



Kap(SS) 4 Kid(SS) Program Guidelines

Updated July 2022

**“No one stands so tall as when they stoop to help a child”
Abraham Lincoln**

The Kap(SS) 4 Kid(SS) Program is part of the United States Veterans Charitable Foundation (USSVCF). The USSVCF is the charitable arm of the United States Submarine Veterans, Inc. (USSVI). It was formed to further the creed of the USSVI by assuming the responsibility of some of the USSVI activities which are charitable in nature.

From the USSVI Purpose:

“The organization will engage in various projects and deeds that will bring the perpetual remembrance of those shipmates who have given the supreme sacrifice”

“That their dedication, deeds and supreme sacrifice be a constant source of motivation toward greater accomplishments”

The goal of Kap(SS) 4 Kids(SS) Program is to bring comfort and joy to Children with challenging medical conditions anywhere they are being treated. Many Sub Vets voluntarily do this by giving these Children caring attention, Honorary Submariner ball caps, certificates, challenge coins and other smile generating gifts during visits.

The K4K Program has proven to provide a meaningful reason for Sub Vets to be involved in USSVI activities. Many Sub Vets have shared that they probably would not attend meetings if not for the rewards they receive from working together with other Sub Vets in giving joy to ailing Children.



The program was started by Submarine Veteran T. Michael Bircumshaw in 2007. It has evolved from one that focused primarily on bringing comfort and joy to Children with cancer, into one that also includes bringing comfort and joy to any Child who is challenged medically (broadly interpreted).

Each Base can tailor their K4K Program to match their own unique situation, resources, and location. Many Bases go to hospitals, some large, some small. Other options include visiting Children in Child Psychiatric Facilities, Camps for Children with medical issues, Ronald McDonald Houses, Outpatient Children at facilities, Hospices...in essence, any place where a medically challenged Child is treated.

The number of Children visited is not important (even though we want to bring this program to as many Children as we can). Bringing comfort and joy to just one Child is a Home Run, as long as no other Child feels left out.

We have experienced firsthand that a patient's siblings also need the joy and comfort that K4K brings. Though the number of patient siblings we see is small, we include them if they are visiting the patient.

The K4K Program is really pretty simple; Sub Vets get some Kaps and go and give them to Kids who have challenging medical conditions. Sometimes it is easy to get access and implement the program and sometimes it's more challenging, but it is always worth the effort.

To start a K4K Program contact the National K4K Program Chairman and Fund Manager, John Riley (contact info at the end of these guidelines). I provide each Base's Kaps 4 Kid(SS) Chairman with a KAP(SS) 4 KID(SS) Startup Package. I also provide support to help a Base set up and maintain a self-sustaining K4K Program.



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1. Building A K4K Team

A base needs a K4K Chairman to manage the program. That person can be a Sub Vet, Spouse of a Sub Vet, or an Associate Member.

Base Commanders seem to find that a one on one discussion with a potential K4K Chair is usually more fruitful than asking a group of Sub Vets for a volunteer. The Base Chaplin, Vice Commander or someone who was a Hospital Corpsman is a good place to start looking.

It is recommended that K4K Chairs get as many Sub Vets as possible to sign up for K4K visits. This gives flexibility in scheduling visits. Again, a one on one request with a Sub Vet is much more productive than asking a group for volunteers.

Please send me the name and contact information for your Base K4K Chairman so that I can provide future K4K information updates.

2. Obtaining Kaps & Other K4K Items

Each Base can choose whatever Kap supplier they wish. Ordering of K4K “Honorary Submariner” Youth, Toddler or Adult Ball Caps, Doo Rags, Infant Knit Caps, Challenge Coins, K4K Pins & Patches for vests, K4K Wristbands, and Temporary Tattoos for the Kids can be done through the USSVI National Storekeeper’s website.

