



Kap(SS) 4 Kid(SS) Program Guidelines

Updated September 2021

**“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, and Infant Knit Caps, K4K Pins & Patches for vests, K4K Wristbands, Challenge Coins and Temporary Tattoos for the Kids can be done through the USSVI National Storekeeper’s website.

<http://ussvinationalstorekeeper.com/>

A source for K4K Kaps is Northwest Embroidery. Website:

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



3. Picking A Facility

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 National 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 Care Facility Administrator it is helpful to view our K4K VIDEO with them or email them the link to the K4K VIDEO.

(you can copy this link and paste it into an email to send as appropriate)

https://drive.google.com/file/d/14v-LAyJSFAzhxRXVenvyj0lla7k7jTa/view?usp=drive_web

You can access the K4K VIDEO and these K4K Guidelines and also print a modifiable PDF Honorary Submariner Certificate online. Go to USSVCF.ORG and click on the “FUNDS” button at the top of the page. Then click on “KAPS 4 KIDS FUND” button.

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. Here is a link to the Visitors Guideline sheet we were given at the Yale New Haven Children's Hospital (YNHCH):

https://www.ussvi.org/Documents/Charitable_CFDocuments_K4K_Visitor_Guidelines.pdf

It is a good idea to review it prior to visiting the administrator to understand their concerns.

It is also a good idea to get and have your K4K Team review your facility's guidelines prior to a 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 a good relationship with your facility's coordinator, explore the possibility of 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.

Many facilities have their own photo release forms. If the facilities photo release form is used ask for a copy with any photo you get. Here is a link to a K4K photo release form that you can print out and use if necessary:

https://www.ussvi.org/Documents/Charitable_CFDocuments_k4k_photo_release_form.pdf

If you help to get access to a Child Health Care Facility, I can facilitate communication with enthusiastic administrators at facilities around our K4K Fleet, who will gladly vouch for us.



4. What to Bring

Wear your vests and hats. Sub Vet vests with patches and Dolphins are impressive to many Children and can prompt interest and questions. Though not mandatory, it would be neat to wear one. 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.

If you decide to use one color Kap, such as only the Blue Kap, bring enough for all. However, it is important to understand that in facilities where a girl has lost her hair due to chemotherapy, the Pink Kap may be a welcomed choice because it will let everyone know that she is in fact, a Girl!

You can make your own Honorary Submariner Certificate, or use the one at this link: (you can also print it out from the K4K FUND page 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 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 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 frames our Honorary Submariner Certificates to protect the certificates and impress the Child.

We use Proframes Broadway Easel Gray size 8 1/2 x 11 inch.

If you order you should get a discount if you tell them that you are part of the Submarine Veteran Kap(SS) 4 Kid(SS) Program; (they should give you a volume discount at the next level above what you order).

Link to company:

http://www.promoframes.com/product_info.php?products_id=51

5. Conducting A Visit

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, unescorted!

If not vetted, visits to Children are always accompanied by staff members.

Each Base can tailor their K4K Program to match their own unique situation, resources, and location.



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.

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 photos can be taken (**with a signed photo release form**), we usually take pictures with the Child who is holding the certificate.

6. After the Visit

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 this link:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/14v-LAyJSFAzhx_RXVenvyj0Ila7k7jTa/view?usp=drive_web

In 2021, 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!

Over the past 5 years 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 link with them.

In 2021 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:

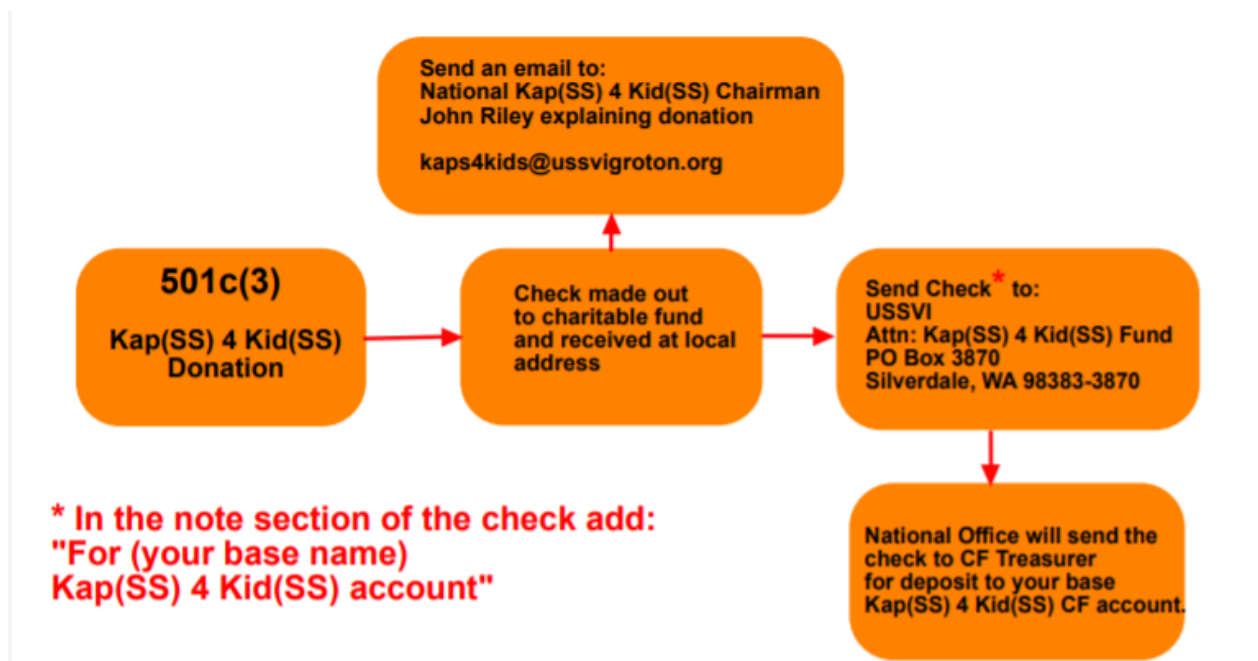
<http://giving.walmart.com/walmart-foundation/community-grant-program>



Checks made out to the USSVCF from Walmart, or 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-LAyJSEAzhx_RXVenvyj0Ila7k7jTa/view?usp=drive_web

Email: subvetss4kidss@gmail.com 203 668-9131