



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 27, 2007

Contact: Jeri Thomson, ThanksUSA, 571-277-3249 or
Erin Cecil, Fleishman-Hillard, 202-828-9725

**Nationwide Treasure Hunt Benefiting Military Families
Kicks Off With Official ThanksUSA Clue Book and Online Game
Release**

ThanksUSA's second annual contest marks beginning of scholarship period

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Thousands of history buffs young and old alike anxiously awaited Wednesday's unveiling of the 2007 ThanksUSA Clue Book and interactive online game for the organization's second annual American History Treasure Hunt.

Created in 2005 by nine- and eleven-year-old sisters, Rachel and Kelsi Okun, of McLean, Virginia, the nationwide Treasure Hunt signals the beginning of the non-profit's annual scholarship drive benefiting the families of active-duty status military personnel.

"We really wanted to do something to thank the troops and their families," said Kelsi Okun of the program's beginnings.

"We had a *brain blast* and came up with the idea to do a giant treasure hunt. Our parents and teachers and a whole lot of people helped us write up the clue book and launch the treasure hunt last year to thank the troops," finished Rachel Okun.

Over 6,000 contestants competed in the 2006 Treasure Hunt for more than \$250,000 worth of prizes donated by corporate and individual sponsors. With over 200 questions related to our "Pillars of Democracy", the Hunt's 2007 Clue Book takes participants on an historical and cultural journey across the U.S.

Sudokus, crossword and other puzzles geared to all levels and ages are designed to give classes and families hours of challenging fun. This year's contest runs through Labor Day. With sixty percent of the questions meeting state-based Standards of Learning requirements, prizes are geared to school classes which can use the treasure hunt to enliven history lessons. Individual prizes will be given as well for those completing chapters. A grand prize will be awarded to the history expert who answers all the questions correctly.

-more-

In its second year, ThanksUSA has grown from its humble beginnings at the Okun's kitchen table into a professionally-managed scholarship program which aims to award more than a thousand scholarships in 2007 to the spouses and children of military members serving on active duty status.

"The Treasure Hunt really marks the beginning of our 2007 call for scholarship entries and sponsors," said Jeri Thomson, President of ThanksUSA. "This year, we hope to again award 1,000 scholarships to deserving military spouses and children. We're hard at work bringing on new corporate, foundation, and individual sponsors."

In 2006, ThanksUSA awarded 1,013 need-based, post-secondary scholarships totaling over \$3.5 million dollars from federal, corporate, foundation and individual sponsors. Scholarship recipients represented each of the 50 states and the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, National Guard and Reserves.

Information on scholarship applications and sponsor opportunities, as well as registration instructions for the American History Treasure Hunt, can be found on the ThanksUSA Web site, www.thanksusa.org.

About ThanksUSA

Founded in the fall of 2005, ThanksUSA, a non-partisan 501(c) (3) organization, is an effort to thank the men and women of our armed forces and their families for their service to the country with the gift of education. The organization provides need-based, post-secondary education opportunities to the children and spouses of active duty status military personnel through competitive scholarships. For more information visit www.thanksusa.org.