

Groton Base's 2013 Kap(SS) 4 Kid(SS) Visits



"No one stands so tall as when they stoop to help a child"

Abraham Lincoln

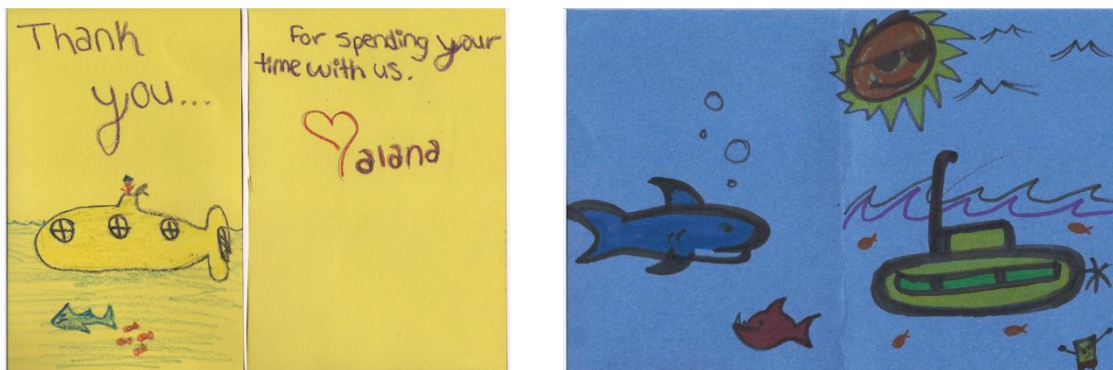
During 2013, Groton Base's K4K Shipmates brought comfort and joy to hundreds of sick Children, and their families. Below are 10 visit reports, with photos.

We give Children caring attention, and make them Honorary Submariners.

Children receive an Honorary Submariner Certificate, Honorary Submariner Cap or Doo Rag, K4K Wristband, K4K Tattoo, photo of a Submarine signed by Sub Vets, brochure from the **Historic Ship Nautilus and Submarine Force Museum** and a brochure from the **World War II National Submarine Memorial - East**. The museum and memorial are both in Groton, CT.

We let them know that they would get special treatment from Sub Vet Docents if they wore their Caps or Doo Rags when they visited the museum. We also encouraged them to have their parents take them to the memorial before or after visiting the museum.

We answer their questions and share information about Submarines, Submariners, and our history, which significantly advances the reason the **United States Submarine Veterans Inc. (USSVI)** exists.



Our favorite "Thanks You" cards from Kids at St Rays Hospital

On April 10th, Groton Base K4K Team members, John & Jackie Riley, assisted Shipmates at USSVI's Long Island Base in starting a Kap(SS) 4 Kid(SS) Program. The visit to the **Good Samaritan Hospital Medical Center in Babylon, NY**, made Honorary Submariners of approximately 30 Children.



The staff at the hospital was very pleased with the joy given to their Children and requested the Long Island Base visit as often as possible! Long Island Base Commander Mike Zemser and Base Kap(SS) 4 Kid(SS) Chairman Ed Wylie sent their thanks to Groton Base for the assistance.

On April 17th, Paul Dillon, Rich Lukas, Buzz Merritt and John & Jackie Riley visited the Children in the **In-Patient Child Psychiatric Program** at **Saint Raphael Hospital in New Haven, CT**. This was our 5th visit to the Kids at St Rays. We made Honorary Submariners of the 19 teenagers.



This was the first time all the Kids visited were teenagers and the hospital staff was amazed that they were all fully engaged in our presentation and discussions. We were thanked by the Kids, the Program Coordinator, all the staff, and were requested to continue to visit as often as we can.

On May 23rd, Norm and Ella Mae Kuzel, Charlie Murray and John & Jackie Riley visited the Kids at **Yale New Haven Children's Hospital (YNHCH) and the Smilow Cancer Hospital, in New Haven, CT.** We made Honorary Submariners of 27 Children.

All of the Children at **Smilow Cancer Hospital** and many of the Children at **YNHCH** had family members visiting with them. The family members were very appreciative of what our K4K Program provided to their young loved ones.



We were thanked many times for the comfort and joy we brought to the Kids, as well as for our service to our country. It was a very rewarding visit!

The **Coordinator of Arts and Healing in YNHCH Child Life Department** sent us the following email after our visit:

"It's always a pleasure to see you guys (and gals). Thank you for working through lunch and visiting everyone individually. We had some really wonderful visits today and heard good feedback from families and Child Life. Thank you for reaching out with kindness to our families."

