2018: Our Best Year Yet!

With the pilot year of our Pathways for Patriots program under our belt, we are looking forward to its growth and development in the coming months. To kick off the new year, we will hold a breakfast briefing in partnership with iHeartMedia in January. At this event we will be introducing ThanksUSA and our Pathways for Patriots program to companies interested in sponsoring our scholars through mentorship, networking, internships, and potential career opportunities.

By engaging strategically with corporations in specific industries, our mission has expanded to creating pathways to meaningful employment for our military spouse and kid scholars. Learn more at www.ThanksUSA.org/Pathways-for-Patriots.

Q&A: Military Spouse Champion Bonnie Amos

ThanksUSA Board Member Bonnie Amos was born and raised in Pensacola, Florida, where she met her Marine Corps fighter pilot husband, General James F. Amos, USMC (Ret.). During his 45-year career, their family, including a son and daughter, relocated 30 times to 20 different locations. During this time, she held a career in banking and real estate investment. She served as the First Lady of the Marine Corps from 2010 until her husband retired in 2014. She is a strong supporter of military family advocacy, serves as an advisor to Hiring our Heroes and Charlotte BridgeHome, and also serves on the board of the Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund/America’s Fund.

Q: How did you prepare your children and household for your 30 relocations?

Moving often means upheaval and uncertainty for everyone in the household, most especially the children and the family pets. Jim and I tried to make moving cross country or overseas an adventure, planting seeds of the unknown and its excitement.

Q: What do you believe are the greatest challenges faced by our military families?

Military families live with the reality that on any given normal day their lives could suddenly be very abnormal. An unscheduled deployment, a training accident, a natural disaster in some part of the world that requires our military’s assistance, can turn lives upside down in the blink of an eye. For some, being a long way from home is a difficult transition that can cause a lot of turmoil in families. Money, or lack of it, can cause so many stressors that put pressures on families that lead to unplanned consequences. The varied challenges can “grow one up” or just as easily break one down.

Q: Tell us how you became involved in military family advocacy.

My husband was a lieutenant colonel at the time. He had taken command of an F18 squadron that received the mission for a six-month cruise on an aircraft carrier. Prior to that, my involvement was limited in command activities. However, during this command I invited spouses over for taco salad and margaritas, and we discussed issues and solutions, broke into call groups, and tackled the need for information flow and assistance.

It was during this time, that I stopped thinking about how could I make this easier on me and started thinking about how could I make this easier on our families.

Stay tuned for our full 2018 events calendar to include several golf and tennis fundraisers as well as our annual Treasure Our Troops Gala.

The Kovner Foundation Challenge Grant will continue through June 30, 2018, with donations being MATCHED up to $400,000. We can’t thank our supporters enough for all they do to support our military family scholarship program. 2018 is shaping up to be our best year yet!

Do you have appreciated stock you want to donate? Please email MicheleStork@ThanksUSA.org or visit www.ThanksUSA.org/donation-options.
In other words, I fell in love with our spouses, which was something I'd never felt before. That love and the need to provide information to families is what propelled me for the remainder of Jim’s career in the Marine Corps.

Q: During your time as the First Lady of the Marine Corps, what common strengths and attributes did you find in military families?

While I must have known it intuitively, it became clear when meeting so many spouses from all ranks and all services that WE ARE AN AWESOME GROUP OF PEOPLE. Talk about making lemonade out of lemons, entrepreneurial, creative, educated, determined NOT to fail, not taking NO for an answer, a sense of adventure, a drive to succeed, fire in the belly for LIFE, for love of their family, and for their country...

I so admire military families and especially military spouses. They are the unsung heroes of the successes of our active-duty members!

Q: In your opinion, what measures should be taken to close the education and employment gaps faced by military spouses?

