

# Waypoint

A SWAPA family NEWSLETTER



**SWAPA Open Enrollment  
is Coming!** (Page 9)



**A Lifeline When You Need It**

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**SWAPA**  
*family*



## Making Lifelong Connections

As a child, I used to despise August. I associated the month with summer ending and school beginning – yes, I was one of those kids who would rather have been on the playground than in the classroom. And the onset of cold weather was just plain depressing. Yet, somehow, once September rolled around, I was sick of the summer heat and ready to get the school year started. (All this changed, of course, when I became a mother of school-aged kids!)

Well, August is over and we're into September. Thanks to the current CBA that was negotiated for us a few years back, we have a substantial and noteworthy raise coming up soon! I am also proud to report that your Outreach Committee is alive and well! We have successfully completed this year's SWAPAFamily Celebration and Grassroots events. More than 1,200 of you showed up across the nation and hopefully had a great time. In addition, we are so thankful to have met every Pilot new hire

class on their "SWA Day 1." The bonus for us is that we also get the opportunity to meet our new hire Pilots' spouses or significant others on that day to let them know there is a caring lifeline available at SWAPA and entire SWAPAFamily community awaiting their arrival. It makes me smile a mile to see 30 to 40 new-to-SWA people join our SWAPAFamily Facebook group on that first day.

Separately, and at the top of your Outreach Committee and SWAPAFamily's list this year, we want to shine a spotlight on our Pilot-to-Pilot charitable fund, the SWAPA Pilot Relief Fund. As dreadful as it is to read about tragedies, we are focusing this issue of the *Waypoint* on one of the many real stories that have taken place within our SWAPAFamily. We can't emphasize enough the importance of donating to the fund in order to keep it financially sound so that we are able to give tax-free grants to our members and their families when they need the financial help most.

Imagine that you've just left the doctor's office where you were told that you have a rare form of cancer only treatable by surgery and intense chemotherapy that will most certainly ground you for months, maybe years. Or you just watched your home burn to the ground or be swept away or flooded by a devastating storm. Or even worse, you've just lost a loved one in your immediate family whose death will forevermore change the fate of your family.

We have real families who have had these very real situations happen in their lives. In these situations and many others, the financial ramifications can be devastating. That's when we hope that the SWAPA Pilot Relief Fund can offer some comfort in a time of chaos.

Please take a moment to read the Songys' story on page 10 and consider setting yourself up for payroll deduction via the online portal on SWAPA.org. See below for instructions. It will only take a few seconds and can make the difference in a fellow Pilot's life.

In closing, I want to thank all of you out there who are already donating. Your generosity and support for our families is appreciated by each and every member of SWAPA. We can never forget that our relationships and support for one another are the ties that bind us together.

**JEAN PECK**, Chair  
SWAPAFamily Outreach 

## HOW THE PILOT RELIEF FUND HAS HELPED OUR MEMBERS

### TO DATE:

- **89** – Total number of SWAPA members who have received a grant from the Pilot Relief Fund since its inception in 2017.
- **68** – Number of SWAPA members who received a grant following the devastating hurricanes of 2017.
- **3** – Number of SWAPA members who received a grant following the 2017 California wildfires.
- **\$2,500** – Full amount applicants can currently receive from the Fund.
- **89** – Number of Pilots currently donating to the Pilot Relief Fund via payroll deduction.
- **9,395** – Number of active SWAPA Pilots.

### OUR GOAL:

Our goal is to be able to make a substantial difference in our Pilots' lives when they need it the most. But we cannot do it without your help. 89 people donating out of almost 10,000 Pilots is just simply not enough. If every Pilot donated just \$5 a paycheck, we could have more than \$1 million by year's end and enough money to raise the grant maximum from \$2,500 to \$10,000 or possibly more.

It's easy to opt in for automatic payroll deduction. Simply go to the SWAPA website, click on the SWAPA Pilot Relief Fund button, and then click the Sign Up Here link under the Donate to the SWAPA Pilot Relief Fund banner.

# THE SEP CONTRACT 2020 CYCLE

We are more than halfway through the Survey Education Polling process for Contract 2020. What does this mean? It means that we have surveyed our membership eight times on topics that are vital to our profession and our career at Southwest Airlines.

We've published eight *Negotiating Points* and multiple blogs detailing how things currently run, what's wrong, or right, with the status quo, and what we changes we can make. Finally, we've done eight rounds of member follow-up polling on those topics to ensure that our committees know the desires of our members and their families in order to write a contract that is appropriate not only for the Pilots of today, but also for those to come in the future.

