



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Military Families Help Fill Skills Gap through ThanksUSA's Pathways for Patriots
\$100 Million Initiative Provides Need-Based Scholarships, Mentoring and Internship Programs for the Children and Spouses of our Armed Forces

McLean, Virginia (March 6, 2017) – National non-profit ThanksUSA will introduce its **Pathways for Patriots** scholarship and career pipeline program for military families on Capitol Hill on Tuesday, March 7, 2017. The \$100 million initiative provides need-based scholarships, mentoring and internship programs for the children and spouses of our Armed Forces. It simultaneously helps diverse industries address the nation's skills gap and fill workforce shortfalls – with more than 5.5 million unfilled jobs nationwide.

“One of the biggest challenges facing our military families is college affordability,” says ThanksUSA President and retired Marine Lieutenant Colonel Kevin Schmiegel, who devised the Pathways program. “Almost two million military family members don't wear the uniform but “serve” too, including more than 700,000 spouses and 100,000 children between the ages of 17 and 22. Pathways for Patriots offers them financial and career support for a bright future and an extraordinary talent pipeline for corporate America.”

ThanksUSA will make the announcement at a special event honoring military families, hosted by the Honorable Michael McCaul in conjunction with High Tech and Military Family Caucuses and ThanksUSA. The event will be held at the Rayburn House Office Building Foyer on Tuesday, March 7, 2017, from 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm and will be attended by ThanksUSA scholars and their families, Members of Congress, and corporate supporters.

Among the attending corporate supporters will be major sponsor Lockheed Martin, a global aerospace, defense and advanced technologies company. Lockheed and ThanksUSA scholars in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) are leading the charge toward reducing the skills gap in tech-related fields. The **Pathway to STEM** talent pool boasts Lockheed's flight-testing engineer Charlotte Orren, ThanksUSA scholarship recipient (2012-2014) and Navy dependent.

“Ms. Orren is a ThanksUSA success story, a young woman who represents the enormously talented and dedicated individuals in our military, both on the battlefield and at home,” said Lockheed Martin's Vice President of Government Affairs, Larry Duncan. “We are pleased to help expand America's economy and our industry's future with talented graduates like her and other students currently heading down the STEM pathway.”

“The opportunity to reach for my dreams was an incredible gift. I was given a wonderful opportunity to receive a top-notch education with the help of people who believed in me, including my parents and ThanksUSA,” says Charlotte Orren. “Today, at Lockheed Martin, I continue to receive opportunities to develop my professional knowledge and experiences.”

Ms. Orren is one of several ThanksUSA scholarship recipients attending the event. They include: mechanical engineering student (Virginia Tech) and Navy dependent Natalie Ebreo; electrical-computer engineering major (State University of New York Polytechnic Institute) and Air Force dependent David Jeselson; US State Department employee and Army dependent Cedric Pulliam; Air Force dependent and ThanksUSA biology scholar (Carroll College, Montana) currently pursuing a medical degree Ashtin Jeney; Army spouse Andrea Barreiro, studying psychology in applied behavioral analysis on a full-tuition Kaplan / ThanksUSA Scholarship; and Kristine Goffos, ThanksUSA Iowa State University scholar (2010-2012) and a Coast Guard dependent, currently a digital strategy associate.

The founding sponsors and supporters of the Pathways program include Lockheed Martin, CVS Health, Kaplan University, Rumsfeld Foundation, Smiths Group, Cobham, The Wireless Association, and Twin Logic Strategies.

“Our military families are an extraordinary talent pool for all professions and industries, and it is clear programs like **Pathways for Patriots** are vital in helping them achieve their educational and career aspirations, financial stability and a brighter future.” says Mr. Schmiegel. “Post-secondary education is too often out of reach for a majority of military families who depend on one income. But thanks to our corporate sponsors’ willingness to engage with our scholars in a meaningful way, the Pathways initiative will advance the career trajectory of thousands of military children and spouses who deserve our gratitude through the gift of education.”

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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.

About Pathways for Patriots

The Pathways for Patriots Program engages corporations from specific industries (i.e., Tech/STEM, Public Service, Healthcare, Hospitality, Financial Services, Manufacturing, and Energy) to create pipelines of military spouses and children interested in pursuing post-secondary degrees, certifications, and ultimately careers in occupations that companies are struggling to fill. The initiative will help our scholars establish careers in hard-to-fill occupations through mentoring, internships, and employee engagement.

About Lockheed Martin

Headquartered in Bethesda, Maryland, Lockheed Martin is a global security and aerospace company that employs approximately 97,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products and services.