MILITARY FAMILY Gala

October 26, 2019

Providing the gift of education and pathways to employment for military spouses and kids
EVENING PROGRAM

PRESENTATION OF THE COLORS
Joint Armed Forces Color Guard, Military District Washington

NATIONAL ANTHEM
Janine Stange

INVOCATION
Brig. Gen. Kenneth Brandt, Chief Chaplain, Army National Guard

WELCOME REMARKS
Brianna Keilar, Anchor of CNN Right Now and Author of Home Front

VIDEO PRESENTATION
ThanksUSA REMARKS
Jon Rosa, ThanksUSA President & CEO

PRESENTATION OF MILITARY FAMILY ADVOCACY AWARD
The Honorable Ben Cardin, United States Senator of Maryland

SPECIAL REMARKS
Rachel Okun, ThanksUSA Co-Founder

SCHOLAR REMARKS
Courtney Bonine

FUND OUR MISSION

DINNER

PRESENTATION OF SCHOLARS

KEYNOTE REMARKS
Gen. David L. Goldfein, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force

INSPIRATIONAL REMARKS
Lt. Col. Justin Constantine, USMC (Ret)

LIVE AUCTION
Ron Kirby, Auctioneer

ENTERTAINMENT
LeAnn Rimes, Two-time Grammy Award-winning Artist

DINNER MENU

STARTER
Baby Arugula & Frisee Salad
Daikon Radish | Roasted Beets | Julienne Pickled Beets
Pistachio Whipped Goat Cheese | Curried Carrot Puree
Basil Lime Vinaigrette
(gluten free)

ENTRÉE
Filet of Beef + Seabass
Garlic Whipped Potatoes | Broccolini | Marmalade Glaze
(gluten free - nut free)

DESSERT
Mascarpone & Citrus Cheesecake + Chocolate Dome
Riesling Poached Pears | Strawberry Sauce | Mixed Fruit

WINE OFFERINGS
Brancott Sauvignon Blanc Marlborough | J.W. Morris Chardonnay
Sycamore Lane Cabernet Sauvignon | J.W. Morris Merlot
ThanksUSA is a 501(c)(3) organization that honors the men and women of the United States Armed Forces by providing need-based scholarships and pathways to employment for their spouses and children. Since 2006, ThanksUSA has awarded 4,700 scholarships valued at more than $15 million to military families in all 50 states and every branch of the military.

Families are the backbone of military strength and a true representation of sacrifice. Tonight, with your help, we will show our appreciation for the families of our troops and celebrate their allegiance, spirit of service, and heroism at home.

### ThanksUSA by the Numbers

- **4,700** scholarships awarded
- **$15M** awarded in scholarships
- **2,000** applications received annually

“I want to show my children that success can be achieved no matter your age or background. As long as I get to roll dough, whip cream, and make people smile, I will have succeeded. Thank you for helping me achieve that success.”

Sheeka, spouse and caregiver to retired Army Specialist
On behalf of the Board of Directors, Advisory Council, and the staff of ThanksUSA, we’d like to thank you for joining us for the 2019 Military Family Gala!

ThanksUSA has been thanking members of our troops for nearly 15 years by providing scholarships for their spouses and college-age children. In doing so, we aim to strengthen military families — by increasing the earning potential for a military spouse who may be un/underemployed or helping a military child attend the school of their dreams to follow a chosen career path.

Our scholars continue to inspire us through their accomplishments in and out of the classroom. We can all be proud to be a part of their success.

In this spirit of celebration, we would like to acknowledge each of you, our generous supporters. We recognize just how invaluable your contributions have been, and will continue to be, as we fulfill our mission of supporting our military families’ education and career goals.

We thank you for your continued support and partnership and wish you a wonderful evening.