Please take the time to read through some or all of these education pieces, which can all be found on the Negotiating Committee page of SWAPA.org. Topics we've covered so far include:

- Hotels
- Schedule Planning
- Training
- Exchange of Flying
- Safety/Fatigue
- Additional Flying
- Benefits
- Reserve

We have six topics left to cover before the end of next year, and we continue to need your engagement. Please read the education material, talk to your SWAPA representatives, take NC polls and surveys, attend 2019 SWAPAFamily events, and above all, let your voice be heard.

January 8, 2018	SRC Exchange of Flying	Follow-up poll
January 22, 2018	Safety/Fatigue	Blank survey
February 19, 2018	Safety/Fatigue	NP out
March 5, 2018	Safety/Fatigue	Follow-up poll
March 19, 2018	SRC Additional Flying	Blank survey
April 16, 2018	SRC Additional Flying	NP out
April 30, 2018	SRC Additional Flying	Follow-up poll
May 14, 2018	Benefits	Blank survey
June 25, 2018	Benefits	NP out
July 9, 2018	Benefits	Follow-up poll
July 23, 2018	SRC Reserve	Blank survey
August 20, 2018	SRC Reserve	NP out

September 17, 2018	Section 1	Blank survey
October 15, 2018	Section 1	NP out
October 29, 2018	Section 1	Follow-up poll

December 17, 2018	SRC Execution	NP out
January 7, 2019	SRC Execution	Follow-up poll
January 21, 2019	Misc	Blank survey
February 18, 2019	Misc	NP out
March 4, 2019	Misc	Follow-up poll
March 18, 2019	SRC Misc	Blank survey
April 15, 2019	SRC Misc	NP out
April 29, 2019	SRC Misc	Follow-up poll
May 15, 2019	Retirement	Blank survey
June 17, 2019	Retirement	NP out
July 1, 2019	Retirement	Follow-up poll
July 15, 2019	EFA/IRC	Blank survey



SWAPA President Jon Weaks with his wife, Dawn.

## *Creating Unity*

I hope that you and your loved ones had an enjoyable summer full of the things that benefit your family — whether that is spending time together, enjoying trips to exotic destinations, or taking advantage of the busy summer flying season and the extra income that it can provide. By the time you read this, kids and grandkids will be preparing to return to school or already back in the full swing of school, and our airline's pace of operations will be in the transition from the heavy

summer travel season to the lighter shoulder schedule before the holidays. However, this summer's end also heralds another milestone.

I know it's difficult to believe but the end of this summer also means that we are within a year and a half of reopening negotiations for our next contract. This is especially hard to believe because the ordeal that we went through together to attain our current contract seems

like just yesterday for most of us. As every SWAPA Pilot and his or her family should know by now, we are working diligently toward compiling and updating the language that will become our next contract. Thank you to all of you who have made your voices heard during our Negotiating Committee's Survey, Education, and Polling (SEP) cycles. Please encourage your Pilot to continue to participate in future cycles because our next contract's language will be membership-driven and only as good as your input makes it. As always, please remember that our membership's unity was a definitive factor in all we achieved during the previous round of negotiations and that unity will be absolutely necessary again very soon. For more on the SEP process, negotiating blogs, and education pieces already out, turn to page 5.

One facet of that unity is connecting our SWAPA families through the bonds of friendship within our professional community. To that end, my hat's off to First Officer Jean Peck and her Outreach Committee for the six very successful 2018 SWAPAFamily Celebration and Grassroots Events they held for our Pilot group this year. The feedback we receive from Pilots and families about these events reinforces our decision to continue hosting them every year. These

events are priceless for sustaining the grassroots support network among our families, which is an obvious dividend during negotiations. But they also pay less obvious and often unseen dividends between negotiation cycles. To those who made time to attend our events, thank you. If you did not have an opportunity to attend, I would like to encourage you to do so next year. You won't regret it. (For a recap of our 2018 events and what you can expect out of these events next year, turn to page 18.)

Finally, I would like to remind you of a very important program that our Outreach Committee manages for the benefit of our Pilot families. That program is the SWAPA Pilot Relief Fund. This program is funded by voluntary contributions from Pilots and it provides emergency financial assistance for SWAPA families who face unexpected hardships in life. Most recently, we have assisted SWAPA families who were affected by last season's hurricanes (see page 10). Distributions from the Pilot Relief Fund enabled individuals to bridge the gap between catastrophe and when other sources of aid or insurance can assist. The fund has also assisted Pilot families who have been put under financial strain due to a severe family illness that has drained their finances.

