

We've Moved! (page 8)

india indonesia africa asia latin america

INSIDE

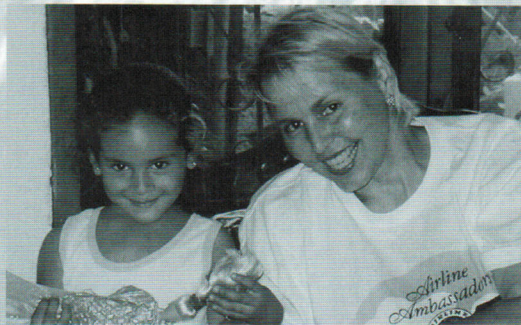
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AAI 2003 Highlights

- Countries visited: 21
- Humanitarian Missions: 56
- Escorts Completed: 115
- Aid Delivered: \$2.81 Million

Giving, From the Heart

(Mission Irader Mari Hafner and a new friend in Ecuador)



One of the most inspiring things about Airline Ambassadors (AAI) is the constant reminder that there are many, many people working to make life better for others. Sometimes it seems things are only getting worse in our global community as we watch nations go to war, suicide bombers strike, countries develop nuclear weapons, and dictators mass-murder thousands. It is enough to create a complete sense of hopelessness and helplessness, but AAI truly is a beacon of hope, proving time and again there is a great deal of good in this world! So many Airline Ambassadors help those in need,

each in their own way. Some members spending hours knitting caps and crafting blankets; one donated a large Beanie Baby collection, perfect for children who have no toys. A seven-year old boy collected hundreds of toys and supplies from his classmates to send to children in need. Regional directors holding membership drives at airports, groups of people taking their time off from work to go on missions, and dedicated mission coordinators spending countless hours working out itineraries, determining aid needed, and coordinating travel to developing countries. Escorts accompanying children from remote parts of the world so they may receive life-saving medical care, and children in the U.S. creating cards for their counterparts in other countries who are less fortunate. Airline Ambassadors epitomizes hope and compassion. Thank you to all our members, volunteers, and contributors who help us make a difference in the world and are an inspiration to all of us! ■

WELCOME Home, Gabby!

Words simply can't express the joy we feel in announcing the adoption of four year old Gabriela to our own Elaine Osborn. Three years ago, Elaine met Gabby at an orphanage while leading a mission for Airline Ambassadors to El Salvador. It was love at first sight! After years of traveling to El Salvador to complete the adoption, Elaine is finally bringing Gabby home to Texas. "We had a connection from the very beginning. For me, this is a dream come true," says new mom Elaine. Gabby now has many new aunts and uncles in the Airline Ambassadors family and we're all thrilled to welcome her home! Elaine is the National Coordinator for Airline Ambassadors, and has worked as a volunteer for the last year almost full time at our headquarters in DFW. ■



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Message From Nancy Rivard

It is so inspiring for me to receive the stories and letters from our members, transformed by their experience on an Airline Ambassador mission. Truly we are helping thousands of children and substantively making a difference in the areas of hunger, health, education, child welfare, sustainable development and disaster relief. We are also offering a way for members to express their fundamen-

tal selflessness, generosity and compassion. Bringing love into action, we automatically feel joy, a deeper joy than we can experience buying a new car or a new dress. Once you feel that joy, you want to share it with others. I hope you will join us, I hope you will get involved in some way – our own way – to help our brothers and sisters all over the world who do not have any of the privileges and conveniences we take for granted. Join us for the adventure of a lifetime and let us share the love and goodwill that will transform our world! ■

FEATURE STORIES

A Life Changing Experience For American Airlines VPs

Visiting a garbage dump, refugee camp, or poor children's project can be a real adventure. That's what American Airlines' VP-DFW Tim Ahern and VP-MIA George Hazy found during a recent mission to Quito, Ecuador. Tim commented that his visit to families living at the dump was a life-changing experience. "When you see such poverty, you are amazed that the people can be so happy just to receive a pair of used jeans, a rain jacket, or a baseball cap," Tim said. Later, at an indigenous children's project at a squatter community, the team shared smiles and laughter brought on simply by helping children make butterflies from coffee filters and clothes pegs. Children living in poverty don't play or receive attention from caring adults. Life is difficult without electricity, running water, or even food, and there is no luxury of leisure playtime.