Sincerely,
The Gala Co-Chairs

Andrew Don
Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation

The Honorable B. Robert Okun
Chairman of ThanksUSA
Founder and CEO of The O Team

FROM THE GALA CO-CHAIRS

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Brianna Keilar
Anchor of CNN Right Now and Author of Home Front

Brianna Keilar is the anchor of CNN Right Now which airs weekdays at 1:00 p.m. She is also the author of Home Front, a column that focuses on military families in hopes of bridging the military-civilian divide. Previously, Brianna was CNN’s senior Washington correspondent, responsible for covering important stories on politics, policy and breaking news in Washington. She also serves as the network’s primary fill-in anchor for The Situation Room with Wolf Blitzer. Brianna has also served as senior White House correspondent for CNN, reporting on the Obama administration from the nation’s capital and from around the world. In this post she covered several key stories for the network from the government shutdown to Obamacare, for which she earned a 2014 Aldo Beckman Memorial Award from the White House Correspondents’ Association. In addition, during America’s Choice 2012 coverage, Brianna reported on President Obama’s campaign, the Democratic National Convention, and contributed to the network’s Emmy Award-winning election night coverage. Prior to covering the White House, Brianna served as a congressional correspondent, responsible for covering the activities of both the U.S. House and Senate.

The Honorable Ben Cardin
United States Senator of Maryland

Ben Cardin has been a national leader on health care, retirement security, the environment and fiscal issues while representing the people of Maryland in the U.S. Senate, and before that in the House of Representatives. Senator Cardin serves on the Foreign Relations Committee, Environment and Public Works Committee, Finance Committee, and is the lead Democrat on the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee where he has sought to bolster programs in support of veteran-owned and minority-owned small businesses. Senator Cardin has worked across party lines to further U.S. national security and to ensure that good governance, transparency and respect for human rights are integrated into U.S. foreign policy efforts. Integral to that effort is a commitment to ensuring that our service men and women, and their families, are supported on the battlefield as well as when they return to civilian life.

Visit ThanksUSA.GiveSmart.com for donation options, including a live auction and raffle with a chance to win a new Cadillac XT4! Or text ‘Give 250’ to 52182 to make a $250 donation.
Lt. Col. Justin Constantine, USMC (Ret)
Motivational Speaker and Marine Combat Veteran

Lt. Col. Constantine joined the Marine Corps while in law school and served as a JAG officer for six years. Then as a Reservist, Justin deployed to Iraq in 2006 as a Civil Affairs Team Leader while attached to an infantry battalion. During a combat patrol, Justin was shot in the head by a sniper. In fact, when Corpsman Grant first rolled Justin over, he was no longer breathing. For his service in Iraq, Justin earned the Purple Heart, Combat Action Ribbon and Navy-Marine Corps Commendation Medal. His wife, Dahlia, has been the cornerstone of his recovery. In 2015, Justin graduated on the Dean's List from Georgetown University with a Master of Laws degree focusing on National Security. Justin is a Presidential Leadership Scholar, was named a Champion of Change for Veterans by President Obama, and was one of the wounded warriors painted by President Bush in his book Portraits of Courage.

General David L. Goldfein, USAF
Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force

As Chief, General Goldfein serves as the senior uniformed Air Force officer responsible for the organization, training and equipping of 685,000 active-duty, Guard, Reserve and civilian forces serving in the United States and overseas. As a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the general and other service chiefs function as military advisers to the Secretary of Defense, National Security Council and the President.

Jon Rosa
President & CEO, ThanksUSA

Jon Rosa joined ThanksUSA in 2018 as the organization’s president and CEO. Jon’s professional experience includes more than 18 years in the non-profit industry in health and human services, as well as five years in the U.S. Navy. Jon is a graduate of The Pennsylvania State University with a Master’s degree in business administration. He is married to Kennia Alvarez-Rosa, a Sergeant Major in the U.S. Army, and has one daughter, Isobel.
LeAnn Rimes
Two-time Grammy Award-winning Artist

LeAnn Rimes is an internationally multi-platinum selling acclaimed singer and ASCAP award-winning songwriter. The two-time Grammy award winner recently unveiled her first-ever LIVE recording as an exclusive vinyl release titled “Rimes: Live at Gruene Hall” where LeAnn celebrated music of all genres. But it was in 2017 that the world-renowned singer released her 16th studio RCA UK/Thirty Tigers album, Remnants.

To close out 2018, LeAnn lit up the television screens as she starred and served as an Executive Producer in a new original Hallmark Christmas movie, “It’s Christmas, Eve,” and released a soundtrack that featured original holiday songs the songstress created specifically for the movie.

At the age of 35, she has sold more than 44 million units globally. At 14, LeAnn won “Best New Artist” making her the youngest recipient to take home a Grammy® Award.