Our profession is rightfully fairly well compensated, and it is often difficult to imagine losing our financial security because of a natural disaster or illness. But, as much as it saddens me to say it, tragic things do happen and have happened among our fellow families. This is why the SWAPA Pilot Relief Fund plays a critical role in Pilots helping Pilots. I can't emphasize enough the benefit of having Pilots contribute to this worthy cause. It may only be a few dollars a month from each family, but those collective few dollars a month add up and make an immeasurable impact on your fellow Pilot families when they face hardship. And rest assured that as long as Pilot participation in this program is robust, it will be there for you should the need arise in your life as well, perish the thought. If your family does not currently contribute to the SWAPA Pilot Relief Fund, please consider it. The positive impact of doing so for our fellow families who benefit is simply incredible.

Thank you for remaining engaged with your SWAPAFamily. Also, with so many new additions to our growing family, please remember that one of your first calls should be to SWAPA should something arise in your professional or personal life (turn to page 16). We are "the customer service arm of your career," and the men and women who

work at SWAPA take that sacred duty very seriously. Thank you for supporting your SWAPA Pilot. We could not be the professionals that we are without the support of those at home. Our Pilot group is only as strong as the individuals who make up our membership and their families. It continues to be my highest honor to be able to serve you as your president.

Leading Forward,

**JON WEAKS**

SWAPA President 



## ***SWAPA Open Enrollment is Coming Up!***

SWAPA's Short-Term Disability (STD), Long-Term Disability (LTD), and Voluntary Loss of License (VLOL) open enrollment starts on October 1 and will be open until October 12. **MetLife will be mailing Open Enrollment forms to your home address on file in the coming month.** Please ensure that your current address is listed on SWALife. To update your mailing address, go to [SWALife.com > My Life > About Me > Launch Self Service > My Personal Info > Contact Information](#).

If you do not want to enroll or make any changes, you do not need to do anything. You only need to return the Open Enrollment documents to MetLife if you want to enroll or make changes to your elections.

If you want to enroll or make changes to your VLOL, Petersen International will provide an enrollment link during the Open Enrollment period. If you have any questions regarding VLOL, please contact Wes Bryan at **713.855.8105**.

If you haven't already, please take the time to review the [Open Enrollment Guide](#) and the [Disability Guide](#) that can be found on the Benefits page of [SWAPA.org](#). If you have any questions, please contact a member of the SWAPA Benefits team at 800.969.7972 ext. 4259.



## *A Lifeline When You Need It Most*

On the night of August 25, 2017, Hurricane Harvey made landfall along the Texas coastline as a Category 4 hurricane. Over the next four days, it would drop more than 60 inches of rain over the southeast region of Texas, triggering a 1-in-1,000-year flood event and eventually becoming the second-most costly hurricane in U.S. history.

Today, more than a year later, hurricane victims in Houston, Florida, and Puerto Rico are still putting the pieces of their lives back together. HOU CA Paul Songy, his wife, Christy, and their two children can be counted as part of that group.

“We’re still probably three months away. So it will probably be well over a year before we

are really done, and insurance has still not come through with what they should have,” says Paul. “For many people, Harvey was a long time ago, but for us, it is still happening. People want closure, they want to hear, ‘things are all better,’ but the truth is, no, it’s still happening for many of us.”

Unlike much of the damage done to residential homes from flooding in other parts of Houston, the Songy’s destruction came from a lesser-known by-product of the hurricane.

“We felt pretty prepared for a hurricane. We had a generator, supplies, we talked as a family about a plan. We knew the rains would come, the winds would come — but we were

not ready for nor did we expect tornadoes. During Harvey there were 57 confirmed tornadoes in the Houston area,” says Christy.

The family went to sleep around 10:30 p.m. on Friday night. It was raining, as it had been all day. But around 1:15 a.m., Paul heard weather warning on his phone — seconds later, the windows exploded.



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*“These are your friends, your co-workers, the people you fly with every day. We’re real people. And this really happened to us. And it was bad. So you can rest assured that your money to the SWAPA Pilot Relief Fund is helping someone real, someone that you know, someone you’ve flown with.”*

*—Christy Songy*

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“The back fence was lifted up and came into our bedroom and through the roof, windows along the back of our house exploded. The initial destruction was terrible — then it rained for four days inside our house,” says Paul.