Simply spending time with these children, showing them care, helps to build their self-esteem and is an experience they will remember for the rest of their lives. Tim himself looks forward to joining another AAI mission and plans to bring his wife and son. Both AA executives encourage American Airlines employees and all Americans to travel to make a difference through Airline Ambassadors International. It will make for an unforgettable memory! ■

Welcome Our New Executive Director Eric Woodson!



Eric joins us from the advertising department at American Airlines and is a veteran of missions to Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Peru, Bolivia, and the Philippines. He also just completed his first escort, taking little Chrislove and Julene home to Haiti after treatment in the US. "I'm thrilled to work with such great people doing such important work," said Eric. "It's exciting to know how many lives we touch with the work we do." ■

Join

AAI

call 972.323.2772 -or- visit www.airlineambassadors.org

ESCORT NEWS

Congratulations, Margaret!

As a full-time volunteer, Margaret Whitehead serves as AAI's Children's Escort Program Director and organizes 13-15 escort trips each month. Seriously ill children need prompt medical attention and Margaret often has very little time to arrange their trips to the United States. For eight years, she's dedicated her time to helping these children receive life-changing medical treatment not available to them in their home countries.

At the first Children's Escort Conference in Dallas, AAI President Nancy Rivard presented Margaret with a special award which will begin an annual tradition for Airline Ambassadors - the Margaret Whitehead Award, to be given every year for volunteers who have contributed the most to our Children's Escort program. Surrounded by friends and colleagues, Margaret thanked everyone for their support. "I continue to be amazed at the generosity of our escorts who are so quick to use their limited time off to help a sick

child. We work as a team, and together, we're making a difference," she said. AAI members honored for their contributions to the Escort Program included: Masako Fett, Donna Kocian, Pam Maloof, Jackie Miller-Erskine, Amy Watson and Liz Wilson... Special thanks to the Elizabeth L. and Russell F. Hallberg Foundation for their generous grant for this conference. AAI appreciates Paula Latshaw for organizing the event. ■



Jorge's Journey

Little Jorge Grajales, age 6, is a quad amputee after a terrible systemic infection at age seventeen months, but you'd never know it by the smile on his face! JFK-based Sue Megingold escorted him home to Panama after recent treatment here in the U.S. Partnering with Healing the Children, AAI was able to help Jorge return home, where he now plays soccer and computer games, rides a scooter, and enjoys his puppy, just like most other kids his age. Thanks to Healing the Children, AAI, and volunteers like Sue, Jorge is an inspiration for us all. ■



Opening Her Heart and Her Home

Miami based Flight Attendant Sherly Cadet had agreed to what she thought would be a quick mission: to escort a 15-year old boy from Miami to Haiti after medical treatment and return with a 16-year old girl who needed treatment in the U.S. In a comedy of errors including missed buses, delayed flights, and other complications, she rolled with the punches and offered gracious hospitality despite the challenges. She opened her home to the children and their escorts and even treated everyone to dinner at a Haitian restaurant. Thank you, Sherly, for your diplomacy and your love going beyond the call of duty to make life's stressful situations better for all! ■



Airline Ambassadors are often faced with the same challenges as parents traveling with an infant. The Baby B'Air Flight Vest offers a comfortable and economical way to secure a lap child, protecting baby from the dangers of turbulence. The Flight Vest is the only product designed specifically for lap children aboard aircraft and is the only way for parents to secure a lap child. Baby B'Air generously supports Airline Ambassadors by donating Flight ■





MISSIONS

“God is not looking for alms, God is looking for action. You can’t fix every problem, but the ones that you can, you have to try. The world is a smaller place: distance cannot decide who is our neighbor to love. Love thy neighbor. We cannot afford not to.”

