



February 2019

Journeys

A monthly newsletter of Travelers Aid International

In this edition:

- Board begins crafting new strategic plan
- Annual Conference agenda posted
- New *Impressive* feature
- Member news

Thoughts from the President's Desk



I am writing to you in my third week as your President. I am very excited to be here and for the challenge of leading this wonderfully complicated, interesting, impactful, and long-standing (dare I say old?) organization. I am beginning to meet staff and volunteers, and I am tremendously impressed with the caliber, enthusiasm, and commitment I have encountered everywhere I have visited. The staff and volunteers are TAI's greatest asset; I am so fortunate to have been chosen to work with all of you—staff, volunteers, and members. Together there's nothing we can't accomplish.

In the coming weeks I will be concentrating on learning all I can about what we do and how we do it. I will work to meet and get to know all of TAI's staff members — I can't stress enough how fortunate TAI is to have this amazing team of

people. And then, in my spare time, I will begin visiting as many member agencies as possible. How handy that I love to travel!

I would love to hear your thoughts and ideas about TAI. My door (proverbial, virtual, and actual) is open. Come on in! *Kathleen*

While at JFK, I had a chance to meet Larry Zeluck, a 14-year volunteer!

Agenda Posted for Annual Conference

A [preliminary agenda](#) for the 2019 Traveler Aid International Annual Conference to be held in Charlotte on June 12-14 is now on our website!

Organized around a general theme of *One Travelers Aid*, there will be a series of team-building and brainstorming sessions designed as an in-depth introduction to your

Travelers Aid peers and the rich resources of talents, ideas, and experience within the Travelers Aid family.

We are again offering three concurrent tracks of educational programming on Thursday, June 13; however, in keeping with the theme, these 9 sessions cover a wide variety of subjects instead of specific structural niches. Please check out these topics!

The board's Professional Services Council is planning the conference and is now recruiting speakers. If after reviewing the agenda, you would like to be a speaker or nominate a speaker please contact [Kathleen](#).

Travelers Aid members can [now register](#) and [reserve](#) their hotel room. Our host hotel is the Springhill Suites Uptown Charlotte and the discounted rate is \$149 per night plus taxes. Reservations must be made by May 22 to secure the discount. Breakfast and wi-fi are included in the daily charge! Community Link is hosting the event.

Board to Start Charting New Direction

The Travelers Aid International Board of Directors will meet next week in Washington to begin crafting a new 3-year strategic plan for the organization. "As community service agencies and the travel industry continue to evolve, the board and I think it is time to chart out our future so TAI can best serve its member agencies," explained our new president, Kathleen Baldwin.

As part of the background research needed for the discussions, the board conducted an online survey of the membership, volunteers and staff. It is anticipated that the new strategic plan will be released for approval in June at the Annual Conference in Charlotte.

Member News

Crisis Center is "More Brilliant"

Congratulations to **Crisis Center of Tampa Bay**! On Thursday, WEDU-FM, the PBS station for Florida's West Coast, recognized Crisis Center with its *Be More Brilliant* honor in the station's Be More awards ceremony. Crisis Center, which runs the 2-1-1 center in Tampa, established the Florida Veterans Support Line staffed by veterans working to assist their fellow vets.

Soon to be Appearing in Blue

Travelers Aid of the Inland Empire is making a color switch. The staff and volunteer were vested in red uniforms for years. The Ontario International Airport Authority is purchasing new uniform vests, wind breakers, scarfs and ties in blue. The new uniforms are due in this spring.

Assisting the TSA during the Shutdown

During the 35-day partial federal government shutdown, **Travelers Aid/Chicago** changed the protocol for escorting 9 severely injured military passengers to free up the time of TSA agents. The usual protocol required that TSA agents meet these injured individuals. With Travelers Aid meeting the individuals, the TSA agents did not have to leave their regular checkpoint posts. At times, the TSA was short staffed in performing its regular task, thus Travelers Aid action allowed them to focus on their primary job.

Impressive

Travelers Aid Going Beyond Expectations

A New feature

This story highlights the best example of a volunteer going above and beyond. A series of these stories are featured in this month's Volunteers' Edition.

Making Connections

Chicago, JFK Tag Team to Get Expat Home to Peoria

In February, **Travelers Aid/Chicago** was asked by the U.S. State Department to assist in repatriating a former central Illinois resident who had been in Germany since the mid-1980s as he had overstayed his papers. Travelers Aid found a transitional housing shelter and awaited flight information. The State Department booked the Frankfurt-New York-Atlanta-Peoria flight with less than 24-hours' notice to the individual. In fact, he had to depart Germany before learning of the ground transportation arrangements that would be meeting him in Peoria. Once armed with the details, Travelers Aid Chicago contacted **Travelers Aid at JFK Airport**. Before the man boarded the Atlanta leg, Travelers Aid/JFK found him and provided him with the rest of his itinerary. Travelers Aid/Chicago arranged the ground transportation with the Illinois Department of Human Services. Upon arrival in Peoria, the expat was met with his ride and made it to the shelter managed by the Department of Veterans Affairs Transitional Housing program.

Milestones

New Hires, Promotions and Honors

Travelers Aid/Newark Airport – **Jessica McKenzie** joined the team at Newark Liberty International Airport in mid-February as the Site Manager. She holds a Master of Public Administration degree from Kean University with concentrations in non profit management. Jessica has served in the nonprofit sector for over five years managing volunteer engagement, youth programs and corporate relations. She loves to write poetry, spend time with loved ones, travel and attend music festivals.



Travelers Aid/Chicago – A 20-year Travelers Aid employee, **John Ishu**, was recently promoted to associate director of airport program.

Gifts and Fundraisers

Travelers Aid Society of Metropolitan Detroit collected 102 new winter coats during its 2018 Operation Warm – Coats for Kids drive. And, Delta Dental Michigan donated 50 Dell desktop computers to Travelers Aid that were in turn given to students in the agency's various programs.

March 9, **Baltimore Catholic Charities**: 28th Annual Taste of Maryland Dinner and

Auction benefiting Our Daily Bread Employment Center, American Visionary Art Museum.
[Learn more.](#)

March 9, **Gainesville Catholic Charities**: Spirit of Charity Polynesian Paradise, J. Wayne Reitz Union Grand Ballroom. [Learn more.](#)

April 13, **Community Link**: 8th Annual Sweet Escapes, Mint Museum – Randolph Road.
[Learn more.](#)

April 6, **Crisis Center of Tampa Bay**: Strokes for Hope a 10K swim around Davis Islands. CEO Clara Reynolds and Board Member Jamie Klingman will be among the swimmers. [Learn more.](#)

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