<http://ussvnationalstorekeeper.com/>

Another source for K4K Kaps is Northwest Embroidery. Website:

<https://www.northwestembroidery.com/>



3. Picking A Facility

Presently, K4K visits to many facilities have been restricted due to COVID concerns. This is especially true of Children's Hospitals.

However, we have found that the Kids in Child Psychiatric Facilities, Ronald McDonald Houses, Outpatient Clinics and Hospices are much easier to visit.

The staffs at most facilities are very protective of their Children (as they should be). They also want their Children to benefit from the kind of comfort and joy our program provides. Our challenge is to effectively communicate the value of our program to them and their Children and convince them that we are not a health or confidentiality risk.

After identifying a facility that you want to visit, call and ask to talk to whoever is responsible for Child activities in the facility (titles such as **Child Life Coordinator, Child Life Specialist, Child Arts Coordinator, Activities Coordinator, Arts Program Coordinator, etc., are used at many facilities**). When you get to the right person explain that the Kap(SS) 4 Kid(SS) Program is a United States Submarine Veterans Charitable Foundation Program, proven to bring joy and comfort to Children fighting for their health, and that you would like to discuss bringing the program to their facility.

When discussing the program with a Child Health Care Facility Administrator it is helpful to view our **K4K VIDEO** with them or email them the **K4K VIDEO**.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/14v-LAyJSFAzhx_RXVenvyjOlla7k7jTa/view

You can access the **K4K VIDEO** and the **K4K Guidelines** online.



Go to USSVCF.ORG and click on **KAPS 4 KIDS FUND** button.
You can also print out **Honorary Submariner Certificates** there.

In your communications, work to build a good relationship with the facility visit coordinator. Discuss facility guidelines regarding health and confidentiality risks. Obtain any forms they may require to be signed by the Sub Vets.

Make it clear to the facility that you fully understand, and all K4K visitors will comply with, their health and confidentiality requirements. Attached are the Visitors Guidelines we received at the Connecticut Children's Medical Center. It is a good idea to review it prior to your initial visit in order to understand their concerns.

It is also a good idea to have your K4K Team review YOUR FACILITY'S guidelines prior to a K4K visit.

Not all facilities fully explain the rules and it is up to us to ask what they are, and to understand the basic guidelines.

After you have had several visits and a good relationship with your facility's coordinator, explore the possibility of taking photos by getting photo releases from parents or legal guardians. Emphasize that this would be fully under the facility's control and direction and is NOT a requirement for the visit.

Be careful not to give the impression that we are visiting for publicity, explain that the photos encourage other Sub Vets to get involved in visiting sick Children.

Many facilities have their own photo release forms. A **K4K Photo Release Form**, that you can print out, can be found on the **KAPS 4 KIDS FUND** page of the USSV Charitable Fund website USSVCF.ORG

If you need help to get access to a Child Health Care Facility, I can facilitate communication with enthusiastic administrators at facilities around our K4K Fleet.



4. What to Bring

Wear your vests and hats. Sub Vet vests with patches and Dolphins are impressive to many Children and can generate interest and prompt questions. Those without vests should wear hats, Dolphins and anything that might get a Kid's interest.

Bring enough Certificates, Kaps, Challenge Coins, etc., for all the Children you expect to see (get a number from the facility for a maximum number of boys and girls you will see and bring a little more to cover that). Again, we don't want any Child to feel left out. It is better to wait until you have enough Kaps for a facility visit than to go in without enough.

You can make your own [Honorary Submariner Certificate](#) or use the one on the USSVCF.ORG website. It is a modifiable PDF document so, using your computer, you can type first names and dates on the certificate.

Note that, because of HIPAA confidentiality issues, Child Health Care Facilities don't give out names before a visit, and if they do, just first names. When you can get first names in advance the certificate can be filled prior to the visit.

Ask the facility administrator you are working with what the facilities guidelines and preferences are regarding names. Greater than 95% of the certificates we give out are printed by hand with a Sharpie marker just prior to giving it to a Child.

