

Serving Those Who
Preserve Our Freedom



**Injured Marine
Semper Fi Fund**

825 College Street, Ste. 102

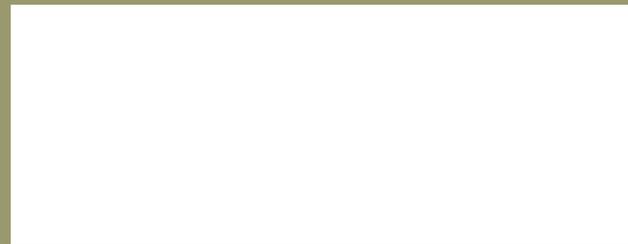
PMB 609

Oceanside, CA 92057

CFC# 11459

Issue 6, Dec 2008

We Thank You for Your Support



CONTACT US:

Please continue to support our injured Marines and Sailors!

General Information and Correspondence:

Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund

715 Broadway Street
Quantico, VA 22134
703.640.0181

Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund

Wounded Warrior Center
PO Box 555193
Camp Pendleton, CA 92055-5193
760.725.3680

Or: info@semperifund.org

Please send Check Donations to:

Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund

825 College Blvd., Suite 102
PMB 609
Oceanside, CA 92057

Donations may also be made online:

www.SemperFiFund.org

CFC# 11459



Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund

Issue 6

December 2008



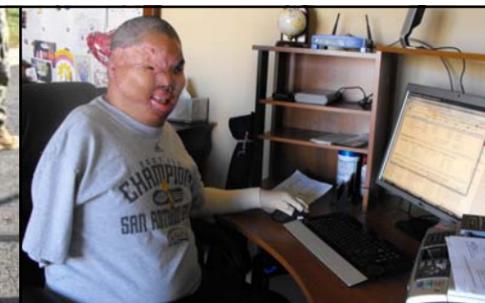
SEASON'S GREETINGS



**Thank you for supporting the **Injured Marine
Semper Fi Fund's** programs for our wounded
and their families!**



*HM3 Daniel "Doc" Jacobs,
below the knee amputee, injured in Iraq.
Team Semper Fi Program*



*Cpl Ronny Porta, injured in Iraq, with his
Dragon naturally speaking software.
Specialized Equipment Program*



*Devil Dog learning to use his PDA.
PDA's are a vital tool for those with
Traumatic Brain Injuries.*



*MSgt Davey Lind and family.
Double leg amputee injured in Iraq.
Family Support Program*



*LCpl Josh Bleill and fiancée, Nicky.
Double amputee from an IED blast in Iraq.
Transportation Program*



*Sgt Greg Edwards,
double amputee, with newly
adapted home.
Housing Program*

NOTE FROM OUR FOUNDER

Dear Friends of IMSFF,

Wishing all Season's Greetings and a very Happy New Year!

We enter the Holiday Season THANKFUL to our supporters and to all who ensure that our mission of serving those who become critically injured or ill in the service to our great Nation continues! We learn more each and every day about the needs of our injured as they transition back to their communities and, happily, we have been able to evolve the Fund to meet these needs.

Because of your support, the Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund has been able to make a significant difference in the quality of life of our injured and critically ill. We have been able to provide much needed financial and emotional support to promote healing and recovery. The Fund has remained at the side of our service members and their families as they navigate the often long hospital stays and rehabilitation. The morale boost of knowing that America is behind our injured Marines and Sailors is priceless.

We hope you enjoy our Holiday update, the stories and pictures...only a few of the thousands of lives we have been able to touch because of your faithful support. The needs continue to be great and, as always, we are passionate about making sure that our injured Marines and Sailors are never alone or forgotten.

Happy Holidays from the Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund team!!