On June 6th, Norm and Ella Mae Kuzel, Charlie Murray, Rich Lukas, Mike Lewis and John & Jackie Riley conducted our first visit to the Kids at **Yale New Haven Hospital's In-Patient Child Psychiatric Program.**



This program is for Children 12 years of age and younger and supplements **St Raphael Hospital's** program which treats Children 13 to 18 years of age.

We made Honorary Submariners of 20 boys and girls. It was a great visit with the Kids! They had lots of questions. One little girl even asked the wives what it was like to be married to a Submariner.

The staff was overjoyed with how engaged the Kids were. They were just as engaged as the Kids and asked us to visit as often as we could!

On June 25th, Groton Base Westport Satellite Group Sub Vets Mike DeLeo, Roy Wilkes and Buzz Merritt, with John & Jackie Riley, visited Children at **Bridgeport Hospital, in Bridgeport, CT**. This was our 4th visit to the **Bridgeport Hospital**.



We visited the Kids in the hospital's Activity Room and made Honorary Submariners of 11 boys and girls. The Kids had lots of questions which we enjoyed answering. They were very excited about becoming Honorary Submariners and receiving the gifts we presented them.

As usual, the hospital staff asked us to return to visit the Children as often as we can, and we promised to do so.

On July 2nd, Rich Lukas, Mike Lewis, Stuart Temple, and John & Jackie Riley conducted another K4K visit to children at the **Connecticut Children's Medical Center in Hartford, CT**. We made Honorary Submariners of 37 Kids.



We brought comfort and joy to them and the family members who were visiting them. The responses we received warmed our hearts. The hospital staff thanked us for our visit and requested that we come back more often. We agreed to visit again on September 5th.

On September 5th, Norm & Ella Mae Kuzel, Rich Lukas, Mike Lewis, Stuart Temple, and John & Jackie Riley conducted another K4K visit **to Children at the Connecticut Children's Medical Center in Hartford, CT.**



We made Honorary Submariners of 37 Kids. We brought comfort and joy to them and the family members who were visiting them.

On November 13th, Norm and Ella Mae Kuzel, Mike Deleo, Ron Grabowski and John & Jackie Riley visited the Kids at the **Yale New Haven Children's Hospital and Smilow Cancer Hospital.** We made Honorary Submariners of 49 Children.



We were thanked many times for the comfort we brought to the Kids, and for our service to our country. It was a very rewarding visit for all of us!

This visit was made two days after Veterans Day, during USSVI's Kap(SS) 4 Kid(SS) Week. Many USSVI Bases around the country also visited Children during the week!

On November 25th, Paul Dillon, Charlie Murray, Mike Lewis and John & Jackie Riley conducted a K4K visit to Children at the **Connecticut Children's Medical Center in Hartford, CT, (CCMC)**.



We made Honorary Submariners of 47 Kids. We brought comfort and joy to them and visiting family members. This was our 3rd visit to the Children at **CCMC** this year and the staff was very appreciative. We let them know that we appreciated being able to visit with their Kids.

On December 11th, Norm & Ella Mae Kuzel, Mike DeLeo, Roy Wilkes, Ron Grabowski, Buzz Merritt and John & Jackie Riley visited **Saint Raphael Hospital in New Haven, CT**.

Before we saw the Kids we visited with **Bill Lehr, a WW II Submarine Veteran**, and friend, who was in St Rays for treatment of pneumonia. Bill was very happy to see us and we thoroughly enjoyed our visit with him!



We then visited and made Honorary Submariners of the 20 teenagers in the hospital's **In-Patient Child Psychiatric Program**. This is the maximum number of Kids the hospital can treat in this program.

The visit with the Kids went exceptionally well. The staff was amazed again at how the Kids respond to us. They said the Kids (all teenagers) were all having a really hard time this week and that our visit made a huge positive difference. Our sharing of our Submarine knowledge and experience really engaged the Kids! The addition of the K4K Wrist Bands, K4K Tattoos and Christmas themed stuffed animals that Buzz provided, were also hits! We were thanked by the Kids, the Program Coordinator, all the staff, and were requested to continue to visit as often as we can. The visits we make to the Kids at St Rays are uniquely rewarding and we intend to visit as often as possible.



A banner Kids at St Rays made to welcome us

"We began by imagining that we are giving to them; we end by realizing that they have enriched us" Pope John Paul II

The courage that the Children exhibit as they face their medical challenges is inspiring! Our lives are enriched by these visits and the knowledge that we made a positive difference in the lives of our new Honorary Submariner Shipmates!

John Riley USSVI National & Groton Base Kap(SS) 4 Kid(SS) Chairman

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K4K Video: <http://www.youtube.com/embed/DaHOrDe4U5E>