K4K BANNERS:

Custom Banners can be obtained at local shops. Sub Vet Vincent Flaherty also has a business which offers K4K banners. His website is:

<http://www.designed4submariners.com/>



HONORARY SUBMARINER CERTIFICATE FRAMES:

Our base uses cardboard frames to frame our Honorary Submariner Certificates. This protects the certificates and impresses the Child. Frames can be obtained from a Dollar Store, Craft stores, etc. If you are interested in what we use please contact me.

5. Conducting A Visit

Visits to Children are supervised by facility staff members.

Several USSVI Bases have members that go through hospital training programs and are vetted by hospitals. These Amazing Sub Vets visit Kids in their rooms, on a weekly basis, unsupervised!

During Groton Base visits to Kids in their **Hospital Room** or an **Activity/Playroom** we individually introduce ourselves, explain that we are there to share our knowledge about Submarines and the US Submarine Service, answer all their questions and to make them Honorary Submariners.

Hospital Room Visits: The accompanying staff member gives us the FIRST name of the Child prior to entering the room. We ask the Child to pick the Kap or Doo Rag they want and give the gifts we have for them. We then make a point to "formally" present them with their Honorary Submariner Certificate. We share our information with them and answer all their questions. We then welcome them into our Submariner Family.

Activity Room Visits: It helps to show interesting Submarine related pictures and/or videos to engage the Children (and adults). We started by showing lots of 8 1/2 x 11 pictures, and now use a laptop connected to a flatscreen TV to show our pictures and videos. Usually the facility has a TV for us to use but we have our own if they don't.



If requested, I will send you our K4K Photo/Video Presentation for your use. It can be easily modified to match your audience.

Styrofoam wig holders, that you can get from many beauty salon supply stores, work well to let kids see and get excited about choosing a Kap or Doo Rag.

We ask Children to pick the Kap or Doo Rag they want. We make a point to "formally" present a certificate to each Child. We ask the staff or each Child to spell his or her FIRST name (again, confidentiality sensitivities) and we write it on the certificate with a Sharpie. We then "formally" read each word on the certificate, fill in the date, etc. and then present it to the Child (for a large number of Kids we wait until all of them have their certificate, have them all stand up holding their certificate, then we read it). We all (Sub Vets, families, facility staff) then clap and congratulate the Child/Children on now being an "Honorary Submariner" and members of our Submariner Family.

A number of USSVI Bases were not allowed to visit with Kids in their rooms or in Activity/Play Rooms. However, they were allowed to set up tables in the Hospital Lobby to give Kaps, certificates and other items to outpatient Kids and other Children visiting the hospital.

Depending on the hospital size, a large number of ballcaps and/or other items may be required for this approach. The Rocky Mountain Base has given out more than 100 Kaps during a visit in a hospital lobby.

PHOTOS: If approved by the facility staff that a photo can be taken (**with a signed photo release form**), we usually take pictures with the Child holding the certificate.



6. After the Visit

It is a good idea to discuss the visit with your K4K Team. This allows the team to appreciate the experience and to identify any lessons learned for future visits.

You should submit information and photos of your visit to the USSVI American Submariner Magazine Editor, Chuck Senior, for publication. Guidelines for submitting items for publication can be found in the magazine.

7. Fundraising

Many individuals and organizations will donate to our Kap(SS) 4 Kid(SS) Program once they see what the program is doing for sick Children.

When discussing the program with a potential donor it is helpful to view the K4K VIDEO with them, and/or email them the video.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/14v-LAyJSFAzhx_RXVenvyjOlla7k7jTa/view

In 2022, if a donor wants a tax deduction, the donation must go to the USSVCF.

This will be the case into the foreseeable future, unless USSVI again qualifies for an IRS War Veterans Status exemption.

The USSVCF is an exclusively charitable corporation that is recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) entity. The USSVCF EIN number is 95-4830806.

Due to recent IRS tax law changes, donors should be advised to consult their tax advisor to determine the deductible amount.

