Because of You...

Last month, 301 military spouses and kids received news that they would receive a ThanksUSA scholarship and were welcomed into our growing network of scholars. At $3,000 each, with an additional $319,000 of in-kind full-tuition scholarships from Purdue University Global, that amounts to $1.2 million awarded in scholarships this year!

Building on our mission to provide pathways to meaningful employment in addition to scholarships, we held the inaugural ThanksUSA Scholar Enrichment Day and Career Fair at Lockheed Martin Global Vision Center in July. The response from scholars was inspiring, and all walked away with valuable advice, new connections or leads for employment.

Because of the generosity of our donors, we continually see scholars eager to pay it forward through their chosen career fields. We invite you to share in their success and good will by joining the Pathways for Patriots movement.

Q&A: Pathways for Patriots – A Sponsor and an Intern

ThanksUSA spoke with Chris Swonger, Senior Vice President of Government Relations at Smiths Detection, a sponsor of the Pathways for Patriots program, along with ThanksUSA scholar and Smiths Group intern Henry Hill. Henry is studying Computer Science at the Minerva Schools, currently in Seoul, South Korea. His career goals are to develop Education Technology software to improve the effectiveness and accessibility of learning.

Because of the Pathways program, meaningful connections like this one are providing our scholars with invaluable work experience and beneficial lessons in career development.

Q: You were instrumental in Smiths Group’s participation in Pathways for Patriots. What was your motivation?

Swonger: I know the Okun family personally and was inspired by their passion and desire to help military families receive the education they need to succeed. Smiths Group’s values include integrity, respect, ownership, and passion.

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Q: What motivated you to apply for the internship with Smiths Group?

Hill: In school I have studied political science, comparative government, and economics to learn more about how these instrumental elements of our society work. And I wanted to take my education beyond lectures and textbooks. When I noticed that a government relations internship was available in Washington, DC, I jumped at the opportunity.

Q: What advantages do military families bring to the workplace?

Swonger: Military families bring tremendous value to the workplace. Military spouses and children gain valuable skills by supporting an active-duty military member, often moving to different states or countries, and dealing with uncertainty. Those transferrable skills include organization, dependability, flexibility, project management, and networking.

WAYS TO GIVE

Charitable Gift Planning
Charitable bequests qualify for estate tax deductions. Designate ThanksUSA as a beneficiary in your will, living trust or other financial document.

Donate Stock
Giving a gift of stock that has increased in value may provide better tax benefits than giving cash.

For more information, please contact Michele Stork at 703-855-4108 or MicheleStork@ThanksUSA.org.
ALLISON VAN BEVEREN
2018-19 Scholar

Allison “Alli” Van Beveren was awarded a $3,000 Rudy’s BBQ/ThanksUSA scholarship to begin a Chemical Engineering major as a student of the Engineering Honors Program at Texas A&M University.

An Air Force dependent, Alli looks forward to a challenging curriculum that will prepare her for a career pioneering advancements in pharmaceuticals, medical devices, and treatment procedures.

Recently, Alli and her family visited the Rudy’s “Country Store” and Bar-B-Q in New Brunfels, Texas, to personally offer their gratitude for Rudy’s support of ThanksUSA.

“I feel blessed and honored to receive a Rudy’s BBQ/ThanksUSA scholarship. Your vote of confidence and financial contribution to my academic endeavors are gifts for which I am deeply appreciative.”

Q: What are some of the advantages of being raised in a military home?

Hill: I think the challenges that military families face can also be great advantages. You can find yourself overwhelmed by the stress of PCSing, being uprooted and moved across the country or even the ocean. However, that experience can be turned into an opportunity for personal growth. When I was in high school, the Navy moved us to Germany, making a tough transition between schools and throwing another language into the mix.

As hard as it can be to relocate, that experience taught me how to adapt and to prioritize what was important to me, and it led to some of the most memorable and influential moments of my life so far.

Q: Tell us about Henry’s role in your office.