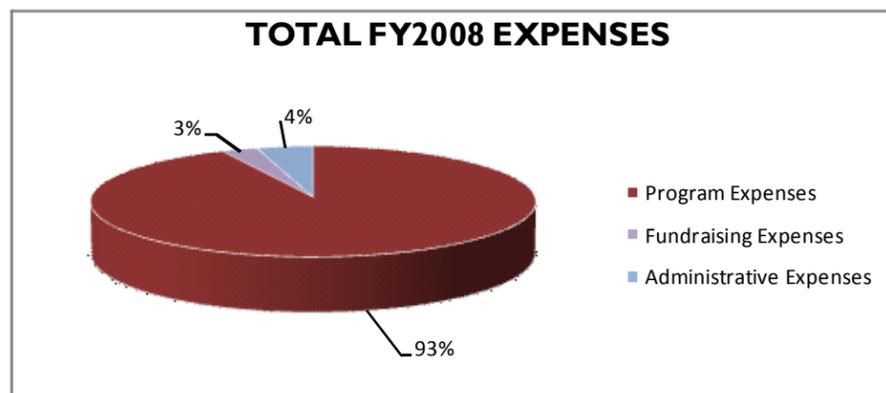
With deepest appreciation,

Karen Guenther

Founder & Executive Director

FINANCIALS

- ◆ Since inception, IMSFF has given out approximately **11,000 grants** totaling over **\$26 million**.
- ◆ IMSFF has provided assistance to over 2900 service members and their families: Marines, Sailors, Soldiers, Airman, National Guardsmen, and a Coast Guardsmen.
- ◆ In Fiscal Year 2008, IMSFF assisted with over \$10 million in grants.
- ◆ IMSFF is proud to report Program Expenses are **93%** of all expenses.
- ◆ Administration and fundraising costs were approximately 7% in Fiscal Year 2008.
- ◆ Fundraising costs remain less than two cents on every dollar for Fiscal Year 2008.



Board of Directors

General Alfred Gray
USMC (Ret)
29th Commandant
of the Marine Corps
Chairman

**Sergeant Major
Lonnie Sanders**
USMC (Ret)
Vice Chairman

**Lieutenant General
Wallace Gregson**
USMC (Ret)
Treasurer

Wendy Lethin
Co-Founder
Secretary

**Major General
J. Michael Myatt**
USMC (Ret)

**Major General
Thomas Jones**
USMC (Ret)

Annette Conway
1st Lady
of the Marine Corps

Peter Murphy, Esq.

Colonel Ben Saylor
USMC (Ret)

John Dowd, Esq.

Karen Guenther
Founder
President Emeritus

A WORD FROM OUR CHAIRMAN



In the past 30 days, we marked the Marine Corps birthday with the Marine Corps Marathon featuring many of our wounded Marines competing in the regular marathon, a run from Philadelphia to Washington, D.C., and numerous Marine Corps Birthday celebrations. Many events embedded in these larger celebrations were devoted to supporting the Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund. Early reports indicate that former Marines, former service members from other services and patriotic Americans in general were very generous to us. This is especially noteworthy in these times of concern over the direction of our economy and its effect on all of us. It shows that even in these times, we are well supported by those who are aware that we have Americans in harm's way as well as many who have returned in need their support.

Less than one-half of one percent of America's population serves in uniform. The Marine Corps percentage is, of course, far smaller. I'm always impressed with how many of our severely wounded Marines, Sailors and others aggressively seek to continue their education in colleges and universities, at culinary academies and in other specific skills. The Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund supports these heroes with tuition, with mobility devices, with vision and hearing aids, and with any manner of assistance so they can achieve the skills needed to regain their financial and personal independence. Of course this is to be expected – these men and women asked for nothing more than the opportunity to serve when they chose our tough course rather than the safer alternatives. But their spirit and their achievements, in the face of such odds, nevertheless deeply affect those of us privileged to meet them. Many Marine- and veteran-owned placement services are lined up to help them gain employment. In these days, when many worry about the strength of this nation, I am confident that there is no other group of Americans more deserving of our help to get their shot at the American Dream. Who is better or more deserving to ensure the strength of this country in the future?