Janine Stange
National Anthem Singer

Janine Stange is a motivational speaker, singer, and on-air personality. She is best known for her historic journey to sing the Star-Spangled Banner in all 50 states — a mission she embarked on to honor our brave. Her story is the subject of a new documentary, “National Anthem Girl!” now streaming on Amazon Prime. Janine has been featured on every major television network, and national news shows including The TODAY Show, Fox & Friends and NBC Nightly News. As a motivational speaker, she takes the audience along on her journey. She identifies the pitfalls that keep goals hidden in plain sight and shares four life lessons that helped her avoid them. Janine can be heard every Thursday morning on Sirius XM’s 60’s on 6 with Phlash Phelps.

Rachel Okun
ThanksUSA Co-Founder

Rachel Okun is the co-founder of ThanksUSA. She graduated in American Studies from Yale University in May, winning the Norman Holmes Pearson Prize for her thesis, “Middle School Sucks: The History of an American Cliché.” She now works in the New York Catskills at the Center for Discovery, which offers services to 1,200 people with complex disabilities and medical frailties. She designs programming to fortify the round-the-clock staff, which means that, 15 years later, she has not strayed far from ThanksUSA’s own mission of taking care of caretakers.
Courtney Bonine
ThanksUSA Scholarship Recipient

Courtney Bonine received multiple Jackson Casey Fund/ThanksUSA scholarships while studying Equine Science and Equine Management at Northeastern Junior College in Colorado. She graduated in May with two Associate degrees and is now a certified Equine Pulse Therapist. Her dream is to establish a guest ranch ministry to impact others through rodeo bible camps, ropings, horse shows, and family events. She is now focused on gaining experience and funds needed to run her own equine facility, and she will also be getting married next month.

The daughter of dual-military parents, Courtney has found motivation through commitment to her family and belief that everything happens for a reason. After being hit by an RPG, her father was medically discharged, awarded the Purple Heart, and eventually proclaimed 100 percent disabled. Courtney credits these scholarships with helping her to attend college, thus allowing her a full shot at fulfilling her dream.

Courtney is joined by her parents CW3 Theresa Bonine, U.S. Army, and SGT Gregory Bonine, U.S. Army (Ret).

Andrea Barreiro | Spouse to Army Master Sergeant
• Psychology in Applied Behavioral Analysis major at Purdue University Global, graduating spring 2020
• Administrative Assistant at Hiwassee Dam Elementary/Middle School

Jennifer Benecke | Spouse to retired Navy Chief Petty Officer
• Bachelor of Psychology, University of Maryland University College, and Graduate studies at Walden University
• Employed in Elementary Education field

Ava Brittain | Daughter of retired Army Major
• Physical Therapy major at Columbia State Community College
• 2019 Helping Hand Education Fund/ThanksUSA scholarship recipient

Geri Lynn Maples | Spouse and caregiver to retired Army Corporal
• Pursuing a Ph.D. in Educational Studies, focusing on the needs of military spouses, caregivers and dependent children
• Founded Operation Mission Insight, which develops support programs for organizations to meet the needs of military clientele

Natalie Paukstys | Air Force Daughter and Spouse
• BS in Elementary Education, Brigham Young University
• Cake designer at The Cake Flower in Loudoun County, VA

Cedric Pulliam, Ph.D. | Son of Army Command Sergeant Major
• Recently completed doctoral studies in Health and Medical Psychology from Northcentral University
• Senior Public Health Advisor and Project Officer for the National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, GA

SSG Seldon Warner, USA (Ret) | Spouse to retired Army Specialist
• Electrical Engineering major at University of Maryland University College
• Medically retired after serving in the 173rd Airborne Brigade and The Old Guard
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“I would not have been able to pursue my job of teaching English, which I absolutely love, had I not received financial support. Thank you!”

Regan, daughter of retired Air Force Colonel
“ThanksUSA is truly an organization that cares; and I could not feel more blessed to be a part of it and to have such amazing support, not just financially.”

Courtney, daughter of dual-military parents

Enter the ThanksUSA Raffle for a chance to win a Cadillac XT4!

Purchase tickets at ThanksUSA’s Gala support page
ThanksUSA.GiveSmart.com or text FREERIDE to 91999.