“We were not prepared for the extent of damage. We had prepared as best we could financially, mentally, had all of the supplies for any eventuality, and then something like this happens. That initial slam destroyed everything.”

The days following the initial impact were filled with chaos, uncertainty, and more challenges.

“It was a scary time. After we were forced out of our house, we went to evacuation location A, then that was put under mandatory evacuation. We then started to head to another evacuation location only to hear that’s under mandatory evacuation. Here we are with bags, little kids, nowhere to go, people are telling us, ‘don’t get on the roads,’ but almost everywhere we go, we are told, ‘you can’t stay here, you have to evacuate.’ You don’t know chaos unless you’ve been in it,” says Paul.

“When we were finally able to get back to our house to try to mitigate some of the damage, one of our first two-to-three phone calls was to SWAPA because I knew we had a lifeline there. The impact SWAPA had as far as our reaction to this was immense, not

just monetarily, but just knowing there was someone there who we could call and say, 'hey, we're in trouble. Things are bad.' People started calling us, checking on us. It was amazing," says Paul.



"When going through something like this and nothing is normal, that was a huge help to feel like something was normal, that someone cared about us. And that was SWAPA," says Christy.

Just days after their house was destroyed and the storms had settled, demo teams were at their house taking measurements and surveying the damage, along with the insurance company representatives.

"The demo crew asked for a huge check before they could even start. Since the

insurance guy was there, I said, 'Hey, I need a check to get them started.' He told me, 'You won't get anything until my report's in,' which took about a month. We're still fighting it today and it's almost been a year."

That's when the Songys applied for the SWAPA Pilot Relief Fund. "That immediate money was huge to at least take some of the chaos away when everything else is more than you've ever seen. It got us started and that was invaluable," says Christy.

"If there's one thing I can say about the Pilot Relief Fund it's engage. Whether it's \$5 or \$10 or whatever a paycheck, it is critically important that the whole Pilot group engage in this program to build it bigger than it is because the financial challenges that come at the immediate onset of trying to rebuild your life are massive," says Paul.

The Songys go on to stress that even if you think you may never need it, consider the aid it could provide to your SWAPA friends and family in times of need. "These are your friends, your co-workers, the people you fly with every day. We're real people. And this really happened to us. And it was bad. So you can rest assured that your money to the SWAPA Pilot Relief Fund is helping someone real, someone that you know, someone you've flown with," says Christy.

"The fund is critical, to put it bluntly, in aiding sanity in circumstances that you can't imagine," says Paul. "So, do it. Do it and be done with it because the next time it may be you. I hope that it's not, but it maybe you. And the SWAPA Pilot Relief Fund will be there for you." 

Established in 2017, the SWAPA Pilot Relief Fund is now in its second year. Thanks to **you**, our Fund is growing financially every month with automatic payroll deductions and direct donations. Powered and managed by the Emergency Assistance Foundation, Inc. (EAF), the Fund issued more than 60 “immediate response relief” grants to Pilots who had hurricane damage as well as more than a dozen traditional grants for those members and their families who suffered a personal financial hardship.



If you are experiencing a financial crisis due to a personal hardship or have been struck by a catastrophic event, go to [www.swapa.org/PilotReliefFund/GettingStarted](http://www.swapa.org/PilotReliefFund/GettingStarted) for **new** instructions and help on how to fill out the online application.

Because we are a unique group – commercial Pilots who are governed and scrutinized by a different set of rules than most other professionals – the application process can be a complicated one, but we now have a system in place to help you through the application process. HOU FO Ron Scheibe has joined our SWAPA Outreach team and has become our EAF expert. Before filling out an application for the Pilot Relief Fund, please contact Ron at [rscheibe@swapa.org](mailto:rscheibe@swapa.org) or 303.550.7418. We highly recommended that you contact Ron before submitting the application.

Listed below are the ways to donate and the parameters that must be met to qualify for a grant.

### **The quickest and easiest ways to DONATE to the Fund:**

Automatic Payroll Deduction – Sign up on SWAPA.org on the homepage or under My Stuff > Pilot Relief Fund

By credit card on the web portal – PayPal - <https://emergencyassistancefdn.org/swapa-pilot-relief-fund/>

### **How to APPLY for a grant:**

Who can apply?

