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ThanksUSA's Young Co-Founders Inducted into Caring Hall of Fame

Sisters Rachel and Kelsi Okun honored for their creative, generous support of military families

McLean, Va. (October 13, 2009) – ThanksUSA today celebrates the induction of co-founders Rachel and Kelsi Okun, ages 14 and 11, into the Caring Institute's Hall of Fame. The Virginia schoolgirls were selected by Senator Bob Dole and his Institute's board of trustees for their compassion, integrity and public service. Among this year's distinguished nominees, who will be honored at the Westin Bonaventure Hotel in Los Angeles, is General Colin Powell.

"On behalf of our board of trustees, it is a great honor for us to pay tribute to these extraordinary people who have used their lives for the betterment of others," said Senator Dole. "They are wonderful role models and the very personification of caring."

Rachel and Kelsi dreamed up ThanksUSA in 2005, when their fascination with treasure hunts led them to design a game to support the families of our armed forces. Proceeds from the online game, which tests participants' knowledge of American history and values, fund postsecondary scholarships for the spouses and dependents of active-duty servicemen and women. The nonprofit hosts additional fundraising efforts to boost its scholarship fund, including a November 9 benefit concert at the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville, Tenn., featuring Vince Gill and Amy Grant.

Over the past three years, ThanksUSA has awarded need-based, postsecondary scholarships to more than 1,850 military family members. The \$5 million in scholarships have benefited individuals representing all branches of the armed forces, as well as the Guard and Reserve, and all 50 states.

"There's no explanation for how good it feels to help other people," said Rachel. I think that's one of the reasons why we were put on this earth – to make our mark."

To support ThanksUSA's scholarship fund, please visit www.ThanksUSA.org to make a donation.

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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, posts-secondary

education opportunities to the children and spouses of active-duty status military personnel through competitive scholarships. For more information, visit www.ThanksUSA.org.

About the Caring Institute

The Caring Institute is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization founded in 1985 to honor and promote the values of caring, integrity and public service. Inspired by the example of Mother Teresa, we at the institute believe most problems can be solved if human beings truly care for one another. We celebrate those special individuals who transcend self and devote their lives to serving the disadvantaged, poor, disabled and dying. Their enduring dedication to caring uplifts us all and ennobles the human race.