Swonger: Henry provided invaluable research into critical legislative issues that our office is working on. He also attended Congressional hearings that were important to our office and reported back to our Vice Presidents of Government Relations. In addition, he helped write some of our communications and helped to present a webinar on tariffs to employees at our company. He is a very good writer and picks things up quickly.

Q: Share with us a funny or interesting experience you had during the internship.

Hill: In my final week, there was one blistering day where the outdoor temperature broke 100 degrees. I had to go with another intern up the Hill to the Cannon House Office Building, about a five-block walk. After making it two blocks in our three-piece suits, we decided to go the underground route. Ten minutes later, we were lost in the subterranean labyrinth. We made it back above ground only to discover we were farther away than when we started, and at this point drenched in sweat. Upon arriving back, we were asked why we didn’t just take a taxi. Never in my life had taking a taxi five blocks seemed like the sane choice.

Q: Tell us how the ThanksUSA scholarship and the Pathways for Patriots internship has impacted you.

Hill: “Financial aid” doesn’t sum up the service that ThanksUSA provides. ThanksUSA has helped to give me the freedom to learn inside and outside the classroom.

ThanksUSA has helped me go to my dream school, has kept me there, and has opened up opportunities for learning between the spring and fall semesters. Thank you to the generous sponsors!
Tennis Thanks the Troops

ThanksUSA is proud to provide Veterans tennis opportunities as another way to show gratitude to our nation’s military. The original ThanksUSA Veterans Adaptive Tennis Clinic meets every Friday at the East Potomac Tennis Center in Washington, DC. The second Veterans clinic is part of a new program called Tennis Corps, a partnership between ThanksUSA and JTCC in College Park, Maryland that teams up Veterans and youth. We held a kick-off event in September and now host this clinic every Wednesday. Tennis Corps is a premier tennis mentoring program for Veterans and youth that promotes social inclusion, tolerance, and passion for the sport. At both clinics, Veterans benefit through the rehabilitative effects of weekly tennis and social interaction.

The clinics are led by our friend Brenda Gilmore, a USPTA Wheelchair Certified and PTR Adaptive Tennis Certified Instructor. Brenda inspires others from her wheelchair, and her expertise makes the clinic succeed as a safe and therapeutic environment that blends learning and fun. We are happy to announce that ThanksUSA, along with five other partnering Veteran tennis programs, has been awarded a VA Adaptive Sports Grant to fund our weekly clinics and expand tennis programs for Veterans and service members across the country.

National Spokesperson Stephen Curry

ThanksUSA National Spokesperson Stephen Curry and the Golden State Warriors are back on the court for the 2018-19 season after winning back to back NBA titles. We wish Stephen the best of luck and continued success!

“With these scholarships, the spouses and children of our troops are getting education that would otherwise be out of reach. So, please, give to ThanksUSA. Your support can help them win and win big.” –Stephen Curry, ThanksUSA National Spokesperson

Special Thanks to These Generous In-Kind Supporters

PETER WITT
2018-19 Scholar

Air Force dependent Peter Witt received consecutive Monster Energy Drink/ThanksUSA scholarships totaling $6,000 for Architecture and Sustainability majors at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio.

Peter recently completed an internship with Passive House Institute U.S. (PHIUS), a non-profit organization that implements the standards for, and certification of, energy efficient Passive Houses. “As an Architecture student in the early 21st century, a time of pivotal consequence in regards to the environment and the inclusion of all people, I am very concerned with the future of building standards.”

The Oxford community is already benefiting from Peter’s knowledge. He and fellow students are designing structures for a service-animal organization, developing community gardens, and building a shade structure at a local dog park.

“It is an honor to be selected as a Monster Energy Drink/ThanksUSA scholar and a privilege to be supported in my endeavors.”
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"These resources helped me go from a frustrated dreamer to a degree earner." ~Army Spouse LaQueshia Jeffries, MS.Ed

To watch LaQueshia’s speech and other Gala footage, visit www.ThanksUSA.org/Gala.

Scholarship Program Highlights

4,511 scholarships awarded for a total value of $14,599,507

Our scholarship recipients come from each of the 50 states and DC and represent all military branches.