- SWAPA members employed by Southwest Airlines on the date of the application
- SWAPA members on approved medical leave or an approved leave of absence
- SWAPA employees
- In the case of death of a member or employee, eligible dependents may apply
- Go to [www.swapa.org/PilotReliefFund/GettingStarted](http://www.swapa.org/PilotReliefFund/GettingStarted) for more information about the grant process and to fill out an online application.



## See What SWAPAFamily Members Are Doing

Our SWAPAFamily members are doing some amazing things. Whether it's starting their own businesses, writing a children's book, taking their first solo flight, helping those in need – there are great things happening throughout our system. If you have a Pilot, spouse, or child with a story to tell, a business to share, or an accomplishment to rave about, send us an email! We'll be featuring these stories in the pages of future *Waypoints*.

### PAWS FOR A CAUSE

18-year-old Delaney Ericson has spent the last three years of her life at Lake Oswego High School with something furry following her. When she sat down at her desk, there it was beneath her. When she wandered the halls, there it was behind her. And when she would go home for the night, there it was beside her. Every day. 24-7. And for Delaney, she would not have wanted it any other way.

For the past three years, Delaney has trained dogs that eventually go on to help autistic children in states across in the country for the group, Autism Service Dogs of America (ASDA). Of the three dogs

she has trained; one stayed in Oregon, another was moved to Texas, and the latest will be placed with a family soon. Delaney provides the dogs with basic personalization training and prepares each pup for a lifetime of being by a human's side.

“What I do with them takes about a year,” Delaney says, “She comes to school with me, she goes out when I go out, and I teach her mostly basic obedience stuff.”

Starting this Fall, Delaney is planning on attending Montana State University with intentions of getting on a pre-veterinarian track and eventually becoming a vet. And while her mom, Michelle Ericson, and dad, OAK CA Chris Ericson, are dealing with



the transition of their eldest child going off to college, Delaney, who will be in Bozeman, Montana, will have to deal with not having a pup following her around for the first time in three years. Though sad as it may be, for Delaney, the pay off of the last three years has been tremendous. She receives periodic updates from the family her very first dog, Paisley, now lives with in Texas. They say the dog's arrival has been transformative for their autistic child. And that's pawsome!

## BUG LOVE

Laura St. John has always wanted to spread a positive message. Whether it was through her music, her poetry, or more recently her children's books, Laura knows that our children need positive messages to empower them to make good choices in all aspects of their lives.

But it took Laura a while to get her messages out to the world. Her husband, MCO Captain Charles Gay, was often out flying so after creating the stories that would later become her first books, she put them on the shelf for a couple of decades to focus on her family.

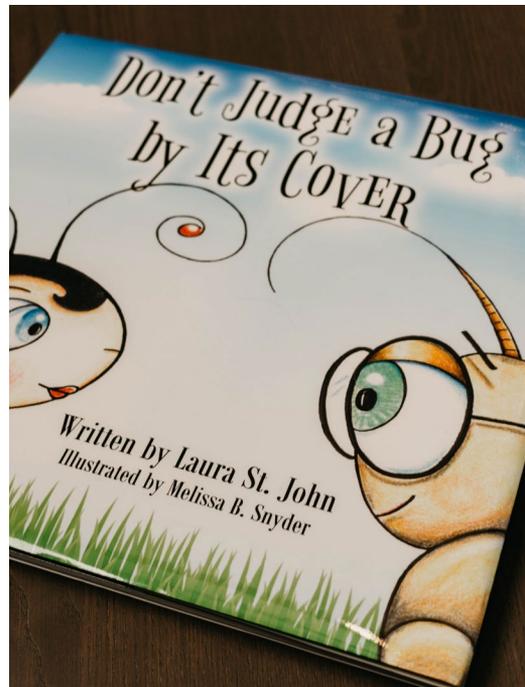
Now that her kids are older, Laura has the time to focus on her passion, uplifting other children through positive messages and kindness.

Her most recent book *Don't Judge a Bug by Its Cover* tells the story of two bugs who became friends because of the beauty they had within them, not the way they looked outside.

"There are many messages in the story but the one that stands out is to not judge others on how they look," Laura told *Clermont Magazine* last March.

Laura also created a persona named the "Alphabet Chef" to help her kids learn to make better food choices. She turned that character into a website geared towards helping kids and teenagers eat healthier. [The Alphabet Chef](#) also provides services for parents, so they can create family meals that are as healthy as they are delicious.

