We wouldn’t be at all surprised to find this photo of Staff Sgt. Jesse Cottle and his wife Kelly on many “best of 2013” lists. It’s a remarkable illustration of service and love—and the Semper Fi Fund is honored to have played a small part in it.

Jesse joined the Marine Corps in 2003 and served three deployments as a radio operator in Iraq. He transferred to an EOD (explosive ordnance disposal) team, spent two years in Japan, and was deployed to Afghanistan in February 2009.

On July 19, 2009, Jesse’s EOD team was clearing IEDs (improvised explosive devices) in support of a Marine infantry company. Jesse stepped on a pressure plate with his left foot, triggering the explosion that claimed both his legs.

He received immediate medical care, including the amputation of both legs, and was transported to Camp Bastion (the main British military base in Afghanistan) overnight, then to the U.S. Air Force Base in Bagram, Afghanistan, and then to Landstuhl, Germany.

A week after the explosion, Jesse arrived at Bethesda Naval Hospital, where he remained for four weeks. He was transferred to the Naval Medical Center in San Diego, where he began the outpatient phase of his recovery after a total of eight surgeries.

The Semper Fi Fund’s assistance to Jesse and his family included family support grants, assistance to his parents to make home modifications, funds to purchase a special therapeutic mattress and a lightweight wheelchair, a handcycle grant and grants for transportation to and from San Diego while his vehicle was being modified.

Free of the stress of financial concerns for himself and his family, Jesse was able to focus on recovery. He received his first set of legs in September 2009 and

continued on page 11
A SEMPER FI FUND HERO STORY:

Marine Corporal JOSH SAMS

WHO IS JOSH?

Josh Sams was born in 1984 in Wilmington, Ohio. The oldest of three children, Josh attended Wilmington High School, where he ran track and played football, baseball and lacrosse. After graduating in 2004, Josh attended Thomas More College in Crestview Hills, Kentucky. He continued his athletic career, playing outside linebacker on the football team.

On January 12, 2012, Josh was on foot patrol in Sangin with the 1st Battalion, 6th Marines. He stepped on an IED (improvised explosive device) and sustained injuries that required both legs to be amputated above the knee. He also sustained a serious pelvic injury.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR JOSH?

“Aafter I retire from the Marine Corps, I plan on returning to my home in North Carolina with my wife, Lindsey – we were married on July 5, 2011 – and our dog. I'll be attending the University of North Carolina Wilmington and finishing my bachelor's degree in criminal justice.”

HOW DID THE SEMPER FI FUND HELP JOSH?

We provided Josh and his family with a number of family support grants so Josh could focus on his recovery without worrying about financial issues. We also provided him with grants for an adaptive vehicle, a handcycle and an Action TrackChair – an all-terrain wheelchair. We also helped with home modifications, including landscaping, to accommodate the TrackChair.
TO ALL OF OUR EVENT HOSTS AND SPONSORS...
THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME, ENERGY, HEART AND LOVE
that you have so gratefully given in support of our service members and their families. We are humbled by your generosity as you continue to make such a difference in the lives of our heroes.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING SPONSORS WHO HELPED MAKE THE 2013 MARINE CORPS MARATHON A TREMENDOUS SUCCESS!

WHO IS JASON?
Jason Gibson was born June 1, 1986 in Westerville, Ohio, a town of about 36,000 located smack in the middle of the Buckeye State. He has one sibling, a younger sister named Kristen.

After graduating from Westerville South High School, Jason went on to Ohio State University, where he enrolled in Air Force ROTC. On June 30, 2009, just days after he married his wife, Kara, about six months after they met.

WHEN DID JASON JOIN THE ARMY?
After one year at Ohio State, Jason decided to devote himself to full-time service: He joined the Army on September 1, 2005, and distinguished himself as a combat engineer.

JASON'S FIRST DEPLOYMENT - TO MOSUL, IRAQ - BEGAN IN 2006 AND LASTED 15 MONTHS. IN JULY 2009, JUST DAYS AFTER GETTING MARRIED, JASON WAS DEPLOYED FOR ONE YEAR TO BAQUBAH, IRAQ. HIS THIRD DEPLOYMENT BROUGHT ABOUT A CHANGE OF SCENERY: HE LEFT FOR AFGHANISTAN IN MARCH 2012.

WHEN WAS JASON INJURED?

About two months into his third deployment, on May 30, 2012, Jason was on foot patrol and stepped on an IED pressure plate. The explosion claimed both his legs at the hip and inflicted a deep wound on his right forearm.

Jason was transferred to Germany, then to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, for inpatient care. A few months later he transferred to the Navy Medical Center San Diego where he began outpatient therapy.