--Bono--

Ecuador Excursions

Our volunteers are often surprised by the overwhelming kindness and “royal treatment” received from start to finish on a mission. This was especially true during Corlene Horan’s mission bringing aid to children at three daycare centers in Guayaquil, Ecuador. Upon arrival, Airline Ambassadors were escorted into the VIP lounge, while local volunteers gathered baggage, cleared Customs, and placed the aid in a waiting Army truck. The Ecuador Army provided a bus, truck and guards to assist them the entire trip. The team visited the tiny home of a local family and were treated to royal hospitality. They were entertained with live guitar music and a delicious crab boil dinner in a touching show of gratitude. People in this poor community commented how moved they were that Americans would come so far to help people they do not even know.

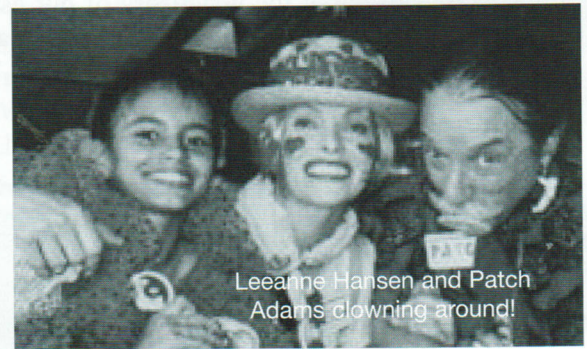
Thank you also to many teams that helped in Ecuador. Lisa McKellar and Kathleen Smith who delivered 7,220 doses of Influenza vaccine to seven Quito clinics and hospitals. To Maria Harrison for coordinating a consortium of local foundations to work with Airline Ambassadors missions. To Penny Rambacher for coordinating successful long term plans to support families at the Quito Dump. And to Paula Latshaw and Margaret Whitehead who provided donations, including a new stove, to an orphanage on a research mission to Guayaquil. ■

Panama: Music to our Ears

Life is a daily struggle in many of the places we visit and providing for basic needs like food or shelter is a constant concern; that’s why we are especially pleased with Kerry Keith’s recent mission to Panama. The volunteers brought thousands of dollars of humanitarian aid, but also something more lasting. Kerry’s Denver team raised funds to purchase band instruments for impoverished children in the village of Boquette. Our goal is to help meet their basic needs, but we are thrilled to offer the gift of music, too. AAI salutes dedicated mission coordinators like Kerry. ■

Building Houses for the Homeless: El Salvador

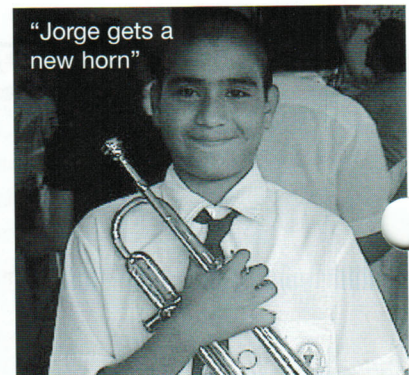
AAI is building houses for the earthquake victims in El Salvador, partnering with the government, Catholic Relief, Kiwanis International, and Homes for the Heart. Over 150 families were displaced from their homes in the “campesinos” (country) and since the earthquake have been living in tin shacks in the “Chattererra” (the community dump). Twenty houses have been completed so far! Construction volunteers needed! Check out our website for details or e-mail sridave@aol.com. ■



Leeanne Hansen and Patch Adams clowning around!