Despite the economic turmoil and the wild ride of the stock market, the Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund remains strong. We have taken some punches along with all other investors, but we are well balanced, on our feet, and fully "mission capable."

My heartfelt thanks to all of you for your continued support!

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

EVENTS 2008

IMSFF is deeply appreciative of all the time and effort spent by others who host a variety of events to raise funding and awareness for the needs of our injured Marine and Sailors.

During this last year, over 160 events were hosted or completed on behalf of the IMSFF. They ranged from backyard barbecues and motorcycle rides to golf tournaments and formal galas. We have also had a record number of athletes running, biking and swimming to raise funds through our Team Semper Fi Community Athletes. Altogether from these events, our communities have raised more than \$2 million dollars in support to help our injured and critically ill Marines and Sailors. We extend our warmest thanks to all of you who have taken part of an event this year.

If you would like to join our team to raise funds and awareness for IMSFF's mission in your own community, please contact us at info@semperfifund.org, or call 703-640-0181. Hosting an event or racing for the Fund, is a great way to motivate friends and family to join you in supporting our wounded.

THANK YOU



I am a Disabled Veteran of the Navy Seabees. After nine years in the Navy, I was diagnosed with a rare bone cancer, which has left me with a hip full of metal, cadaver parts, a partially paralyzed leg, and a lifetime of pain and residual injuries. Between time spent in the hospital and doctors visits, along with the need for therapeutic and comfort items, my family and I were slowly depleting ourselves financially.

I was referred to Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund (IMSFF) for some assistance with bills. I assumed I would receive a loan to temporarily alleviate the financial strain; but as long as my wife and son had a roof over their head and food in their stomach, I would have been grateful. As it turned out, this was not a loan at all. In fact, since early 2006, I have received much needed assistance with essential bills, as well as vehicle adaption.

In all, IMSFF is an organization whose purpose is not for profit or politics, but rather to simply provide assistance to our nation's injured service members with "no strings attached". No words can describe our heartfelt gratitude for all the assistance we have received from this organization to help us get back on our feet. God bless IMSFF, all who work there, and for those who support their cause.

Sincerely,
Dillon Raube & Family

"On behalf of my son, my husband and I want to thank you so much for the check to cover expenses for our trip to San Diego. It meant so much to him and to us to be there for him. Words cannot express the gratitude we feel towards your organization and others that were so good to our son. Enclosed is a small donation which we will repeat monthly." [IMSFF sent the check back!]

Sincerely,
Mom of LCpl/USMC

"Thank you so much for the grants. Things have been pretty hard at times. We appreciate everything you guys have done. We thank God everyday for putting people like you in our lives. We do not know where or what we would do without this help. I just do not know what else to say but Thank You so much!! My husband is still in the PTSD Clinic and seems to be doing good. I am hoping for the best. Again, Thank You so much for all of your help and time you spent on us."

Sincerely,
Wife of Cpl/USMC

"You couldn't be more thoughtful, and I couldn't be more grateful. Thank you for all the help. It was greatly appreciated and needed!" (Family of Marine)

"There is no way to express in words how much I appreciate the Semper Fi Fund. The help that has been provided has allowed me to take time off work unpaid and to travel to be with my brother as he continues to heal. We are so blessed with his life, and I am so blessed to have the freedom to be with him as much as I have been.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart!"

Sincerely,
Sierra Schoenheit

Corporal Aaron P. Mankin, USMC



Cpl Aaron Mankin with wife, Diana and daughter, Madeline

"If you don't have time to do it right, when will you ever have time to do it over again?"

"If you don't have time to do it right, when will you ever have time to do it over again?" On several occasions Aaron Mankin has followed that sage advice he received from his grandfather, a Navy veteran of WWII.

