

American Airlines Helps Bring Holiday Cheer to Gold Star Families Through the Gary Sinise Foundation's Snowball Express

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American to fly 1,722 children and spouses of fallen military from more than 80 cities worldwide for an unforgettable five-day experience

FORT WORTH, Texas — On Saturday, Dec. 8, nearly 1,000 American Airlines team member volunteers will bring 1,722 children of the fallen and their surviving parent or guardian to Orlando, Florida, for five days of fun and fellowship at the 13th annual Snowball Express, a program of the Gary Sinise Foundation. This therapeutic getaway will offer inspirational programs, encouraging critical peer-to-peer support for these families.

The annual Snowball Express event began in 2006, with a letter written by a fallen soldier to his wife, only to be opened should he perish in battle. While the letter expressed many things, one wish was that they visit Disneyland. From that letter, Snowball Express was created to bring together the children and surviving spouses of fallen U.S. military heroes for a healing retreat. In 2017, it was announced the annual event would officially become a program of the Gary Sinise Foundation.

During their trip, families will not only visit Disney World, they also will have direct access to complimentary resources such as counseling services; application support for educational scholarships; education about and access to medical and government benefits; financial counseling and assistance; mentoring; and aid for those with special needs or disabilities. Snowball Express will offer a variety of activities and entertainment, including a concert from Gary Sinise and the Lt. Dan Band.

"For the last 12 years Gary has been involved with the Snowball Express program, and I know it holds a special

place in his heart given the help and support it provides the families of our fallen military heroes," said USAF General Robin Rand (RET), CEO of Gary Sinise Foundation. "Taking on the annual event as an official program of Gary Sinise Foundation is a true honor, and it would not be possible without the generous contribution of American Airlines. As our primary sponsor, they're providing an invaluable service that enables us to accomplish our mission in creating new positive memories for our Gold Star families."

As the official airline of the Snowball Express program, American is transporting the families from 80 cities worldwide via more than 100 chartered and commercial flights. American's 12 charter flights will be arriving at Orlando International Airport from every corner of the country, some stopping at up to three locations to pick up additional participants along the way. Charter cities include:

- Atlanta
- Charlotte, North Carolina
- Chicago
- Colorado Springs, Colorado
- Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas
- Detroit
- El Paso, Texas
- Fayetteville, North Carolina
- Indianapolis
- Kansas City, Missouri
- Killeen/Fort Hood, Texas
- Las Vegas
- Los Angeles
- Nashville, Tennessee
- New York City
- Norfolk, Virginia
- Phoenix
- Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- Sacramento, California
- Salt Lake City
- San Antonio
- Savannah, Georgia
- Seattle, Washington
- St. Louis
- Tulsa, Oklahoma

- Washington, D.C.

“This event is a favorite among the American team. I am proud to work with so many generous colleagues, not only those who have donated their time to fly and serve the families in the air, but those who have spent countless hours coordinating gate-side sendoffs in scores of airports around our system,” said David Seymour, Senior Vice President of Integrated Operations at American and graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point. “Gary Sinise Foundation’s Snowball Express is an impressive event that continues to grow every year, and it is our deep privilege to partner with the Gary Sinise Foundation to honor our Gold Star families. As a company, and as a nation, we owe it to them to never forget the sacrifice that continues long after the war is over.”

American team members volunteer their time in a variety of ways, including hosting special send-off celebrations at each of the departure airports, staffing the flights, assisting with activities, “decking the gates” with holiday decorations and providing refreshments and entertainment — all to make sure the Snowball Express families have an unforgettable experience each year.

“I’ve served as the Team Airlift coordinator for six years working with our pilots, flight attendants, gate agents and countless others to serve our Gold Star families,” said Jeff Graham, Airlift Coordinator and DFW-based First Officer at American. “Serving each of them is a privilege that we take on with love, compassion and pride.”

To learn more about the Gary Sinise Foundation’s Snowball Express program, please visit garysinisefoundation.org. Additional information can also be found at aa.com/letgoodtakeflight. Follow this year’s festivities on social media with the hashtag #SnowballExpress2018.

About American Airlines Group

American Airlines and American Eagle offer an average of nearly 6,700 flights per day to nearly 350 destinations in more than 50 countries. American has hubs in Charlotte, Chicago, Dallas/Fort Worth, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Philadelphia, Phoenix, and Washington, D.C. American is a founding member of the oneworld® alliance, whose members and members-elect serve nearly 1,000 destinations with 14,250 daily flights to 150 countries. Shares of American Airlines Group Inc. trade on Nasdaq under the ticker symbol AAL. In 2015, its stock joined the S&P 500 index. Connect with American on Twitter [@AmericanAir](https://twitter.com/AmericanAir) and at [Facebook.com/AmericanAirlines](https://www.facebook.com/AmericanAirlines).

About The Gary Sinise Foundation

The Foundation honors America's defenders, veterans, first responders, their families and those in need. Through its R.I.S.E. program (Restoring Independence Supporting Empowerment), specially adapted smart homes are being constructed for severely wounded veterans and first responders nationwide. Each one-of-a-kind home is customized to ease the everyday burdens of a wounded hero, their family, and caregivers. Other programs include Relief & Resiliency Outreach, Invincible Spirit Festivals, Gary Sinise & the Lt. Dan Band, Arts & Entertainment Outreach, Serving Heroes, First Responders Outreach, and Soaring Valor. Its latest program, Snowball Express,

serves the children of our fallen military heroes, surviving spouses, and Gold Star families. For more information, please visit GarySiniseFoundation.org.