HOW DID AMERICA'S FUND HELP JASON?
We provided family support grants that enabled Jason’s wife and mother to remain at bedside after the initial injuries in June 2012. We also provided an iPad, a truck bed cover to protect the lift he uses to get in and out of the truck, funds to cover truck payments and a transition grant to assist Jason and Kara with bills while he was waiting for his disability pay to start.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR JASON?
As of September 2013, Jason is medically retired from the military and looking forward to moving back to Ohio. He enjoys handshaking and snow skiing, and is part of Team Semper Fi, our rehabilitative athletic program that supports recovery through sport. "I've biked the Los Angeles and San Diego marathons both in about 2 hours," Jason says. "I've been learning to golf, too—it's somewhat difficult from the wheelchair, but I'm still able to do it." He's also looking into getting his pilot’s license. No wonder so many look to Jason as an inspiration.

AN AMERICA’S FUND HERO STORY
ARMY STAFF SERGEANT JASON GIBSON

To meet other America’s Fund heroes, please visit americasfund.org/heroes

DECEMBER 2013

SemperFiFund.org
**TEAM SEMPER FI & TEAM AMERICA’S FUND**

**Recovery Through Sport**

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**Team Facts:**
- **600** total team members
- **94** athletes in the US Paralympic Pipeline
- **18** athletes compete internationally
- **20+** sports represented
- **8** host countries

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**January 18-20, 2013**
Alpine Ski Mountain Camp Park City, UT

**March 2, 2013**
Blossom Trail Ride Fresno, CA

**March 17, 2013**
Los Angeles Marathon Los Angeles, CA

**April 10-21, 2013**
Sea Otter Classic Monterey, CA

**April 11-14, 2013**
Warrior Games Colorado Springs, CO

**May 11-16, 2013**
Drive For Heroes Golf Classic Colorado Springs, CO

**May 19, 2013**
Semper Fis 5K Washington, D.C.

**May 19, 2013**
Marine Corps Historic Half Marathon Fredericksburg, VA

**May 25, 2013**
Sea Isle City Tri for Vets Sea Isle City, NJ

**June 6-9, 2013**
Endeavor Games Edmond, OK

**June 21, 2013**
Singleminds National Convention Washington, D.C.

**July 19, 2013**
Cowboy Challenge Culpeper, VA

**November 3, 2013**
New York City Marathon New York, NY

**November 17, 2013**
Bank of America San Antonio, TX

**November 29, 2013**
Tunnel to Towers Run/Walk New York, NY

**December 1-3, 2013**
Warrior Games Colorado Springs, CO

**April 6, 2013**
Marine Corps Marathon Washington, D.C.

**April 6, 2013**
Cooper River Bridge Run Charleston, SC

**April 6-8, 2013**
AT's Sporting Rings, CA

**April 12-14, 2013**
AT's Challenge Portland, OR

**May 16, 2013**
Semper Fi 5K Washington, D.C.

**November 16, 2013**
Jingle Bell Run Washington, D.C.

**November 17, 2013**
Semper Fi 5K Washington, D.C.

**December 11-16, 2013**
Winter Paralympic Games Sochi, Russia

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**Joining in on “Recovery Through Sport” Across the Country... Announcing Team America’s Fund With Its First 25 Team Members!**

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**Team Members Compete for a Spot to Represent the USA at the Paralympic Winter Games**
The Veterans 2 Veterans Program is an entirely new concept. It’s a powerful – and absolutely effective – mentoring program that makes a real difference in the way service members are able to successfully transition from military to civilian life.

That’s how V2V Program Lead Brandon Pelletier enthusiastically describes this latest important initiative from the Semper Fi Fund.

Launched early in 2013, V2V is all about veterans helping veterans.

“People know what it’s like,” says Brandon. “No one knows what our service members are going through better than other service members.”

When a Semper Fi Fund case manager recognizes that a service member is struggling, the Organization for Military Community Support Coordinators (DISC) work closely with Veteran Integrated Service Networks (VISN) and District Injured Support Coordinators (DISC) to make sure service members are plugged into their local resources.

“V2V is unique in this respect,” Karen Guenther, Founder, Semper Fi Fund, explains. “There are many nonprofits that support a service member during the transition period, but we’re actively making sure they’re taking advantage of all the benefits and programs available to them on the local level.”

The V2V program is also unique in the way it takes a motivational—and personal—approach to helping service members. Most of the time when a fellow service member comes to the V2V program, he or she is so far down, it’s hard to build them back up,” Brandon says. “Every day is a struggle. But I tell every service member I’m working with in the program: You have my cell phone number – if you’re having a bad day, you call me. We’re in this together, and I know how hard this can be.”

Brandon is one of five V2V Veteran Leads helping service members navigate the path from military life to civilian life. Each Veteran Lead currently helps 50 to 100 service members, and each service member’s need is specific and unique. For example, one person may need assistance with computer training in order to secure a job while the next person may need help learning how to set up a personal budget. In all cases, of course, the purpose is to address the individual’s need and make his or her transition to civilian life smooth and successful.