In high school Mankin was the first student in the history of Arkansas high school forensics to qualify for national level debate competitions. At the age of 17 he was the 1999 Arkansas State Debate Champion and graduated with honors. After graduation, Mankin raised funds to travel to China to do missionary work. Upon his return to Arkansas, he was an elementary and junior high school substitute teacher.

At age 21, Mankin joined the United States Marine Corps. In February, 2005 he was deployed to Iraq with the II Marine Expeditionary Force stationed in Fallujah where he served in Operation Iraqi Freedom as a Combat Correspondent. In May, 2005 Cpl Mankin was assigned to Operation Matador, an eleven-day mission in Northern Iraq along the Syrian border. On the seventh day of the campaign, Cpl Mankin was severely wounded when an IED destroyed his 26-ton AAV fatally wounding six Marines. Aaron's burns covered 22% of his upper body - face, neck, ears, and arms. He was immediately transported to Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas, where he continues treatment for wounds received in that attack. While undergoing daily physical therapy and now just short of forty surgeries, Cpl Mankin was awarded the Purple Heart and the Navy Achievement Medal with Valor. He has remained active at the hospital by serving as the Patient Media Liaison for the Public Affairs Office at BAMC.

Mankin was recently chosen as the first participant in a new concept project called 'Operation Mend', a cooperative venture involving the Katz Family Foundation, UCLA Medical Center and Brooke Army Medical Center. Their sole mission is to provide world-class restorative surgical procedures to wounded warriors who have suffered severe disfiguring injuries.

Corporal Ronny Porta, USMC

Part One

"First, I want to thank you for all that you have done for me. In appreciation, I would like to tell you my story.

My name is Ronny Porta and I was born in Lima, Peru on November 29, 1986. When I was nine years old, my dad had an opportunity to go to work in California while my family remained in Peru. Four years later, my mom joined my dad in the United States leaving my sister and I in the care of our aunt and grandmother. My parents moved to Maryland where they worked to save enough money to have my sister and I join them.

When I was 15 years old, my parents brought my sister and I to the United States. When I arrived, I started ninth grade. I was really good in math and in playing soccer so I joined the soccer team and earned a scholarship.

The next year, 9/11 happened. It changed my life. I was so grateful to this country for giving my family a safe place to live and giving my sister and I a safe place to grow that, in gratitude, I wanted to do something in return. The first thing that came to mind was to become a doctor and help injured soldiers. Instead, I decided to check out becoming a Marine.

When I arrived at the Marine recruiting station, I saw the recruiters working, which inspired me. I decided to join the Marine Corps, not for the money, but to defend my country, my family and all the people of the United States. When I first told my parents that I was going to join the Marine Corps, they didn't want me to join because of the war that was going on in Iraq. I told them I wanted to do something for this country and that the only way a soldier or a Marine could return to the states was for someone to replace them. I also told them that I would only serve for four years and then go to college. They agreed to let me go. At the time I was 17 years old."

(To be continued in April 2009 Newsletter)



Cpl Ronny Porta with his Dad.

Lance Corporal William (Trey) Lafitte III, USMC

"I was a Reserve Marine assigned to Echo Company, Anti Terrorism Battalion, 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB). In route back from a drill weekend in preparation for an upcoming deployment to Peru, the bus I was in flipped over. One Marine died and several others were injured. The injuries I suffered in this accident have forever changed my life. In addition to multiple contusions, a fractured skull and vertebrae, I suffered a severe spinal cord injury that has left me paralyzed in my lower extremities.

Throughout the long recovery process, I have been blessed with the loving support of my family. In order to receive the best possible care and to learn to cope with my injuries, I have to transfer between three different hospitals. With the multiple transfers, and with my family an ever-present source of strength at my side, the expenses associated with travel and lodging for my family mounted. The Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund has a long history of helping injured Marines and their families in times of crisis, and they were there to offer us a helping hand and to provide much needed financial assistance."