Her next book, *The Christmas House*, is a classic Christmas story with a modern twist for a generation of children who are living their lives through glass screens. It will be available sometime before the Christmas holiday season. *Don't Judge a Bug by Its Cover* is available on Amazon. 





## *A Special Kind of Service*

Over the course of the last year, our Pilots have encountered more than their fair share of difficulties. From hurricanes that devastated much of our nation to the tragedy of Flight #1380 there have been many obstacles thrown in the path of our Pilots and their families. Add to that the inherent pressures that come with our jobs and it can make for some very tough times indeed.

Luckily, SWAPA has a very unique team of individuals to help our Pilots deal with some of these very difficult issues. Our Special Services Committee is designed solely to assist our families in their time of need, whether that's through peer-to-peer counseling, assisting with a death, or responding to an incident or emergency. The Special Services Committee is made up of three different teams: the Critical Incident Response Team (CISM), Project LIFT, and the Special Services Team. CISM is the response team that is dispatched to deal with any accidents or

incidents that occur during the course of the operation.

Project LIFT is a 24/7 hotline manned by volunteer Pilots trained to assist fellow Pilots who are experiencing any type of “non-physical” issue. While CISM deals with the stress associated with operational issues, Project LIFT is a **confidential program** designed to assist our Pilots with just about any issue that may affect their ability to safely fly. These may include family issues, suicide and depression concerns, counseling, or mental health. (For more on Project LIFT team, read the article in the February 2017 issue of the *Reporting Point*.)

The Special Services Team is a group of CISM and/or Project LIFT Pilots trained to assist you and your family in the event of a death. The team reaches out to the family after the death of a SWAPA Pilot, the Pilot's spouse, or the dependent child of a Pilot. When certain circumstances warrant, they

can also get involved for the death of other family members.

So what does the Special Services team do to assist the family? Once they are notified of the passing of a Pilot's immediate family (or the Pilot themselves), a team member makes contact with the family. When they make contact with the family (either through introduction from a Chief Pilot or someone who is familiar with the family), they will then assess the level of assistance the family requires. Depending on the family's wishes, two team members may visit the family's home.

If they are involved early enough, they will coordinate all of the out-of-town travel requirements needed to get friends and family passes to fly in for the funeral. They also have a lot of experience working with funeral homes and with planning funerals, so they will provide assistance at whatever level the family desires. Whether that may be helping to plan the entire ceremony or simply being a resource for the family. They can also shop for groceries, make airport runs to pick up or drop off travelers, or run errands for the family. The primary goal is to enable the family the opportunity to grieve the loss of their loved one, so whatever is needed they are there to help accomplish.

They will also review all the benefits from SWA and SWAPA that the family should expect. This includes things like life insurance, medical insurance, pass privileges, 401(k) and profit sharing, etc. These issues are not time critical and can be covered before or after the funeral. And the team members assigned to the family are available by phone or email to answer any questions that come up at any time. Their service to the family does not end when the funeral is over.

If you have any questions about the CISM/ Project Lift/Special Services team, please take a look at their page on SWAPA.org. In addition to their hotline (800.969.7972 ext. 5), they have a wealth of resources there that can be of help for anything from stress to depression to grief counseling. 

## **GET HELP TODAY**

If you or someone you know is struggling with a personal issue or depression, a Project LIFT volunteer Pilot is always standing by and ready to assist you with your needs and the needs of your family. Call 855.737.5438. There isn't a problem, situation, or concern that cannot be addressed. You are promised confidentiality and service in a timely manner. For more information on Project LIFT, please visit the Special Services Committee page on SWAPA.org.



## ***2018 SWAPAFamily Events — That's A Wrap!***

This year, the SWAPA Outreach Committee visited six cities across our network, met hundreds of our SWAPAfamilies — and we're already planning more events in 2019. These gatherings are so much more than just a party; these events provide an opportunity for our families to reconnect, to talk to domicile representatives about what's happening on the line, to hear from SWAPA execs and Negotiating Committee members about what our Pilots can expect in the next year leading into Contract 2020, and yes, to relax a little and enjoy time with your fellow Pilot brothers and sisters and their families.

If you didn't have a chance to come to an event this year, we encourage you to make it to one next year. We promise you won't regret it. The unity and relationships that are created at these events lasts a lifetime. And that unity will be more important than ever in 2020.

See you all next year!











**SWAPA**  
*family*



SOUTHWEST AIRLINES PILOTS ASSOCIATION

1450 EMPIRE CENTRAL DR • SUITE 737  
DALLAS, TEXAS 75247

