



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**GARY SINISE FOUNDATION HOSTS OFFICIAL SEND-OFF CELEBRATION
FOR ITS *SNOWBALL EXPRESS* PROGRAM WITH PRESENTING SPONSOR
AMERICAN AIRLINES AT SLC ON DECEMBER 8**

The annual retreat will offer five days of therapeutic and inspiring programs to support Gold Star Families.

The holidays can be especially challenging for grieving families of fallen military heroes. On December 8, 2018, the Gary Sinise Foundation's *Snowball Express* program will host a five-day experience for 1,722 children of the fallen, including their 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 a Gold Star Family 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 presenting sponsor American Airlines, the Gary Sinise Foundation will unite these Gold Star 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. *Snowball Express* 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 and presenting sponsor American Airlines, who provide the air travel, flight crews and hundreds of team member volunteers, donating their time and energy to make it a memorable experience for each family. There will be 12 chartered flights, departing from 26 cities — including Salt Lake City — to pick up the Snowball Express families.

You are invited to attend the send-off party at American Airlines Gate G5 for families departing from the Salt Lake City-area.

What: Gary Sinise Foundation's Snowball Express, along with presenting sponsor American Airlines, will fly more than 1,722 children and spouses of fallen U.S. military heroes to Disney World in Orlando Dec. 8-12 for a holiday retreat.

Before departing from Salt Lake City, families will be greeted by a military honor guard, members of the Patriot Guard, as well as an island themed holiday party and celebration.

Who: More than 150 members of local Salt Lake City Snowball Express families, Snowball Express representatives and volunteers, the USO and American Airlines team members.

Interview opportunities:

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

When: Saturday, Dec. 8, 2018

Event begins at 8 a.m. MT – Gate G-5

Snowball Express charter arrives Salt Lake City at 9 a.m. MT

Snowball Express charter departs Salt Lake City at 9:40 a.m. MT

MEDIA: Please arrive at the American Airlines Ticket Counter no later than 7:30 a.m. MT. You will need to present a government-issued ID, such as your driver's license, in order to obtain a gate pass.

If you plan to attend the send-off party at Gate G5, please let Mark Powell know by 12 p.m. MT on Friday, Dec. 7. We must have your full name (first, middle and last) and birth date for a gate pass, and this information must match your government-issued ID.

American Airlines contact: Mark Powell | Mark.Powell@aa.com

About the Gary Sinise Foundation:

The Gary Sinise 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.

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 serve more than 1,000 destinations with about 14,250 daily flights to over 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://facebook.com/AmericanAirlines).