

## Going paperless raises \$85,000 for military families

By SHARI LOPATIN  
TriWest Healthcare Alliance

PHOENIX — Making the simple switch to electronic statements means military families throughout the country will receive thousands in additional funding to help during a future time of need.

Through TriWest Healthcare Alliance's "Go Green & Give" campaign, more than \$85,000 was raised to help four national military charities in their mission of supporting military families.

All told, more than 17,000 TriCare West Region households participated in the three-month effort.

### Go Green, TriWest gives green

For each of the 17,000 households that chose to Go Green and receive healthcare statements electronically, TriWest agreed to donate \$5 to one of four military charities:

- Armed Services YMCA (ASYMCA)
- Operation Homefront
- Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)

• USO  
"It's great to know that by simply choosing paperless options, our customers were able to help these four outstanding organizations — and ultimately, provide support to the men, women and children who do so much for our country," said TriWest President and CEO David J. McIntyre Jr.

### Clearing the clutter

TriCare West Region beneficiaries can continue opting in for paperless healthcare communications, such as referral and authorization letters, claims and explanation of benefits statements, by visiting [www.triwest.com/GoGreen](http://www.triwest.com/GoGreen).

### About TriWest

TriWest Healthcare Alliance partners with the Department of Defense to do "Whatever It Takes" to support the healthcare needs of 2.7 million members of America's military family. A Phoenix-based corporation, TriWest provides access to cost-effective, high-quality health care in the 21-state TriCare West Region. Follow them on Twitter and Facebook or visit [www.triwest.com](http://www.triwest.com) for more information.

## Employer Appreciation Day registration

By Public Affairs staff 419th Fighter Wing

The 419th Fighter Wing will host its annual Employer Appreciation Day Aug. 6. Plans include an F-16 aerial refueling mission aboard a KC-135 Stratotanker, along with various tours and demonstrations. Reservists are encouraged to nominate their civilian employers by the deadline, July 15.

EAD serves to thank employers for their support of Air Force Reservists by showcasing the wing's mission, members and milestones.

The local Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve organization will present briefings aimed at educating attendees on the support they provide and laws that protect both employers and reservists. Lunch will also be provided.

Due to space limitations, employers who have attended past EAD events may not attend. Department of Defense supervisors are also ineligible.

Reservists can register them-

selves and one employer by sending an e-mail to [419fw.pa@hill.af.mil](mailto:419fw.pa@hill.af.mil) with the following information in full:

#### EMPLOYER

Full Name:  
Position/Title:  
Company:  
Complete work address:

Day/work phone:

Alt. phone (home/cell):

Work e-mail:

Home e-mail:

#### RESERVIST

Full Name:

Rank:

Unit:

Day/work phone:

Alt. phone (home/cell):

Work e-mail:

Home e-mail:

Military e-mail:

Upon receipt, a member of the wing public affairs staff will send a confirmation e-mail to the reservist and his or her employer.

For more information, call the wing public affairs office at (801) 777-2713.

## 748TH WINGMAN DAY



Above, Dawn Avery runs to first base during the championship softball game May 25 at the 748th Wingman Day. At left, members of the winning team, the "Home Runs" pose. Final score as they beat the "Mighty Ducks" —

10-6. Below left, members of the 748th Supply Chain Management Group gather for a picnic. Said Reggie Hall, 748th SCMG commander, "At the 748th we work hard and play hard. This activity was to give back and say thanks for all the hard work."

TIM BROUSSARD  
U.S. Air Force

## QUAKE

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old, and Antonio, 9, left their husband and father, Tech. Sgt. Aaron Watkins behind at Misawa Air Base, Japan, bound for Spokane and under the watch of staff from Fairchild AFB's Airman Family and Readiness Center.

"It was 2:45 in the afternoon when our lives changed," Jenevra Watkins said. "My husband had just gotten off an 18-hour shift and I was on the phone talking with a friend when it hit. It was like being on a boat in high seas, but with no water. We grabbed Quintus and went outside. We didn't know what else to do — it just wouldn't stop."