Clowns to Latin America

Airline Ambassadors and Dr. Patch Adams teamed up again for a clown mission to Latin America. The team of clown doctors visited hospitals, orphanages and villages...in Colombia, Argentina, Chile and Uruguay...delivering humanitarian aid as well as love and laughter! ■



“Jorge gets a new horn”

Giving in Guatemala:

Philanthropy Magazine Joins AAI on a Mission of the Heart

Bob Hopkins, President of Philanthropy International Magazine, joined an adventurous mission to the mountains of Guatemala - a far different world than his normal day-to-day life. He taught 350 Mayan children to brush their teeth and wash their hands and later helped deliver promised wheelchairs to a remote adobe village outside the Quiche Indian market of Chichicastenango. En route, the van created quite a stir, piled high with wheelchairs, as volunteers tossed balloons out the windows to eager children. The van bumped to a pullover spot around winding curves and dusty unpaved roads, where the team then trekked through the forest with their donations. Reaching the top, they were able to deliver a wheelchair to 14-year old Marta Elena, who until then had been unable to get around unless carried on her parents backs. A sec-

ond wheelchair just happened to be available for her sister, 3-year old Marta Isabel. With 10 strangers crowded around her speaking languages she did not understand, little Marta burst out crying. A stuffed animal was quickly produced to ease her fear and bring back her smile, then she too was presented with the gift of mobility that would better her life immeasurably. Special thanks to AA GUA General Manager Javier Plaza who made the shipment possible and Bob Hopkins for his enthusiasm and support in "traveling to make a difference." Welcome to the Board of Advisors for AAI! ■



Married on a Mission to Cambodia!



Lynn Burnett and Scott Davis had been dating for four years when they joined an Airline Ambassador mission to Cambodia. Deeply moved by their experience helping so many children in this exotic culture, their intuition and senses became

more awakened and alive. A coincidental invitation into a Buddhist monastery led to an unexpected destiny. Amidst the scent of jasmine flowers and temple bells, the Buddhist monks offered to marry them...within two days! A marriage contract was written in Khmer (Cambodia's official language) and Lynn and Scott said "Yes"!

Despite the excitement over the wedding, the couple and the team kept their focus on the children they were there to visit. "We didn't want to take anything away from the trip. It was an incredible week [in terms of the mission itself]," Scott declared. The team of 13, led by Deborah Quigley, provided hundreds of children's books and funds for Khmer musical instruments for an orphanage of former street children in Phnom Penh, as well as life saving medicines for a children's hospital in Angkor Wat. On the wedding day the whole team witnessed the beautiful Buddhist ceremony, and each tied a piece of string around the couple's wrists - a symbol akin to the rings exchanged in many nuptials. The ceremony added a special touch to a special week of magic. For Airline Ambassadors, this is a first! ■

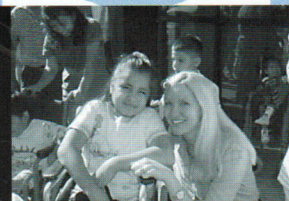
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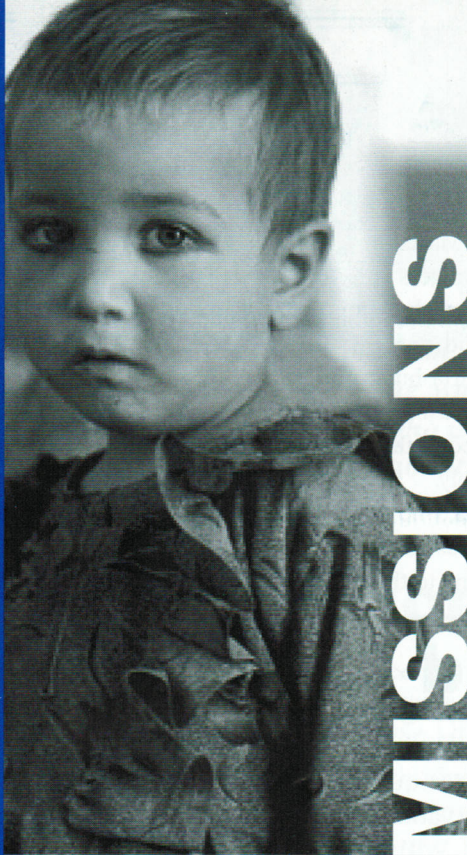
Navajo and Six Nations Reservations