If a donor does not want a tax deduction, the donation should go into your base's K4K bank account. Thank you letters should be sent to all donors.



Walmart Donations

The Walmart Foundation encourages their stores to give "Community Grants" to worthy organizations! This is an excellent way to fund your Kap(SS) 4 Kid(SS) Programs!

Kap(SS) 4 Kid(SS) Chairmen at Sub Vet Bases around the country have received multiple grants, many totaling thousands of dollars, from stores in their areas.

The requests need to be done online. However, visiting a Walmart store first to explain the K4K Program to the manager, or the person who evaluates donation requests, greatly helps to ensure donation success.

It also helps if you provide a package with information about the program; photos from visits, newspaper articles, American Submariner articles, etc. If possible, share the K4K VIDEO with them. If you need photos for your information package contact me and I will send you some.

In 2022 you can request grants from up to 25 stores. Feedback from a number of stores indicate that it might increase the probability of success if you ask a store for between \$250 and \$500. This is sound advice unless, in your discussions with a store, you are given a specific dollar value to ask for.

Contact me if you need help filling out the Walmart Grant request.

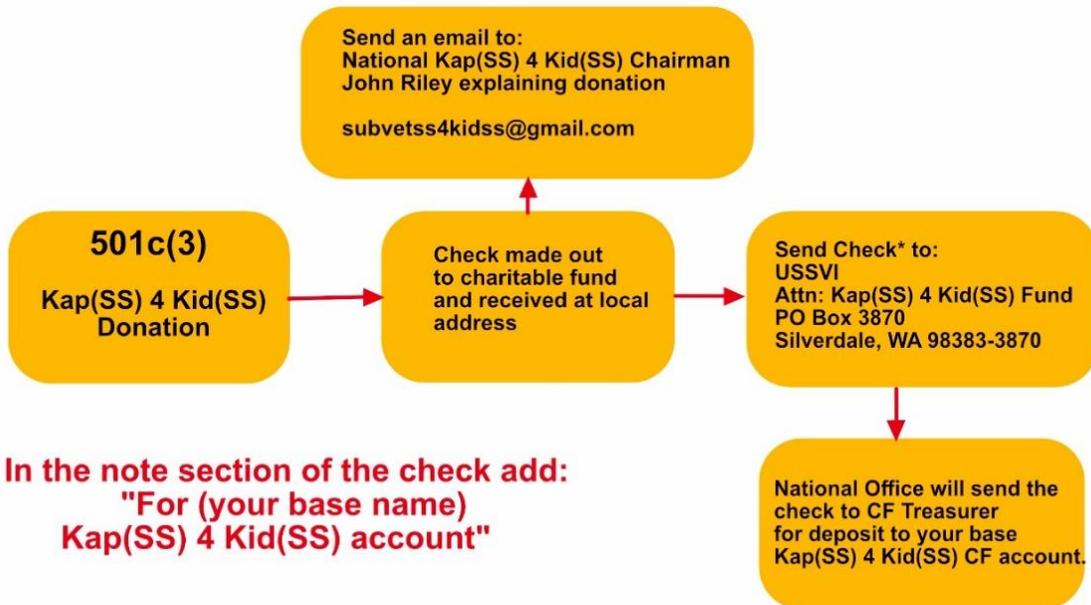
Walmart Grant website: <http://giving.walmart.com/walmart-foundation/community-grant-program>

Checks made out to the USSVCF from Any Source should NOT be endorsed but sent to the USSVCF (see flow chart below). Put a note on the check reading "For (your base name) Kap(SS) 4 Kid(SS) account"

Please contact me if you have questions.



Follow the directions in the below flow charts if you receive a K4K donation to the USSVCF, or if you wish to have an invoice paid for a K4K purchase from your base's USSVCF account.





8. Kap(SS) 4 Kid(SS) Week

Each year K4K Week is celebrated around Veterans Day (November 11th).

