



The Northern Virginia Sail & Power Squadron receives Community Service award.

Francis T. Williamson, Commander of the Northern Virginia Sail and Power Squadron received an award from the U.S. Power Squadron for hosting wounded warriors from Walter Reed Hospital Chesapeake Bay cruises, collecting holiday toys and food for deserving families and other community service efforts.

Williamson, a resident of Springfield, VA, and Past Commander George Degnon, of McLean VA, are shown holding the Award for Excellence in Community Service. Degnon conceived the idea of using Power Squadron members to host cruises on the Chesapeake Bay for wounded warriors from Iraq and Afghanistan and guided the effort to a very successful conclusion. The event was immensely popular for the soldiers and personally rewarding for the squadron members. The soldiers were patients at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. One service member commented to his advisor: "Since returning home from Iraq over eight months ago I had not slept at night nor been able to relax in the day, but following that boat ride, I slept my first good night's sleep and I can relax again."



Commander Francis Williamson and Past Commander George Degnon

The Northern Virginia Sail and Power Squadron also collected toys last December providing gifts to children in Sylvania, Georgia, a community that has been so hard hit economically that the largest employer had to cancel their annual Christmas program for needy children. Over 200 games, dolls, and toys, a case of children books, as well as canned goods and dried foods were collected by Squadron member and delivered to the community in time for holiday festivities. And to top it off checks from the Squadron members of about \$1,000 were donated to the food pantry and food voucher programs.

Reflecting on this award, Williamson said: "Receiving this community service award was a proud moment for me personally and for the entire Northern Virginia Sail and Power Squadron as a service organization. Our community service programs reflect strong squadron values and I am very proud of the members who give so selflessly of their time and energy to help others both on the water and through our boating education classes."

The squadron was also recognized for conducting Vessel Safety Checks for local boaters. Vessel Safety checks are free and help recreational boaters gain a respect for the boating environment.

The United States Power Squadron is the primary nationwide information source for novice and expert boaters, providing boating education for boating safety and connections with other boaters. To learn more about the Northern Virginia Sail & Power Squadron, contact www.nvps.org.

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