Brandon’s favorite part of V2V is the mentor relationship he has built with his mentees. “So many service members feel like they’re alone, like there’s no path forward. For someone who has made that journey to be able to step up and say – from personal experience – ‘this is how I traveled my path forward, now I want to help you travel your path forward,’ that’s a profoundly powerful thing to be able to do.”

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A Note From Our Founder

Dear Friends and Family,

As 2013 comes to a close, it’s a great time to reflect on the incredible year we have had at Semper Fi Fund and America’s Fund.

Our Veteran-to-Veteran (V2V) program has been a tremendous success, providing mentorship, transition assistance, and community for service members in need. Semper Fi Fund mentors are doing a phenomenal job hand in hand with case managers to help navigate their local Veterans Integrated Services Network, network in their communities, seek job opportunities and pave the way for their future. We are so proud of the work that these men and women are doing, and look forward to seeing this program grow in the coming year.

We’ll never forget the impact that the Boston Marathon had on all of us. In the wake of this unexpected tragedy, the men and women of Team Semper Fi sprung into action, sharing their experiences, lending a shoulder to cry on and giving hope to the victims and their families. Several months later, we returned to Boston for an America’s Fund reunion; seeing the lifelong bonds between survivors like Celeste Corcoran and Team Semper Fi’s Gabe Martinez, there was not a dry eye in the room.

In this newsletter, we have shared some truly inspiring stories from some of the everyday heroes whose sacrifice and courage continues to inspire us, like Jesse and Kelly Cottle. A picture of Kelly carrying Jesse, a double amputee, on her back, went viral in September, a symbol not only of the support she gives him every day, but the couple’s strength in spite of all their struggles.

For this, and all of the amazing things we have accomplished this year, we thank you from the bottoms of our hearts. You make it possible for Semper Fi Fund and America’s Fund to continue to help our injured service members and their families in their time of need—we couldn’t do it without your support.

From all of us here at Semper Fi Fund, we wish you a Happy Holiday, and look forward to another incredible year with your support.

Semper Fidelis,

Karen Guenther

Semper Fi Fund Founder, Karen Guenther

Employees Community Fund of Boeing California’s Crystal Vision Awards

In This Issue

- Crystal Vision Awards, a perfect representation of who Kelly is.
- Jesse, a double amputee, on his back, went viral in September, a symbol not only of the support she gives him every day, but the couple’s strength in spite of all their struggles.
- We are so grateful for the incredible support we’ve received from Bob and Renee Parsons, whose generosity is only matched by the size of their hearts, said CEO Karen Guenther. "Their donation will touch the lives of countless service members and their families, and on their behalf, we thank Bob and Renee from the bottom of our hearts."

Bob’s and Renee’s generosity will bring many smiles to the faces of injured and critically ill members of all branches of the military and their families—and you can add to the impact of their donation: Through December 31, 2013, The Bob & Renee Parsons Foundation will be joined by GoDaddy in a $1 million matching campaign. Make a donation to the Semper Fi Fund before the end of the year—and double its impact for our veterans! For complete information, please visit www.semperfifund.org/donate-godaddy.

If I hadn’t stepped on that IED I wouldn’t have met her," Jesse says. "I wouldn’t take it back ever." continued from page 1 walked on them for the first time right after Thanksgiving. He walked out of the hospital on his own with two canes in January 2019, but by midsummer the canes were gone. Jesse and Kelly (a swimmer for Boise State) met at a swim meet in San Diego during his recovery. "I remember being very intrigued by him," Kelly said. "He was very different and not just because of his legs, but because of who he was." The couple was married in 2012, and the iconic photo was taken in 2013 at a family gathering. "The photo really says it all," Jesse told ABC News. "I actually look at it very much as a symbol for our whole relationship in general. She’s physically carrying me, but there’s times where she’s carrying me emotionally. It’s a perfect representation of who Kelly is."

While thousands of miles away, Jesse’s friend Corcoran was also reeling from the tragic news. “It’s such a blow,” Corcoran said in an ABC News interview. “No one imagined this would happen. We were all so happy for him,” she said. "I was always happy and smiling. I didn’t know what to say. I didn’t know what to do. I just knew that we had to come together and support him.”

As a person who has directly been a part of the love and support that all of you at Semper Fi have so freely given to myself, my family and all the other Marine families I am filled with much gratitude and thanks. Today I was able to donate a very small token back to you. I will donate to you every time I sell a house and I will be looking forward to your e-newsletter. Being on a senior budget, my donation will not be very large, but it comes from my heart. Thanks for allowing me to share my comments with you. Keep up the great job you are doing that I have read about and God Bless you and all your volunteers. With love, I could join in!"

