



THE BOWLERS TO VETERANS LINK

BVL Bowling Lane Kits Donated to Fisher Houses Nationwide

Thanks to the generosity of local and state bowling associations, a Chamber of Commerce and a bowling club from Massachusetts to Florida to Texas, days are brighter for the families of recuperating service men and women staying at a number of Fisher Houses across the U.S. That's because they now have the opportunity to take a break from the hospital routine and enjoy a little fun – with the unique Bowlers to Veterans Link (BVL) portable bowling lane kit -- donated by these organizations. The bowling lane is actually a 26 foot long red, white and blue carpet, which comes complete with 10 plastic bowling pins and a rubber ball.

Fisher Houses, built on the grounds of major military and VA medical centers, provide a *"home away from home"* for military families to be close to a loved one during hospitalization for an illness, disease or injury. The houses accommodate anywhere between 16 to 42 family members, and feature a common kitchen, laundry facilities, dining room and living room with a library, and toys for children. The bowling lane kit can easily be rolled out and enjoyed by residents during their stay at the houses.

“Since 2005, BVL has shipped the carpet lane kits to active duty troops to provide a ‘slice of home’ while they are deployed, and they have been met with a great response,” noted Darlene Baker, Chair of BVL Board of Directors. “While the active-duty program continues, we recognized that there are many other uses for the lanes here on US soil, and the Fisher House program seemed like the perfect fit.”

One of the first to donate a kit was the Massachusetts State USBC WBA. Association manager Judy Webb explains, “We were proud to be able to donate a bowling lane kit to the Fisher House in West Roxbury. We know how important it is for our service men and women to have their families by their sides during long hospital stays – if we can boost their spirits just a bit, then we’ve done our job!”

In addition to bowling associations, the Hopkinsville (KY) Chamber of Commerce and the Les Dames de 700 Club also made contributions.

"The Les Dames de 700 Bowling Club, Inc. is strong in its commitment to support BVL," said Executive Director Mary Anna Dalske. "We knew we wanted to donate a couple of kits and when we heard about the Fisher House program, we were in complete agreement - it's a worthwhile cause."

The list of Fisher House donations and contributors is as follows:

David Grant USAF Medical Center
James A. Haley VA Medical Center

Contributor: Hopkinsville, KY USBC
Contributor: Greater Tampa BA

Hines VA Hospital	Contributor: Chicagoland USBC
Blanchfield Army Community Hospital	Contributor: Hopkinsville C of C
Boston VA Healthcare System	Contributor: Mass USBC WBA
Cincinnati VA Medical Center	Contributor: Kentucky USBC
Wright-Patterson Medical Center	Contributor: Les Dames de 700 Club
Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center	Contributor: Greater Houston USBC
Darnall Army Community Hospital	Contributor: Greater Killeen-Fort Hood USBC
Portsmouth Naval Medical Center	Contributor: Les Dames de 700 Club

All of the Kentucky donations were coordinated by Kentucky USBC WBA 2nd Vice President Jo Wisby. This adds to Wisby's record of coordinating the donations of 28 BVL lane kits.

The Chicagoland USBC lane kit donation has sparked a new relationship between the association and the Fisher House. "Our membership was very pleased to be able to donate a kit to the House," points out Association Manager Keith Korinek. Then, Grace Kido, one of our directors, created a beautiful American Flag afghan which was raffled at our annual BVL Tournament. The winner donated the afghan on behalf of the entire Chicagoland USBC membership to the Fisher House. It will go to great use there!"

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