

INDIANS, STCU, INNOVIA DEBUT OPERATION FLY TOGETHER

Partnership unites community with Team Fairchild, celebrates Veterans

SPOKANE, Wash., May 27, 2021 - The Spokane Indians Baseball Team announced this afternoon the launch of a new community campaign called *Operation Fly Together*, centered on honoring and supporting local military veterans.

The *Operation Fly Together* campaign stems from an historic agreement between Team Fairchild and the baseball team, designed to celebrate the KC-135 tanker, build pride for the base's critical functions, and help better the lives of Veterans from all services that have settled in the Spokane region.

The campaign, supported by STCU, Innovia Foundation, KHQ Television, and The Spokesman-Review, will build financial support and awareness for the newly created *Operation Fly Together Veterans Fund*, administered by Innovia. In addition, the campaign has been endorsed locally by Spokane County & Eastern Washington Veterans Services.

Thursday's event at Avista Stadium included the presentation of the first checks from the *Operation Fly Together Veterans Fund* to three local veteran causes: Newby-ginnings of North Idaho for general operating expenses, restoration of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Riverfront Park, and to the Spokane Tribe of Indians for a new handicap ramp for VFW Post 10711.

The team's partnership with Team Fairchild was formed two years ago and put on hold during the pandemic. While it's not uncommon for teams to have veteran appreciation nights and similar events, the Spokane agreement is unique nationwide, said Otto Klein, Sr. Vice President of Spokane Indians Baseball Team.

"If there's anything more American than baseball, it's showing support for our veterans," said Klein. "Spokane is particularly indebted to Fairchild for producing leaders who have served our country and now are serving our region. As the community's baseball team we want to celebrate and acknowledge our veterans in a fun way."

As part of the campaign launched Thursday, the team unveiled a new merchandise line that will be sold online and in the Team Store. Included is a new alternate team uniform modeled after the current U.S. Air Force Service Dress Uniform which the team will wear at every Friday night game starting on June 4th.

Operation Fly Together merchandise, including t-shirts, patches, hats and more, will be available for purchase to the general public starting June 4th on the Spokane Indians website. STCU Gold Glove members have the first opportunity to buy, starting June 1st.

A portion of the sales from merchandise will go toward the *Operation Fly Together Veterans Fund*.

Partnering on *Operation Fly Together* matches STCU's commitment to the community and its "Here for good" brand promise, said Ezra Eckhardt, STCU President and CEO.

"Spokane is a more vital community, thanks to Fairchild, and the presence of our veterans, including many who continue serving in community leadership positions long after their military years come to an end," said Eckhardt, a West Point graduate who served in the U.S. Army. "STCU is pleased to make an initial \$10,000 donation to the Operation Fly Together Veterans Fund."

"Innovia Foundation is honored to collaborate on this unique partnership to ignite generosity in support of those who have so selflessly given to their country," said Shelly O'Quinn, Innovia Foundation CEO.

"We invite the community to join us in contributing to the *Operation Fly Together Veterans Fund* to support local nonprofits and community organizations serving veterans and active military families in our region while bringing greater awareness and critical support to our service men and women."

Klein said that additional possible campaign elements which will be debuted over the next few years include a new KC-135 mascot, ceremonial flag, educational markers, concessions vessel and more. Each element is encompassed under the five strategic categories of *Support, Honor, Educate, Celebrate* and *Community*.

For more information on the campaign and to make a donation, visit www.operationflytogether.com. For general questions, please contact mail@spokaneindians.com.

About the Spokane Indians

The Spokane Indians are the High-A West affiliate for the Colorado Rockies. Avista Stadium is home to the \$5 Kids Bench Seat courtesy of MultiCare. Parking at all Spokane Indians games is FREE. The Spokane Indians Team Store is open M-F 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM, and 10:00 AM to the end of the game on all game days. [CLICK HERE](#) to reserve your seats today.

About Team Fairchild

Fairchild Air Force Base is the largest employer in Eastern Washington State. It is home to the 92nd Air Refueling Wing, the 141st Air Refueling Wing, the 336th Training Group and other tenant organizations. It is also the world's largest tanker wing, housing 63 KC-135 R/T Stratotanker. Fairchild is responsible for providing aerial refueling, as well as rapid and reliable passenger and cargo airlift and aero-medical evacuations. Fairchild's missions support U.S. and coalition conventional operations and U.S. Strategic Command strategic deterrence missions. The Air Force Base directly supports Air

Mobility Command's mission, providing global reach airpower and deploying expeditionary combat support forces in support of worldwide contingency requirements.

About STCU

STCU is a not-for-profit financial cooperative with 28 branch locations, \$4.4 billion in total assets, and more than 227,000 members. Founded by Spokane schoolteachers in 1934, STCU is committed to supporting education, the arts, and the community.

About Innovia

Innovia Foundation ignites generosity that transforms lives and communities so that every person has the opportunity to thrive. As the community foundation for Eastern Washington and North Idaho, we partner with people who want to make our world better. We work together to address and solve our region's problems, help those in need, identify and respond to our greatest opportunities, and leave a lasting impact. Each year, Innovia Foundation invests more than \$7 million into our communities through grants and scholarships to nonprofit organizations and local students.