



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **ThanksUSA Announces Nationwide Treasure Hunt to Aid Military Families**

### **Organization Designed by Kids will Fund Scholarships for Children and Spouses of Active Duty Military Personnel**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – ThanksUSA, a new non-partisan, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization today formally announces the launch of their scholarship program, which provides educational aid to family members of active duty military personnel. ThanksUSA also announces the first-ever nationwide American history treasure hunt to raise awareness and funds for the scholarship campaign. Information and applications for both the scholarships and the treasure hunt can be found at [www.ThanksUSA.org](http://www.ThanksUSA.org).

The “brain blast” of two Virginia elementary school children, Rachel and Kelsi, ages 10 and 8, ThanksUSA is dedicated to providing college, technical and vocational scholarships for the spouses and children of active duty military personnel. The scholarships are funded by federal, corporate and individual contributions. Additional donations for the scholarship fund are expected to come from the nationwide treasure hunt, in which players of all ages will navigate their way through 12 challenging puzzles, each based on a U.S. state with clues rooted in American history.

“We wanted to say thank you to our troops and wanted to show that we care about them,” said Kelsi, who along with her sister Rachel, is the primary architect behind the treasure hunt. “Maybe they [scholarship recipients] will make a difference in science or politics, or maybe in their community. They might even choose to serve our country like their mom or dad,” added Rachel, the treasure hunt’s co-founder.

“ThanksUSA will help military families make the world a better place and take part in an historic treasure hunt. It will let all Americans show their appreciation for the heroes who keep us all safe and free.”

The girls inspired their parents to think about how they could help and the family worked together over the past year, along with a broad array of neighborhood volunteers and others, to bring the idea to fruition. Individuals, organizations and corporations are encouraged to make a direct donation to the ThanksUSA scholarship fund at [www.ThanksUSA.org](http://www.ThanksUSA.org).

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## **Scholarship Application Enrollment Open – Ends May 30**

The launch of the website marks the beginning of the application period for ThanksUSA scholarships. These need-based scholarships will be awarded on a competitive basis to the children and spouses of active duty military personnel who plan to pursue a post-secondary education. Winners will be selected primarily on the basis of financial need. However, academic record, demonstrated leadership and participation in school and community activities will be factors as well. Preference will also be given to students who have studied a foreign language. In its first year, ThanksUSA intends to award at least 1,000 scholarships in amounts of up to \$5,000. Interested applicants can find more information, including eligibility requirements and the official application form at [www.ThanksUSA.org](http://www.ThanksUSA.org). Applications will be accepted through May 30, 2006.

## **Treasure Hunt Begins Memorial Day, Sign-up Today!**

On Memorial Day weekend, the adventure begins. On May 29, 2006, the exciting nationwide ThanksUSA treasure hunt gets underway with a number of fabulous family-oriented prizes up for grabs. Players will be able to download the “hunt” from the ThanksUSA website. The treasure hunt will quiz players on their knowledge of American history, culture, geography and trivia through 12 challenging puzzles, each relating to a U.S. State. A number of corporations and individuals have donated a wide array of exciting prizes that serve as bona fide “treasure” in this “hunt,” including: A vacation to Universal Studios and Disney World in Orlando, FL; a visit to the pyramids in Egypt; and a trip to the 2007 Super Bowl. In addition, players who successfully solve all 12 stages of the treasure hunt will be eligible for the grand prize – an awesome opportunity to experience American history first-hand in the nation’s capital, including a stay in the Presidential Suite at the historic Willard Intercontinental Hotel. Enrollment in the nationwide treasure hunt begins today and players can sign up at [www.ThanksUSA.org](http://www.ThanksUSA.org). Participation is open to any U.S. citizen, but children younger than 14 years old must obtain their parents’ permission. While the treasure hunt is free, Rachel and Kelsi suggest a donation of \$10.00 or more toward the scholarship fund to help the troops and their families.

“This is a treasure hunt designed by kids, for the entire family. I hope it will help kids whose moms and dads are protecting our country,” said Kelsi. “We hope that by working as a team the treasure hunt will bring kids and parents closer together, as it did our family,” observed Rachel.

## **About ThanksUSA**

ThanksUSA, a 501(c)(3) organization, is a unique national effort to thank the men and women of our armed forces and their families through a nationwide treasure hunt rooted in American history. An acronym for **T**reasure **H**unt **A**iding **N**eeds of **K**ids (and spouses) of those **S**erving the **U**nited **S**tates of **A**merica, ThanksUSA is the “brain blast” of two Virginia elementary school children, Rachel and Kelsi, ages 10 and 8. Founded in the fall of 2005, ThanksUSA is dedicated to providing educational opportunities through competitive scholarships to the children and spouses of active duty military personnel. ThanksUSA encourages kids of all ages to learn and appreciate American history and the contributions and sacrifices of America’s heroes in the armed forces.