



December 2017

Journeys

A Newsletter of Travelers Aid International

OUR NEWS

Dates, Place Set for 2018 Annual Conference

The 2018 Travelers Aid International Annual Conference will be in Chicago on June 13-15 at the Hyatt Regency Chicago. While a [Conference Information](#) page is now posted on the website, the Conference Registration and Hotel Reservation pages will open in early 2018. Registration fees remain frozen at 2016 levels with registration for the first agency attendee remaining at \$225. The Hyatt room rate will be \$219 per night plus tax.

A board planning committee is working on the Conference agenda. New this year, the educational programming will begin at 2 pm on Wednesday, June 13. If you have any topic or speaker suggestions, please email [Dave Asselin](#)..

Board Reviewing Organization's Bylaws

A special board committee has been established to review the organization's bylaws to update procedures and to assure we are still complying with laws and regulations for non-profit associations. One change that will be considered is to revising the terms of office for the organization's officers from a 1-year term to a 2-year term. The board hopes to submit the bylaws revision to the whole membership at the annual meeting in Chicago.

Holiday Greetings

As 2018 approaches, I want to wish all our members, staff and many volunteers, a most heart-felt joyous holiday season with prayers for health, success and happiness for 2018. Travelers Aid would not exist without you and our volunteers. I just want to express my deep gratitude for all that you do to help those who are stranded.

Dave

MEMBER NEWS

Amazon Delivers Gifts to HOPE Atlanta

Hope Atlanta was chosen by Amazon as a recipient of its Delivering Smiles program. On Dec. 14, an Amazon truck pulled up to Hope's offices filled with \$15,000 worth of toys, clothes, and essential items.

More than 50 Amazon employees from several fulfillment centers in metro Atlanta helped pick out the items for the non-profit. The donation is part of Amazon's national holiday tour. Hope Atlanta plans to deliver the remaining items to families in need across Atlanta, Jefferson and Braselton communities. [View photos](#).

San Juan Is Open for Service

Travelers Aid in San Juan is coping in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria. In mid-October, we were able to reach Executive Director Mildred Sosa. She reported that at that time the airport continued to run on limited power - the Travelers Aid office is located in the airport. "We have survived the devastation and are continuing to provide services. The staff is coping."

She added, "This has been quite an experience. The devastation in Puerto Rico has affected the whole Island."

Melbourne Providing Disability Awareness Training

Travellers Aid Australia, in conjunction with William Angliss Institute, has developed an interactive online disability awareness training program www.dat.org.au for business owners and their staff. The training is designed to give business operators the confidence to communicate with anyone who has a disability, whether it is in their workplace or in their everyday life.

Travellers Aid CEO Elias Lebbos says, "Our organization promotes independence by enabling people to engage and participate in everyday life. In our experience, many of the accessibility issues that people face can be rectified through increased awareness, through training and through service providers having the confidence to communicate in a meaningful way with their customers who live with a disability." Being active and staying engaged will greatly improve everyone's quality of life and this is what Travellers Aid Australia is all about.

Chicago Continues to Grow Practice Experience

In recent years, Travelers Aid Chicago O'Hare has expanded its Airport Practice Experience program. This is a mock run through of the various components of air travel designed to make the participant more comfortable with these processes. This program has been a tremendous success and has helped the participants to make informed travel decisions after getting this detailed training.

In the past year, Travelers Aid reached out to its airline partners for assistance with the Airport Practice Experience. They provided insight about the services that airlines offer to passengers with disabilities and even granted Travelers Aid access to an aircraft on some occasions. The Airport Practice Experience has been a tremendous success and Travelers Aid looks to expand it in the coming years.

Travelers Aid of San Diego - The agency's administrative offices moved two blocks on Nov. 29. The new address: 701 B Street, Suite 1775, San Diego, CA 92101. Its phone numbers and extensions remain the same.

Volunteer and Staffing Ideas

Travelers Aid Chicago - Social Event - On Nov. 11, volunteers enjoyed two hours of free bowling and a lunch at a nearby bowling alley.

Travelers Aid Chicago - Now in its second year, Travelers Aid Chicago is hosting interns from the Korea West cultural exchange program. To date, interns have contributed a collective total of nearly 1,000 hours. They have participated in a variety of projects, including staffing special events and information desks as well as translating documents. Chicago was introduced to the Korea West program by

Leanne Omland, Travelers Aid Reagan program manager.

Travelers Aid of the Inland Empire - This fall, the staff and volunteers participated in a human trafficking awareness session. The training was provided by a local sheriff's department.

MILESTONES

New Hires, Promotions and Honors

Crisis Center of Tampa Bay - Katie Androff, Vice President of Talent Management, was honored by the *Tampa Bay Business Journal's* People First Awards in the government/non-profit category. Barbara Curtis, a board member, was awarded the Gayle Sierens Volunteer of the Year Award for National Philanthropy Day.

Travelers Aid/Dulles - Sue Martin, assistant program manager, retired this month.

Travelers Aid of the Inland Empire - The Ontario-Montclair YMCA on Nov. 2 honored Travelers Aid Volunteer Chet Sobotka, a Navy veteran, with its 2017 Veteran's Exemplary Community Service Award.

Travelers Aid/Newark - Euleta LaRoach joined the staff in November as the volunteer coordinator.

Upward Transitions - Crystal Levine joined in September as the volunteer coordinator. She is responsible for managing the volunteer program at Will Rogers World Airport.

[The digital Travelers Aid International Membership Directory has been updated on our website.](#)

FUTURE FUNDRAISING EVENTS

Jan. 20, Halifax Urban Ministries, 10th Annual Empty Bowls, BCU - Center for Civic Engagement. [Learn more.](#)

March 10, Baltimore Catholic Charities, Taste of Maryland benefiting Our Daily Bread Employment Center, B&O Railroad Museum

March 10, Gainesville Catholic Charities, Spirit of Charity Gala, J. Wayne Reitz Grand Ballroom. [Learn more.](#)

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