentors who are military kids themselves. Since the first year, the number of campers and mentors has more than doubled.

“The idea is to let them be kids, to give them a break from the reality of being a kid in a military family going through injury and recovery,” explained Semper Fi Fund Senior Case Manager Dawn Van Skike. “This is a chance to focus on them, to give them some tools for dealing with their situation, and just have a good time.”

While there are campfire sessions that provide time for serious discussions, most of the week is spent having fun: Campers do rock wall climbing, take high ropes courses, go zip-lining and caving, and do water sports and some open-air camping.

“We encourage mentors and campers to stay in touch all year and get together on their own,” says Dawn. Just as the Semper Fi Fund creates lifelong bonds with the service members we assist, the benefits of the camp last long after the week is over.
OUR SERVICE MEMBERS generously share their experiences and have remarkable insights on life. They have been through things most of us will never know, and they have learned lessons that all of us should take to heart...
Lifelong Bonds

Serving in the same unit, Gabe and Justin met and became close friends. Two months into their deployment to Afghanistan on Thanksgiving Day 2010 their friendship would take on a new meaning.

Justin was sweeping the area for IED’s, and watched as his friend Gabe stepped on an IED. Minutes later, Justin also stepped on an IED. Each lost both legs along with additional injuries and were MEDEVACed together. The iconic photo of their two fists shows their determination, fighting spirit and strength of their friendship. Through hospitalization and rehabilitation, the two found they shared an ability to excel at recovery as they learned not only to walk again, but to run as members of Team Semper Fi at competitive events across the country.

During an event Justin encouraged Gabe to join him working for Homeland Security Investigations as a Computer Forensic Analyst. This falls under the National Association to Protect Children, as Human Exploitation Rescue Operatives. Absolutely amazing young men who are continuing to serve their Nation. Living nearly 2,000 miles apart, they remain great friends—sharing a lifelong bond.

Very few can say they have a friend with a bond as I do with Justin. We have literally been there by each other’s side since day one of being wounded. We’ve been mad, we’ve been sad, we’ve laughed and we’ve cried. He and I will always be there for one another for the rest of our lives.”

—Gabe

To the Board of Semper Fi Fund, I hope this letter finds you all in good health and good spirits, especially in light of the life impacting work you all manifest.

I wanted to take a minute to try and thank you for all the work you do for veterans. I will never ever be able to express in words how my life has been changed and rebuilt by your organization. The grant you all gave to me to make my car wheelchair accessible, the supplementing of my income while the VA fumbled the transition from Army pay to VA benefits, and the recent trip outside of Idaho Springs, CO for camping and ATV riding PALE in comparison to the hours of comfort, friendship, and conversation that Sheryl (and others of your organization) put into me and my family. All the monetary aid, although important, cannot match the uplifting effect that your people have on soldiers and Marines like us. To illustrate a recent example, I can’t help but recount how Michael offered to carry me on his back inside an old silver mine (duck walking over 15 yards with 110lbs on his back at one point) or to the top of the ridge so I could enjoy the view of both. I’m very proud of having served as an OH58D pilot in the Army, but some of our best pilots and my closest friends came from the Marine Corps. I couldn’t help but hear their voices talking trash in my head as Mike shung me over his back, “Yup… Marines carrying the Army yet again.”

In all seriousness, I am very sensitive to who I allow to help me, let alone carry me on their back. A favorite quote of mine that I feel has been the theme of my recovery has always been, “When you can’t run, you crawl. And when you can’t do that…well… you find good people to carry you the rest of the way.” That has been the story of my recovery since surviving a crash (OEF 2012) that left me paralyzed. This hard charging, type A, overachiever crawled his way back. BUT I NEVER would have made it this far without good people like Sheryl and Semper Fi Fund helping carry me when I couldn’t crawl. I hope this begins to express the gratitude that I am trying to convey.

Respectfully,

David

Josh and Tim became great friends during training in their unit. In October 2006, when deployed to Iraq, they were traveling together in the same Humvee when it hit an IED. The blast claimed both of Josh’s legs and shattered Tim’s right leg, which was later amputated below the knee.