Despite his tragic injuries, LCpl Lafitte has approached his challenges like a true Marine, with determination. He continues to spend three days a week in therapy refining the skills he has acquired. He attends school in pursuit of a degree in computer networking and will return to his civilian job as an Information Technology technician at South Central Regional Medical Center in Mississippi. In addition to his professional life, Trey is a family man with two young daughters. In seeing a need to enhance LCpl Lafitte's mobility to keep pace with his busy, productive and driven lifestyle, the IMSFF contacted the manufacturers of the iBOT wheelchair and procured a system for him.

We at the IMSFF would like to thank LCpl Lafitte for his sacrifice and service to country. We wish him all the best in his future endeavors. Once a Marine, always a Marine.



LCpl Trey Lafitte,
Paralyzed from the waist down

Lance Corporal Matthew R. Bradford, USMC



LCpl Matthew R Bradford
Blinded both eyes, Double Amputee

The Semper Fi Fund is a wonderful organization and has been there for me for almost 2 years. My son was severely injured in Iraq in 2007. The Semper Fi Fund has made it possible for me to be with him through everything. They have helped me with my bills and have even helped with the paying of rent and utilities for an apartment. Matthew has been learning to live on his own with his injuries and the apartment has helped him learn to do that. Matthew has been to a lot of different places for several different operations and the Semper Fi Fund has made it possible for me to go with him. They have never once made me feel like I didn't need to be with him. They have been a Godsend to the families of the wounded Marines and their families. I owe them a lot because they are there with caring hearts. Without their help and support, I would not have gotten to be with my son through this and he would not be as strong and determined as he is now.

Sincerely,
Debbie Bradford
Proud Marine Mom of LCpl Matthew Bradford

2008 MARINE CORPS MARATHON



Cpl Bradley Walker (double amputee) currently a patient at Walter Reed Army Medical Center



Sgt Eric Santellana, Cpl Dan Lasko, and Sgt Frank Delgado. This was Eric and Dan's first marathon on their prosthetics!



TSF Team photo with General Alfred Gray and his pups.



Tun Tavern Marines after they complete their 177.5 mile run from Philadelphia to Washington, D.C.

The days leading up to the 33rd running of the Marine Corps Marathon were plagued with rain and cold weather but that didn't dampen the spirits of Team Semper Fi (TSF) and the Community Runners who all competed to support the Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund.

On the Saturday before the race, our TSF athletes went to Walter Reed Army Medical Center for dinner and a chance to spend some time with other severely injured veterans who are still recovering in the hospital. "Team Semper Fi gave me hope when I thought all hope was gone," said SSgt Katherine Ragazzino, who competed in the 10K run. "They have assisted me with giving me my life back." And it was that sentiment of hope that the team's visit conveyed to the severely injured veterans recovering at Walter Reed.

Saturday night ended for the IMSFF team at the Marine Barracks, at the corner of 8th and I SW, to greet the "Tun Tavern Runners" who ran 177.5 miles from the approximate location of the Tun Tavern in Philadelphia, PA, where the Marine Corps was founded in 1775 to the Marine Barracks. The runners arrived around 11:00pm. "Out of all the charities that we could have run for, it was IMSFF's mission statement and history that truly inspired us to run 177.5 miles." said GySgt Dennis Miranda, one of the Tun Tavern Runners.

Race day started off with a pre-dawn visit of General Al Gray, 29th Commandant of the Marine Corps and head of the IMSFF's Board of Directors. Our Community Runners were phenomenal and we enjoyed visiting with them before and after the race. The weather turned out wonderfully and we were thrilled that our more than 400 runners raised over \$270,000.00 for the fund!

It was a blessing to be with our team and see, feel and share their inspiration, courage and enthusiasm. Please join us next year!

The donation jar put out by MCM organizer, Jeremiah Holland (not pictured), raised over \$11,000 in 3 days from the Expo attendees.



SSgt Corey Robinson at the IMSFF Expo booth. Corey raced her first 10K Hand Cycle race!