I think it will take congressional mandates and perhaps a change in laws. Just as companies receive tax benefits for hiring Veterans, companies will pay much greater attention to the military spouse population when that employer can benefit directly to their bottom line. There’s no one more loyal, more committed and more grateful when given an opportunity to succeed than our military families.

Q: Tell us about your advisory role in Hiring Our Heroes.

Hiring Our Heroes has afforded me the opportunity to advocate in a more public and sustaining way for military spouses. In this role, I am able to educate employers about their many positive attributes and contributions to our country, and to discuss the lack of sustainable, portable, and viable employment for so many spouses. I am able to speak with military spouses from all over, offer them hope, and be their voice of opportunity.

Q: As a Board member for ThanksUSA, what would you like to help accomplish?

Being a ThanksUSA Board Member is truly an honor for me. At the risk of sounding lofty, I’d like to bring more awareness to the services that ThanksUSA is offering to military families. In raising awareness for more scholarship offerings comes the need to increase the donor base.

The Pathways for Patriots program is visionary in its focus and offers educational and employment opportunities in high demand, huge industry growth areas. All of which lead to success for our military spouses and children.
CAEHLEN ROBERTS
Current Scholar

Army dependent Caehlen Roberts was awarded a $3,000 Heartland 4 Heroes/ThanksUSA scholarship to begin undergraduate studies at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas.

Majoring in English, Caehlen is already a published poet who completed 26 college credits during high school. She now hopes to earn teaching certification and become a high school English teacher.

Caehlen’s father was one of the first casualties of Fort Campbell’s 101st Airborne Division’s Fourth Brigade Combat Team in Afghanistan. Caehlen is the second member of her family to receive this scholarship. In 2013, Caehlen’s mother Donnice was awarded a Heartland 4 Heroes/ThanksUSA scholarship for her own undergraduate studies at Stephen F. Austin State University.

“Thank you everyone for donating to the Heartland 4 Heroes/ThanksUSA scholarship. I am able to have a chance for my dream career because of this scholarship. It means the world to me!” said Caehlen.

“Being a student and a military wife can be stressful. The extra help from those who believe in my success only adds to the enthusiasm that I have for my future.”

Army Spouse Lydia Lawrence

Tennis Thanks the Troops

2017 was a heartwarming year for ThanksUSA’s Tennis Thanks the Troops (TTTT) campaign. Tennis events were held across the country with proceeds supporting the ThanksUSA scholarship program. Two tennis clubs paid tribute to our Veterans with inaugural TTTT events in November, each raising ample funds to provide one scholarship for a military family member.

USPTA Professional Joe Noth and Lifetime Activities at Walnut Creek Tennis Center in California hosted a family-friendly fundraising event. Activities included a round-robin doubles tourney, silent auction, and USTA fast-serve booth. On the east coast, the city of Haines City, Florida, partnered with ThanksUSA to host a benefit tournament at the Lake Eva tennis courts. Led by USPTA Elite Professional Jeff McCordle and presented by title sponsor Henry Ruffin with Walking State Insurance, the tournament was fun for all ages and skill levels.

USPTA Pros Noth and McCordle are each looking forward to making their event an annual affair and are already planning for 2018. ThanksUSA and TTTT are incredibly grateful to the entire tennis community for supporting military families both on and off the tennis courts!

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National Spokesperson Stephen Curry

ThanksUSA National Spokesperson and Golden State Warriors guard Stephen Curry received his first “Player of the Week” honor of the season recently as the Week 12 Western Conference Player of the Week by the NBA. Curry shot a season-high 45 points on January 6, also recording new career-highs in free-throws made (15) and attempted (16).

$400,000 Challenge Grant Update

Don’t forget to make your donation to ThanksUSA by June 30 to double your impact on the lives of military families with a match by The Kovner Foundation.
ThanksUSA Scholarship Program
Applications Open: April 1, 2018
Applications Close: May 15, 2018
www.ThanksUSA.org
Since 2006, ThanksUSA has awarded $13 million in scholarships.