



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GARY SINISE FOUNDATION AND AMERICAN AIRLINES HOST SEND-OFF CELEBRATION FOR CHILDREN OF FALLEN HEROES THROUGH *SNOWBALL EXPRESS* AT SALT LAKE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This all-expenses paid annual retreat offers five days of therapeutic and inspiring programs at Disney World® in Orlando, Florida to support families of fallen military heroes.

SALT LAKE CITY – The holidays can be especially challenging for grieving families of fallen military heroes. On Dec. 7, 2019, the Gary Sinise Foundation Snowball Express (GSF SBE) service will host a five-day experience for more than 1,700 family members of the fallen, focusing on their children and the surviving parent or guardian. This therapeutic retreat will offer fun and inspiring programs, encouraging critical peer-to-peer support for these families.

No matter where these families may be in their grieving process, *Snowball Express* aims to provide a memorable experience where they can access support, create new bonds, make positive memories, and build a community with the only people who can truly understand their loss: each other.

Snowball Express 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.

Thanks to the official airline partner American Airlines, the Gary Sinise Foundation will unite these families in a way that honors that initial letter from the fallen Soldier - at Disney World®. In addition, families will have direct access to complimentary resources such as counseling services, application support for educational scholarships, education and access to medical and government benefits, financial counseling and assistance, mentoring, and aid for those with special needs or disabilities. GSF SBE will offer a variety of activities and entertainment, including a concert from Gary Sinise and the Lt. Dan Band.

This trip is made possible by the Foundation's generous donors, its official airlines partner American Airlines, and its corporate partners: Owens Corning, ATD, Aerotek, WoodmenLife, and Highland Capital Management.

Families will travel via 13 donated American Airlines charter flights with all volunteer crews making stops in 22 cities across the country with dozens more traveling from around the world, including Guam, London, and Germany among others.

You are invited to attend the send-off party at Salt Lake City International Airport (SLC) for families departing from around the Wasatch Front-area, including Farr West, Kaysville, South Jordan, Fruit Heights, West Jordan, Saratoga Springs, North Ogden, Clinton, Layton and Plain City.

What: Gary Sinise Foundation Snowball Express, along with official airline partner American Airlines, will fly more than 1,700 family members of fallen U.S. military heroes to Disney World in Orlando, Fla., Dec. 7-11 for a holiday retreat.

Before departing SLC families will enjoy a Winter Wonderland in the gate area, including Whoville, the Grinch and a visit by Santa Claus.

Who: Children and spouses of service members who have died in active duty since Sept. 11
American Airlines team member volunteers including: pilots, flight attendants, airport operations teams and more

When: Saturday, Dec. 7, 2019 – 7:45 a.m. MT
Snowball Express departs the airport at 9:50 a.m. MT

Where: Salt Lake City International Airport – please obtain a gate pass at the American Airlines ticket counter

MEDIA INSTRUCTIONS:

If you plan to attend, please email Ross Feinstein by Friday, Dec. 6 **with your full name as shown on your government-issued ID, birth date and gender** for security clearance purposes. Please plan to arrive at SLC no later than 8 a.m. MT.

Contacts:

Ross Feinstein (American Airlines) – ross.feinstein@aa.com

Nancy Volmer (Salt Lake City International Airport) – Nancy.Volmer@slcgov.com

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About the Gary Sinise Foundation:

Established in 2011 by actor/humanitarian Gary Sinise, aka Lt Dan from Forrest Gump, 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 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, Community Outreach & Education, and First Responders Outreach. Under these programs the Foundation offers numerous services and events, including Invincible Spirit Festivals, Gary Sinise & the Lt. Dan Band, Arts & Entertainment Outreach, Serving Heroes, and Soaring Valor. A more recent addition is Snowball Express, which serves the children of our fallen military heroes, surviving spouses, and Gold Star families. For more information, please visit: www.garysinisefoundation.org.

About American Airlines Group:

American Airlines offers customers 6,800 daily flights to more than 365 destinations in 61 countries from its hubs in Charlotte, Chicago, Dallas-Fort Worth, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Philadelphia, Phoenix and Washington, D.C. With a shared purpose of caring for people on life's journey, American's 130,000 global team members serve more than 200 million customers annually. Since 2013, American has invested more than \$28 billion in its product and people and now flies the youngest fleet among U.S. network carriers, equipped with industry-leading high-speed Wi-Fi, lie-flat seats, and more inflight entertainment and access to power. American also has enhanced food and beverage options in the air and on the ground in its world-class Admirals Club and Flagship lounges. American was recently named a Five Star Global Airline by the Airline Passenger Experience Association and Airline of the Year by Air Transport World. American is a founding member of **oneworld**[®], whose members serve 1,100

destinations in 180 countries and territories. Shares of American Airlines Group Inc. trade on Nasdaq under the ticker symbol AAL and the company's stock is included in the S&P 500. Learn more about what's happening at American by visiting news.aa.com and connect with American on Twitter [@AmericanAir](https://twitter.com/AmericanAir) and at [Facebook.com/AmericanAirlines](https://facebook.com/AmericanAirlines).