Kathy Coffman was quick to respond when she heard the Six Nations Reservation needed blankets for the upcoming winter. Thanks to William Dise in Denver and AAI headquarters in Dallas, Kathy hand delivered blankets and baby quilts to the reservation. "It's an honor for me to work with these wonderful people. Their culture is fascinating and I truly appreciate their warm welcome", commented. Kathy. Many thanks also to Jeanniene Lee and her team who traveled to the Navajo Nation to blankets, supplies and toys for pre-holiday giveaway celebrations. ■

Trinidad A Little Fresh Paint Goes A Long Way

Over 150 boxes of aid came off the airplane with 50 Airline Ambassadors on William Dise's mission to Trinidad. Armed with brushes and over 60 gallons of paint, William Dise and his team brightened up a school literally. William shared that what was most memorable was, "The diverse group that we partnered with." The ages ranged from the very young to the very old and included members of the National Association of Blacks in Criminal Justice from all over the United States. Together they tackled the task at hand with big smiles and camaraderie. "Everybody stepped back and was really happy about the end product," William noted. Bravo to this team for improving the school, and, by doing so, emphasizing the importance of education to the Trinidadian children! ■





MISSIONS

Building Capacity for Orphans in Peru



Peg Meyer fell in love with the 520 precious boys at Ciudad de los Niños, when she met them on a mission to Lima, Peru two years ago. She knew that they appreciated the toys, blankets, school supplies, and clothing our trips provided, but she wanted to do more. She wanted these

boys to have a future, to have skills to find a job when they left the orphanage. She got an idea, and single-handedly raised funds to purchase supplies for their carpentry shop. With the help of Javier Marin and a team from American Airlines in Lima, Peg's group delivered \$4,100 worth of tools – air compressors, drills, lathes, saws – everything the boys will need to learn carpentry skills. "This helps us more than you know", said orphanage director Brother Omar Sanchez. "These tools offer more than an education; they offer hope for a better future." Peg plans to return this winter with supplies for the orphanage's shoe-making shop and bakery. Bravo Peg, for building a better future in Peru! ■

Making Friends in the Philippines



Bob Blake led Airline Ambassadors' most successful Philippines mission yet to Mother Theresa's Missions of Charity near Manila and Shepherd of the Hills

Orphanage near the South China Sea. His team collected clothing, shoes, books, videos, medicine, vitamins, school supplies, arts & crafts, and bathroom items for grateful recipients. The team presented a check for \$3,400.00 with money they'd raised for Shepherd of the Hills and actually stayed at the orphanage themselves. They had time to eat, sleep and be with the children daily and spent time playing sports and games and doing creative arts. The love and joy brought to the children will be something they remember for the rest of their lives! ■

Disaster Relief:

San Diego Fires!



An eerie red sun lit the sky and the smell of burnt wood reeked its rancid odor into the morning mist. When the San Diego fires began to burn out of control, many fled their houses and communities in terror...and returned home to find nothing left. We never think it will happen to us...but when disaster strikes, you realize just how vulnerable we are. An Airline Ambassadors team was there to help deliver aid as the community came together to help one another. Many thanks to William Dise for coordinating four pallets of food donations and to American Airlines and Father Joe's Villages for help with transport and delivery to the worst hit communities...Lakeside, Harbeson Canyon and Scripps Ranch, California. ■

Mission Bolivia: The Gift of Sound

"It's difficult to describe the emotions of witnessing a child hear for the first time", per Paula Moran. She and her team of AAI volunteers could not hold back tears as children from the Erick Boulter Home were fitted with hearing aids. The children opened their eyes wide with delight as a whole new world opened up for them. They heard the sound of their own names, the melodies of birds singing outside, footsteps in the hall, the sound of laughter. Small treasures, that we take for granted in our own lives, they found wondrous. Paula raised enough funds to purchase hearing aids for half of the children



and plans to return in December to support enough for the rest of the children living there. The group also arranged an outing to the zoo and learned some sign language. AAI volunteers like Paula are committed to making a lasting impact on the lives of the children they serve. ■

SPECIAL

events

Help In Hungary:

