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**ThanksUSA Opens 2016 Scholarship Application Season for Military Families**

*Hundreds of Awards Available for Children & Spouses of U.S. Troops*

McLean, Virginia (April 1, 2016) – Children and spouses of America’s Armed Forces will once again be able to apply for valuable post-secondary education scholarships from ThanksUSA, the national non-profit organization dedicated to thanking U.S. troops through the gift of education. Now in its eleventh year, ThanksUSA invites eligible individuals to apply online at [www.ThanksUSA.org](http://www.ThanksUSA.org) beginning April 1 through May 15, 2016.

“ThanksUSA has supported the educational dreams of almost 3,700 scholarship recipients from across the country over more than a decade,” said ThanksUSA CEO and Chairman Bob Okun in announcing the new application season. “Advancing the career aspirations of the children and spouses of our troops who sacrifice so much reflects the gratitude of all Americans.”

ThanksUSA founders and sisters Rachel and Kelsi Okun appeared on [CBS News](http://CBSNews.com) in December in celebration of reaching 10 years of providing need-based scholarships for the families of active duty military personnel. Over more than a decade, ThanksUSA has given military family members nearly 3,700 scholarships of \$3,000 each, for a total of more than \$11 million. In 2015, approximately 500 applications were submitted by the families of the fallen and wounded who are given special consideration, and almost 2,000 applications by other military families.

Among past scholarship recipients is Army dependent Joshua Neal who is studying to become a radiation oncologist after losing his sister Sarah to Ewing’s Sarcoma.

“Though I face years of education ahead, I know that I will be able to assist other families affected by cancer, and I am grateful to ThankUSA for that opportunity” says Neal, who is a junior at Duke University. “Ultimately, I intend to use the world-class education that I receive to make a difference in the lives of all those who are fighting this terrible disease.”

ThanksUSA scholars are able to enhance those efforts and their own career opportunities by using the charity’s new Alumni & Friends network, which includes exclusive networking events, a private discussion forum, and access to an alumni directory.

Since its inception in 2005, ThanksUSA has raised more than \$11 million for its Scholarship Program grown through numerous campaigns and events including the online **ThanksUSA Treasure Hunt** supported by the **ESA Foundation**; the **Jackson Casey Scholarship Fund**; awareness efforts of **National Spokesperson and NBA star Stephen Curry**; the charity’s **Tennis Thanks the Troops** campaign affiliated with the **United States Professional Tennis Association**; and event contributions from **American Airlines**, the **Four Seasons Hotel** and sports apparel company **AthleticDNA**.

Additional support for ThanksUSA's education fund comes from donors including Altria, Apex, the Blavatnik Family Foundation, Centene Corporation, Cobham, Goldman Sachs Gives, The Honda Foundation, Intelligent Decisions, Kaplan University, KPMG, The Kovner Foundation, Lockheed Martin, Navy Postgraduate School Foundation, No Greater Sacrifice Foundation, Paladin Capital Group, Pershing Square Foundation, Rumsfeld Foundation, USA Funds and others. We also receive in-kind support from CSC, Discovery Communications, Edelman, Engage DC, Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton LLP, LMO Advertising, National Association of Broadcasters, and others.

Children and spouses of America's Armed Forces can find applications, eligibility requirements and more information at [www.ThanksUSA.org](http://www.ThanksUSA.org).

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**About ThanksUSA:**

ThanksUSA is a non-partisan, charitable effort to mobilize Americans of all ages to "thank" the men and women of the United States Armed Forces. The organization provides college, technical and vocational school scholarships to the children and spouses of military personnel. For more information, visit [www.ThanksUSA.org](http://www.ThanksUSA.org).