

## **Flight Attendants see 50 as opportunity, Not a Barrier**

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Horizon Air *Leading Edge*

Life begins at 50? Ask Horizon Air flight attendants **Christie Robbins** and **Kathy Turner**. The two founded the Coyote Fifty organization last year as a social outlet for women 50 and over yearning to lead active lives and contribute more to their communities.

Turner says she first got the idea when she turned 50 and, like clockwork, her American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) membership card showed up in the mail.

“That was a bit of a shock to me – it immediately made me feel like I was about 100,” Turner says. “But I also thought, ‘I’m only 50. There have got to be other clubs that I can join.’ I found that there weren’t many out there for women our age, so Christie and I came up with the idea for Coyote Fifty.”

Robbins adds that the group addresses a fear some over-50 women have of losing ground. “How can you lose ground when you’re out there encouraging other women to stay healthy and get involved in their communities?” she says. “We’re helping each other through the changes in life, sharing our gifts and talents and celebrating each others’ accomplishments. We’re following closely our mission of ‘Age is an attitude and service above self.’”

Although its members participate in a variety of social activities, Coyote Fifty, at heart, is charity driven.

Earlier this month, Robbins organized a school supply drive in her hometown of Longview, Wash. The organization has also scheduled a three-day cruise next month to Ensenada, Mexico, in conjunction with Children Today, a Long Beach-based group helping homeless families. Coyote Fifty is collecting various clothing items that can be delivered over the course of the cruise.

“We figured, what better advertisement for our organization than a cruise where we’ll have a lot of fun and be able to make a difference at the same time?” Robbins says.

The cruise begins on Sept. 21, and Turner and Robbins say there’s plenty of room for both men and women who want to participate. Those who aren’t interested in the cruise or joining the organization are more than welcome to donate clothing. Visit [coyotefifty.com](http://coyotefifty.com) for details.

The group is also exploring the possibility of helping the Cowlitz County Habitat for Humanity with the building of a home in Longview.

“They’re interested in having a home built entirely by women, and their director heard about our organization, so he contacted us,” Robbins says. “It’s certainly something we’d be interested in.”

The opportunity to pursue charity work is new for both Turner and Robbins.

“Both of us have been working and raising a family. Now that our children are grown, we’re empty nesters, and we finally have a little more time to do something like this,” Turner says.

Coyote Fifty currently has about 40 members, and Turner and Robbins are hoping to see it eventually become a nationwide organization.

“The group is more about attitude than age,” Turner says. “We’ve got women in their 40s who are seeking a kind of mentoring situation.”

Something like what Turner and Robbins had initially. Despite their closeness in age, Turner and Robbins are far apart on Horizon's flight attendant seniority spectrum. Robbins joined Horizon in 2005, 20 years after Turner.

"When I first started flying, Kathy took me under her wing and really helped me become a better flight attendant," Robbins says. "I called her my Horizon angel, and soon, the best friendship blossomed."

And from that Coyote Fifty was born, providing a catalyst for other women to cultivate their own deep friendships and fulfilling lives past the halfway mark.