When they arrived in Bethesda, they requested to be in the same room to begin their recovery that would take over a year, each having set backs, each lifting the other up when they were down.

Over the past decade, Josh and Tim’s friendship has gotten stronger. They are very close friends and spend time together whenever they get the chance. Whenever possible, they celebrate their Alive day, the day they were injured, together. Tim explains this, “is a day of mixed emotions. On the one hand, we’re so happy to be alive, but on the other hand our minds and thoughts go to those we lost that day. It’s also a day we choose to celebrate their life and great sacrifice.”

Respectfully,

David

The most remarkable thing about our friendship is the fact that we’ve gone through a similar journey. We’re friends and brothers in battle, which led to brothers through injury and rehab.”

—Tim

AND why your organization will always have a special place for me.

The ATV ride was outstanding. Sharing company, fire, food, and drink surrounded by mountains, stars, and trees was even better. There’s something very therapeutic and meaningful about talking with a group that understands some of what you’ve been through and who you’re trying to become. It’s those challenges that remind us who we were. It’s those types of challenges that remind us who we are. It’s those types of challenges that remind us what we are STILL capable of. If there is ever anything I can do for your organization, don’t hesitate to ask. I am always ready to be of service.

Respectfully,

David
CONTINUE TO GIVE

Spread the word by sharing this edition of the Semper Fi Fund and America’s Fund newsletter.

Like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter @SemperFiFund and @AmericasFund.

Become a Semper Fi Fund or America’s Fund Community Athlete and participate in events around the country.

Go to our website for your fundraising kit today.

Sign up to become a recurring donor or join our Legacy Society and leave a legacy for tomorrow. Go to: www.semperfund.org/donate.

Visit us online to make a donation.

PASS IT ON!

Hero Stories:

"Overcoming any obstacles in my life excited me," says First Lieutenant Micah Andersen. “We faced a lot of challenges, but America's Fund quickly stepped in and provided immeasurable support. They’ve been involved in so many aspects of our lives, we can’t imagine how we could have gotten this far without them."

"Figuring out solutions to my own difficulties gives me a sense of accomplishment."

CAPTAIN JASON PAK graduated in May 2011 from the United States Military Academy at West Point. As a Captain he deployed to Afghanistan in October 2012 and on December 12, 2012, an IED blast claimed both his legs and two of his fingers.

"America’s Fund, part of the Semper Fi Fund, does an amazing job in helping guys like me who are trying to get back to normalcy in life. They’re probably the most impactful organization. They genuinely care. Everybody goes through difficulties in life," Jason says. The only thing is that my injuries are more visible than others. "Today Jason works for Boeing and shares his story through inspirational speaking.

"I have absolutely no regrets."

In June 2012, Sergeant Kirstie Ennis, a door gunner was part of a resupply mission on a helicopter that went nose up and rolled left. Tethered by her gunner’s belt, Kirstie was in the worst spot to be in when it crashed. She’s undergone 38 procedures due to the injuries she sustained, mostly for facial reconstruction.

As part of her recovery, Kirstie has become an active member of Team Semper Fi. She has placed multiple times in para-boardercross at events around the world. "Being a part of Team Semper Fi changed my life for the better," she says. "The love and support that comes from TSF keeps me and many others going."

"There’s never a reason to give up."

www.semperfund.org | www.americasfund.org
Thank You for Serving Those Who Preserve our Freedom

$120,000,000
We’ve Helped Over 15,000 Wounded Heroes and their Families

Given in Assistance to Service Members

106,000
Administered Over Grants to Service Members

SUPPLIES OVER $1,000,000 IN SUPPORT EVERY MONTH

A+ Rating from CharityWatch & 4 Star Rating from Charity Navigator

Given in Assistance

$9,600,000
Administered Over 6,200 Grants

Assisted Service Members and their Families

Donate today and give a legacy for tomorrow. Please consider joining our Semper Fi Fund Legacy Society and continue to make a difference in the lives of our service members forever.

For any additional information, please email: info@semperfifund.org

For donations, the Fund’s federal tax ID number is 26-0086305.

The Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.