Here at the Semper Fi Fund, every dollar we receive from our supporters makes us smile—and when we receive a million of them all at once, well, there are plenty of smiles to go around. Established in 2012 by Bob Parsons, founder of GoDaddy, and his wife Renee, The Bob & Renee Parsons Foundation has so far awarded $28 million to various charities. We suspect, though, that there’s a soft spot in Bob’s heart for the Semper Fi Fund: Bob is a U.S. Marine Corps Vietnam veteran and a recipient of the Combat Action Ribbon, Vietnam Service Medal, Cross of Gallantry and Purple Heart Medal.

“We are so grateful for the incredible support we’ve received from Bob and Renee Parsons, whose generosity is only matched by the size of their hearts,” said CEO Karen Guenther. “Their donation will touch the lives of countless service members and their families, and on their behalf, we thank Bob and Renee from the bottom of our hearts.”
Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund
825 College Boulevard
Suite 102, PMB 609
Oceanside, CA 92057
SemperFiFund.org

Thank You for Serving Those Who Preserve Our Freedom

Semper Fi Fund Since 2004

$83,000,000+ given in assistance to service members
64,000 total grants to service members
administered over 6% overhead expenses
over $1,000,000 supplies in support every month
we’ve helped over 10,500 wounded heroes and their families
A+ rating from Charity Watch
4 Star rating from Charity Navigator
processes 60 grants per day

American’s Fund Since 2012

$2,000,000 given in assistance
assisted 200 service members and their families
administered over 1000 grants
6% with less than $2,000,000

Thank you for your support.

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. Contact info@semperfifund.org

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

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

Donations may be made online: SemperFiFund.org

Please send check donations to:
Semper Fi Fund
825 College Boulevard
Suite 102, PMB 609
Oceanside, CA 92057

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

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twitter.com/semperfifund
youtube.com/semperfifund
linkedin.com/company/injured-marine-semper-fi-fund
HOW YOU CAN HELP

POST ... Spread our mission by sharing this poster on your local bulletin boards! Post at your community center, coffee shop, gym, club house, church, school, work place, VFW, or library. Go to www.semperfifund.org to print out more posters or share on Facebook and Twitter.

HOST ... Turn your favorite activity into a fundraising event! Host a BBQ, mystery dinner, bake sale, lemonade stand, motorcycle or bike poker run, golf or softball tournament, flag football game, tailgate, etc. Go to www.semperfifund.org/fundraising/ for helpful hints on planning your next event.

TOAST ... Toast the Semper Fi Fund and America’s Fund with friends and family and plan on how you can make a difference in the lives of our veterans in 2014!

IT’S A LIFELONG BOND.

Semper Fi Fund, and its program, America’s Fund, provide immediate financial assistance and lifetime support to our injured and critically ill post-9/11 service members in the U.S. Armed Forces and their families.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.semperfifund.org
ABOUT THE SEMPER FI FUND:
The Semper Fi Fund, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, and its program America's Fund, are set up to provide immediate financial assistance and lifetime support for injured and critically ill members of the U.S. Armed Forces and their families. We direct urgently needed resources to post 9/11 service members, who meet our criteria for assistance, from the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, and Reserves.

WHO WE ARE:
The Semper Fi Fund was created by a group of Marine Corps spouses nine years ago, and those same women run the Fund today alongside other spouses from all services branches, retired service members, all of whom intimately know the needs of our military families. We have been by our injured and ill service members' sides from day one, helping them as they navigate lengthy recoveries and rejoin their communities.

HOW WE HELP:

WHO WE HELP:
Post 9/11 service members with amputations, spinal cord injuries, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Post Traumatic Stress (PTS), burns, blindness, other physical injuries, or those suffering from life-threatening illnesses. We also help immediate family members of our active duty, spouse or child, who face life threatening illness or injury.

HOW WE ARE UNIQUE:
The Semper Fi Fund has been awarded the highest ratings from Watch Dog groups: A+ from Charity Watch for the second year, and we are one of only three veteran nonprofits to receive this rating the last two reports; 4 stars from Charity Navigator for five consecutive years. We maintain an extremely low overhead - 6%, rapid assistance with no red tape.

LOOKING FORWARD:
The Semper Fi Fund has been successful over the years thanks to our loyal supporters, both individuals and corporations. Yet our challenges continue to intensify due to the level of severity of injury, illness, and post-traumatic stress unique to the length of war on terrorism. These critical injuries are brought home and often call for a lifetime of assistance.

Tax-deductible contributions from people like you make up our lifeblood; whether donations are large or small, a one-time gift or ongoing endowment, every individual or corporation has the power to make a real difference, here and now, no matter where they are in the world. The Semper Fi Fund is forever grateful to each of our supporters who share in our ongoing mission. Please help us help those who have given so much in the name of freedom.

www.semperfifund.org