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ThanksUSA Awards 200 College Scholarships for Military Spouses and Children in 2009

Final 100 scholarships went out on December 21

WASHINGTON, December 22, 2009 – ThanksUSA, a charitable effort to mobilize Americans of all ages to “thank” our active-duty troops by providing need-based college scholarships to their spouses and dependents, announced that it awarded a total of 200 scholarships, valued at \$3,000 each, to military families in 2009. Rounding out its fourth year of tuition assistance, ThanksUSA sent out the final 100 scholarship letters on Monday, December 21, with the previous 100 awarded in the fall.

“Despite economic hardships in 2009, Americans continued to show their appreciation for our men and women in uniform by contributing to ThanksUSA’s scholarship program. We hope these additional 100 scholarships help brighten the holidays for military families, especially those with loved ones serving overseas,” said Michele Stork, executive director of ThanksUSA. “ThanksUSA had an amazing year in 2009, and we look forward to doing even more in 2010 for the families of the men and women who provide such an invaluable service to our country.”

ThanksUSA began in 2005 as the idea of two Virginia schoolgirls as a way to mobilize Americans to thank active-duty troops for defending our freedoms. Since 2006, ThanksUSA has awarded nearly \$6 million in need-based, post-secondary scholarships to nearly 2,000 spouses and children of military members serving on active-duty status. Scholarships have been awarded in all 50 states and the District of Columbia to families representing all branches of the Armed Forces, including the National Guard and Reserves and the families of those killed and wounded.

This past Thanksgiving, ThanksUSA unveiled *Treasure Hunt Five*, which was sponsored by the ESA Foundation, as part of a three-year partnership that aims to increase the number of scholarships available to military families. *Treasure Hunt Five* features more than 150 questions on a variety of states, along with the history of the U.S. Army and a new chapter on the Earth’s resources in honor of Earth Day’s 40th anniversary in 2010. Once the game ends on August 15, 2010, ThanksUSA will award prizes, including laptops and gift certificates, to the winner of each game “chapter.” Contestants may access the game at www.ThanksUSA.org.

To help fund these scholarships, ThanksUSA hosted its first annual ThanksUSA Benefit Concert in Nashville, TN, in 2009 honoring military families with performances by Vince Gill, Amy



Grant, Ricky Skaggs, Jim Lauderdale, the SteelDrivers, Leslie Satcher, and Monty Holmes. The event was attended by recuperating troops from Walter Reed and military personnel from both Fort Campbell and the Tennessee Air National Guard.

“We’re honored to have been a part of the benefit concert and to have contributed to ThanksUSA’s mission in 2009,” said Chris Eberbach, CEO of USA Payment Services, the presenting sponsor for the Nashville benefit concert. “America’s men and women in uniform deserve our thanks for their unwavering bravery; congratulations to ThanksUSA for another successful year.”

These need-based scholarships are awarded on a competitive basis to the spouses and children of active-duty military personnel who plan to pursue a post-secondary education, including vocational and technical training. Recipients are selected on the basis of financial need, demonstrated leadership, and participation in school and community activities.

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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.