A Birthday Present for Congressman

Tom Lantos



Chelsea and James Norell spent the entire summer collecting donations and hand delivered their gifts as youth ambassadors on an exciting journey to Budapest. The Norell's joined the AAI team to visit Szligagy Erzsebet Children's Home with 800 lbs of sports and arts equipment, school and hygiene supplies, clothing, shoes and individual gifts for each child. Thank you DHL! This mission was a birthday present for Congressman Lantos, and part of the three days of festivities were in his honor. The children performed song and dances, as part of a cultural exchange, learned American baseball and worked on beading projects with their AAI friends each day. They promised to stay in email contact with their new computer. Many thanks to Mrs Annette Lantos and Mrs Nada Simonyi, wife of the Hungarian Ambassador. Congressman Lantos appreciated the gift of service to his home country and it was poignant for the AAI team to witness him being given State Medal of Honor. ■

CASA Act-Airline Ambassadors Sponsor a Bill in Congress



Steve Forneris and Dave Rivard received standing ovations and television coverage in Ecuador on an Airline Ambassador volunteer mission to share up to date building codes with local universities and technical schools. The El Salvador earthquake prompted Steve and Dave, both Airline Ambassadors with building expertise, to want to help. Together they lobbied Senator Dodd to write the Codes and Safety of the America's Act, which was signed into law by President Bush last November. Airline Ambassadors is excited to provide volunteer missions for building professionals to share their expertise with the global community. ■

Airline Ambassadors Volunteer in New York

Thanks so much to Sharrye Moore who coordinated for dozens of Airline Ambassadors to help at the United Nations Conference for NGO's, local events with ABC Disney and the Community Mayor's Holiday Party for 5,000 handicapped children. Besides coordinating local volunteers, Sharrye managed to partner with Medical Wings leading substantive missions to the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Jamaica. ■

AAI wins Humanitarian Award at Film Festival

Airline Ambassadors was honored with the Humanitarian Award at the Queens International Film Festival on November 16. The three-day festival culminated with a moving ceremony where some of the best new filmmakers and films were honored. Twelve Airline Ambassadors were applauded with a standing ovation for their work helping children around the world. Many thanks to Marie Jocelyne Castaldo and John DePrima, co-sponsors of the event. ■

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Membership Application

Call us for a free packet of information 972 323-2772 or visit www.airlineambassadors.org

A World of Thanks



Airline Ambassadors is a grass-roots, volunteer driven organization. Though our funds are limited, there's no limit to the kindness and generosity of our supporters. Here are just some of the people, companies and organizations who make our work possible: *Thank you to FedEx for your ongoing assistance Bringing Compassion into Action.* ■

We've Moved!

Through a generous donation of Carlos Pippa, President of Global Finishing Solutions, Airline Ambassadors was donated a new office and warehouse for use through 2008! Thank you to Sheran James for coordinating this donation...which will save us over \$12,000 a year, allowing us to further help those in need.

**1625 Crosby Road, Suite 132
Carrollton, TX 75006**

**www.airlineambassadors.org
972.323.2772 / Fax 972.323.8587**

Thank You **SHURGARD**

A special thanks to Shurgard Storage and the Storing for Hope Program which has donated warehouse space in San Francisco, Dallas, Miami, Chicago and New York. No more piles of boxes in the garage and living room! This gift will allow us to store, inventory and more easily prepare our missions in the future. The storage areas have allowed us to gather donations to fill 40 ft shipping containers bound for Guatemala and El Salvador. ■

Bringing Compassion Into Action At Home and Abroad

Airline Ambassadors is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping children in need and traveling to make a difference. Our members are airline personnel and others who volunteer as Ambassadors of Goodwill in our home communities and abroad. We hand-deliver humanitarian aid, escort children in need, assist at special events and involve youth in efforts to build bridges of friendship across countries and cultures. AAI is a 501(c)(3) charity and all donations are fully tax deductible. Please join us bringing compassion into action. ■

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 - Buckner Orphan Care International
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1625 Crosby Road, Suite 132
Carrollton, TX 75006