Two days prior to the "big one," Jenevra said they experienced a 7.0 and a 7.2 magnitude earthquake and everyone was getting restless.

"I could feel it on my body — something big was coming," she said. "Even the animals were acting weird. The locals were telling us to get money and have food stocked and clothes packed. I put it out on my Facebook to my friends to do the same. As it turned out, some of my friends listened and that night our family and five other families were

huddled together in the only house near us with running water — but at least we had money, food and clothes."

Her son Antonio didn't quite know how he felt about the earthquake.

"I was signing in at the youth center when the shaking started," Antonio said. "It was creepy. It felt like a rollercoaster and I heard loud bangs. They told us to get under cover so I got under the pool table. I kind of wanted it to stop, but it was kind of fun too."

### Post-quake

In the following days, Jenevra said Misawa AB was running at about 30 percent electricity. They were using the base gym to shower and the chow hall was running on generators, but was open to all for food and drinks.

Then the news started trickling in about problems at the Fukushima Nuclear Plant, a little more than 200 hundred miles from the base.

"The base commander was keeping everyone informed about the aftermath, efforts to start clean up and the developing problems with the nuclear plant," Jenevra said. "In one of the meetings he told us that the Department of State had authorized a voluntary departure of families on March

17 — it was then Aaron and I started making our plans."

Several factors played into their decision; first and foremost was the looming nuclear threat and the health of their newborn baby, Quintus. He has fluid on his kidney and was actually supposed to undergo a "voiding cystourethrogram" and an ultrasound in the coming days. In addition to that, base resources were running low and they were also experiencing rolling blackouts during cold weather. On the advice of the medical staff and the uncertain situation — they decided it was time to go.

"I didn't want them to leave, but I knew it would be for the best," said Sgt. Watkins, a 35th Security Forces Squadron unit deployment manager at Misawa AB. "There were too many uncertainties that remained here following the earthquake and tsunami. I wanted to ensure the safety and security of my family."

### Bound for U.S.

Jenevra and her two sons started outprocessing Misawa AB on March 18. They boarded a chartered plane March 22 bound for Seattle.

"I was very impressed on how quickly and smoothly the Air Force got us out of there,"

she said. "It was sort of like a deployment line my husband would go through. We were on the first plane out, and it was full of babies, children and mothers — I did not feel alone."

Her father drove from Spokane to pick them up in Seattle and they drove back talking about their experience back in Japan.

After settling in her parent's house in the Spokane Valley, they made their way to the Fairchild A&FRC where Christopher Marble, the director of the A&FRC, welcomed them and ensured they would be taken care of.

"We are taking care of 33 evacuated families throughout the Northwest," Marble said.

"I feel privileged to be a part of the Fairchild AFB team; that I get to work with great professionals and provide service to Airman and their families. Mrs. Watkins is one of many tremendous stories that surfaced during this Japan crisis. I am very pleased that we were selected to provide family support in the Northwest to the Japan evacuees."

The A&FRC helps families affected and scattered by a widespread catastrophic event through the Air Force Personnel Accountability and Assessment System; which is

a standardized method for the Air Force to account, manage and monitor the recovery and reconstitution process for personnel and their families.

### Currently

With the exception of their still "feeling" the earthquake here, the Watkins family is doing pretty well. Quintus has been seen by doctors and is doing better. Antonio is enrolled in school and Jenevra is in the process of getting proper documentation so they can reunite with Aaron back in Japan at the end of the school year.

"Aaron is taking leave this month sometime to come here and visit us," his wife said. "He has been working endless hours in clean up, but is slowly getting back to normal operations. We can't wait to see him — we miss him a lot."

Sgt. Watkins feels the same way about his family back in Spokane.

"I have a tight group of friends here who sent their families back as well," he said. "We get together on weekends to barbecue and discuss our thoughts, which help everyone cope with loneliness. It's not easy having your family away as you stay behind. It's almost like a reverse deployment — I now know how it feels to wait at home for loved ones to return."