In addition to other K4K visits made during the year, USSVI Bases are encouraged to schedule and make a K4K visit to Kids as close to Veterans Day as they can.

This is done to:

1. Obtain local and national recognition of USSVI's Kap(SS) 4 Kid(SS) Program. This in turn will let our communities learn about USSVI and why we exist.
2. Take advantage of a period when Child Health Care Facilities are more likely to welcome visits by Veterans.
3. Have Sub Vets interact with Children, their families and facility staff at a time when the appreciation for Veterans is at its highest.
4. Bring joy to sick Children and to the Sub Vets who visit them!

“We begin by imaging that we are giving to them; we end by realizing that they have enriched us” - Pope John Paul II

Thanks for your involvement in bringing comfort and joy to sick Children, and their loved ones, by participating in this Life Changing USSVI Community Outreach Program!

John Riley

US Submarine Veterans Charitable Foundation

Kap(SS) 4 Kid(SS) Program Chairman & Fund Manager

K4K VIDEO:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/14v-LAYJSFAzhx_RXVenvyjOlla7k7jTa/view



ATTACHMENT – A



Visiting Connecticut Children's Medical Center

The children and families at Connecticut Children's Medical Center (Connecticut Children's) are typically experiencing high levels of stress and may be in a very vulnerable condition. For this reason, we ask you to follow these instructions.

1. Please let us know if you currently are experiencing any **health problems**, especially infections or any contagious conditions. If there is a risk of infection, we will need to restrict the areas of the hospital that you visit.
2. All the medical and social information about our patients and their families is **confidential** and cannot be shared with visitors; we will share basic information to help start the visit. However, please do not ask specific questions about their condition and maintain the confidentiality of anything you learn during your visit. We do require each special visitor to sign our Confidentiality Agreement.
3. When interacting with a patient.....

Do.....

- a. Talk to them as you would any child their age, at their level and in language they can understand.
- b. Ask about hobbies, interests, favorite sports team, toys and dolls they have.
- c. Talk about your job, your interests, things you like to do.
- d. Empathize with them – imagine what it would be like to have been in the hospital when you were their age.
- e. Introduce yourself to other family members in the room.
- f. Thank them for letting you visit.

Don't.....

- a. Talk down to them.
- b. Stare at their injuries.
- c. Ask them questions about their illness, treatment, appearance, family, or about when they are going home. In many situations, these questions will be upsetting to the child.
- d. Be overly sympathetic or show pity.
- e. Sit on their bed.
- f. Touch them, crowd them, or violate their personal space. Handshakes are OK.
- g. Assume that the adult in the room is the parent.

Continued...



Visiting Connecticut Children's Medical Center

4. Some people have strong emotional reactions when they see children who are injured, ill, or in pain. If this happens, please feel free to excuse yourself from the room and a staff member will escort you to an area where you can relax and compose yourself.
5. Connecticut Children's is a latex-safe environment. Children with LATEX ALLERGY develop an allergic reaction when they come in contact with any latex products (i.e. balloons, gloves etc.). Please refrain from bringing in any materials made of latex or that may have come in contact with latex. Alternative products are made of plastic, vinyl or silicone.
6. Photography and Social Media: At times, we may ask you, as a special visitor, if we can photograph you with a patient. At no point are special visitors allowed to photograph patients at the medical center, either with cell phones, cameras, or any electronic device. Please do not share your personal information with patients – no Facebook information, email addresses, or phone numbers. You can refer the patient to the staff person escorting you.

Parking/Directions

Parking:

- Due to budgetary constraints, performers or special visitors will pay for their own parking. You may use the parking garage across from the Medical Center (maximum of \$6 for day) or Valet Parking (\$5 flat rate) which is located at the Ambulatory Care Entrance to Connecticut Children's across from the parking garage (Seymour Street).

Directions: The best directions to CT Children's are located on our website, www.connecticutchildrens.org.

Thanks for being sensitive to the needs of our patients. Have a great visit!