



U.S. COAST GUARD



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COAST GUARD MUTUAL ASSISTANCE Community, Compassion, Commitment

As we undertake the annual Coast Guard Mutual Assistance (CGMA) Fundraising Campaign, it's appropriate to remind everyone of the important role CGMA plays in the Coast Guard community.

CGMA celebrates its 80th birthday this year.

This year, CGMA celebrates 80 years of committed service to the Coast Guard community. It was created back in 1924 by concerned people who had a desire to **“minister to the general welfare of the commissioned officer, warrant officers, enlisted men and civilian employees of the Coast Guard and their immediate families.”**

Today, it continues to be governed and operated by concerned Coast Guard people, including the 21-member Board of Control, representing a diverse cross section of the Coast Guard community, and some 400 Coast Guard members and employees who, with the support of a small staff at CGMA Headquarters, operate the day-to-day business of providing assistance to Coast Guard active duty members, retirees, reservists, civilians and auxiliaries in need.

CGMA has a good story to tell.

Through interest-free loans, grants and confidential financial counseling, CGMA promotes financial stability and general well-being while providing a vital financial “safety net” for individuals and their families in all segments of the Coast Guard community. This helps foster morale, encourages a sense of loyalty to the Coast Guard and minimizes the impact of financial crises on our people's ability to perform their duties and serve the American public.

However, there still seem to be many in the Coast Guard community who are unaware of the nature and magnitude of assistance CGMA provides.

For example, CGMA provides about \$500,000 in assistance per month in around 650 cases; on average, 1 in 6 active duty members, 1 in 12 civilian employees and 1 in 22 Reserve members received some type of loan or grant assistance from CGMA in 2003; and 89% of the assistance goes to E-6/GS-7 and below. Last year alone, over 7,700 interest-free loans and grants were provided totaling in excess of \$6.2 million. Over the past 5 years, CGMA provided over \$30 million in interest-free loans and \$3 million in grants.

CGMA puts its funds to hard work, with close to 5,000 loans outstanding totaling between \$5 million and \$6 million at any point in time. CGMA turns over its entire net worth in assistance about every two years. That far exceeds the turnover rate of its sister military aid societies.

The Annual CGMA Fundraising Campaign needs your support.

CGMA makes its formal appeal only once a year during the period 1 March through 30 April. The annual fundraising campaign serves a two-fold purpose: raising the funds needed to sustain CGMA programs and making our people aware of CGMA and the help it offers.

While closely affiliated with the Coast Guard, CGMA is a non-profit organization and receives **no** appropriated or non-appropriated funds from the Coast Guard. Thus, CGMA's ability to meet the needs that continue to arise each year rests solely on the generous contributions of the men and women throughout the Coast Guard community.

I ask that everyone search their heart and consider contributing when the CGMA key worker comes by. As importantly, I ask for strong command-level involvement and support for the campaign and the CGMA Representatives and key workers who are working diligently to ensure that CGMA continues to be a vital force for good within the Coast Guard community.

More information about CGMA is available on its Web site: www.cgmahq.org or may be obtained by calling CGMA Headquarters at 800-881-2462 or 202-439-6621.

I sincerely appreciate your generosity and support!

Through CGMA, we can continue a proud tradition of Coast Guard People Helping Coast Guard People.

Regards,

RADM Kenneth T. Venuto
Ken Venuto

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