



Columbia Distributing CEO, Chris Steffanci, is joined by his team, family, and Red Bull athletes at the Wings for Life Golf Classic.

Meet our Legacy Builders: Columbia Distributing

To honor our most generous supporters, we are highlighting our Legacy Awardees – donors who contribute at the highest tier as part of Honoring Through Research – to learn more about their journey with Wings for Life and why they support our mission.



Can you please introduce yourself?

Columbia Distributing is the leading total beverage distributor in the Pacific Northwest. Since 1935, Columbia Distributing has helped build some of the best-known brands in the beverage business. Today, Columbia Distributing and its 2,800 teammates service over 24,000 retail customers covering more than 135,000 square miles in Oregon and Washington. Columbia's success is based on the deep-rooted tradition of delivering quality products, timely service, and a genuine concern for customer and community needs.

Photo: Chris Tulle

Columbia Distributing team visiting a research project at University of California, Irvine.



“Witnessing the research being conducted up close was remarkable. It brought incredible meaning to our overall support of such important work, allowing us to see firsthand the impact our donations are making.”

Chris Steffanci

How did you first get involved with Wings for Life?

Columbia was introduced to Wings for Life in 2019 through its partnership with Red Bull. The cause aligned well with Columbia's community giving focus areas, and employees immediately became very passionate about supporting the organization. Meeting Aaron Baker, a Wings for Life board member and Ambassador, hearing about his direct experience with spinal cord injury and his determination to change the future of such injuries has been incredibly inspiring for the Columbia team.

Can you share one of your favorite moments with Wings for Life?

A favorite moment for our leaders, CEO Chris Steffanci and VP of Non-Alcoholic Sales Rich McNaughton, was the 2023 lab tour at the University of California, San Diego, for Honoring Through Research.

Why is funding spinal cord injury research important to you?

When we were considering the number of ways Columbia could support Wings for Life, we went out to the business and asked our employees for their feedback. This simple activity brought to our attention the number of connections our team has to spinal cord injuries, whether it's a former coworker, family member, or friend. That connection and the promise for amazing advances is why we continue our support of this research.

