Riding High for All Charities

By Sarah A. Cart with Holly Houser

In addition to utterly spectacular performances at Vintage Weekend, for the past couple years the Aeroshell Aerobatic Team has provided one of the most exhilarating packages to be auctioned off over All Charities Weekend (ACW, February 7 and 8 this season) thanks to Equity Members Wendy and Robert Stallings.

As the founder of Titan Aviation Fuels (supplier for the Ocean Reef Airport), Rob has known the Aeroshell pilots for years thanks to their relationship with Shell. He and Wendy have watched them perform many times at other air shows and three years ago decided to bring them to Ocean Reef as a thank you to the community. The Stallings partner with fellow Member Lenny Sikora to ensure the logistics work smoothly each year.

Even highly experienced pilots like Walter Orth, one of the founders of the Wings Over Miami Air Museum and a Vintage Weekend participant, never get jaded about opportunities to watch the Aeroshell squad. “I’ve seen these guys perform probably a hundred times and I get excited every time. They are gentlemen and about as good as it gets.”

Then in 2018, the Stallings reached out to All Charities offering what has become an annual package of Vintage Weekend rides for four with the aerobatic team.

On Friday morning, Dec. 6, Steve Parker strapped himself in as one of All Charities 2019’s lucky aircrew.

“It was a BLAST! No other ride I’ve been on (including many of the world’s highest, fastest, most circuitous roller coasters) even comes close – immensely exhilarating, yet I felt totally safe during their aerobatic formation flying. These Aeroshell guys are phenomenal and quite obviously focused on safety as well as an unbelievable ride. I highly recommend the experience to anyone considering bidding on this spectacular flight at All Charities 2020.”

As Rob Stallings explains, the air show and enabling Members to take to the skies with the team “gives people that wouldn’t otherwise have the opportunity the chance to enjoy seeing what a vintage airplane is really like and fly in an airshow routine with some of the best guys in the business.”

He goes on to note, “The Aeroshell Team always kicks off the Oshkosh Air Show, and out of all the acts there, they’re still the best one… They are the stars of every show they’re in, and their night shows are just so spectacular.”

The Stallings also provided the opportunity for Ocean Reef Airport employees to ride with the team because, “They do so much for all of us, we wanted to say thank you,” says Wendy. Participant and Associate Mic O’Keefe shared with her that his wife’s parting words that morning had been, “I think I’d rather you swim with the sharks than do this. Don’t forget you have a wife and two kids!”

Rob concludes, “The Airport here adds so much to the Ocean Reef community. To be able to fly in, get on our golf cart, and be home in 10 minutes is amazing. I think it’s a big plus for Ocean Reef.”

AN EXPLANATION OF ALL CHARITIES

In the mid-2000s, the broader Ocean Reef community was overwhelmed by the number of fundraisers each season (over 27 at that time). As a solution, organizers conceived of a combined fundraising effort that has evolved into ACW. In the years since, All Charities has brought in over $38 million, monies that help ensure the viability of not-for-profit institutions vital to Ocean Reef’s unique way of life and provide much-needed funds to dozens of worthy charities in our neighboring communities.

If you’d like to know more about it, contact the All Charities office at 305-367-5996 or AllCharities@oceanreef.com. Lesa Crayne, All Charities Director, and Amy Cornaire, Community Relations Manager, will be delighted to assist you.

And if you’re curious to know more about this season’s ACW offerings, take a look at allcharities.orfound.org (and plan to look at it again and again as it is a work in progress).