



NEWS RELEASE

Defense Commissary Agency

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Scholarships for Military Children application deadline is Feb. 18

*By Carrie Williams
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FORT LEE, Va. – Sharpen your pencils, fire up your computers and eat as much “brain food” as you can! You’ve been preparing your whole life for college, so don’t miss the opportunity to apply for a \$1,500 scholarship through the Scholarships for Military Children Program. Don’t delay because applications must be turned in to a commissary by close of business Feb. 18.

Applications are available in commissaries worldwide. You may also fill out an application online at the Military Scholar Web site, <http://www.militaryscholar.org>, but the Web site does not have a “submit” button, so you must print a copy and drop it off at a commissary. You may also fill the application out by hand. At least one scholarship will be awarded at every commissary location with qualified applicants.

Since the scholarship program kicked off in 2001, it has distributed more than \$6.4 million dollars in scholarships to more than 4,000 of the best and brightest children of military families.

“Education today is very expensive,” said Andrew Knaub, a 2003 scholarship recipient from Scott Air Force Base, Ill., “so every dime you get in scholarship money is that much less you’ll have to pay back in college loans after you graduate.” Knaub put his \$1,500 toward tuition at Penn State, earning a bachelor’s degree in finance while specializing in international business.

Knaub said education has completely changed the course of his life. “Without it I wouldn’t have been able to travel abroad to other universities, and I would not have been able to get the job I have today as a compliance analyst with a securities firm.

“Since I paid for most of my education with loans and money from summer jobs, this scholarship means a few less months of my salary today that will go toward repaying those loans.”

While the \$1,500 scholarship can only be applied to undergraduate studies, the money it saves students and their families can then be applied to postgraduate work. Starla Armstrong, a 2003 scholarship recipient from Fort Gordon, Ga., did just that and went on to earn a master’s degree in clinical psychology from Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, Ga. “Education plays a *huge* role in my life. I’m committed to a career that requires two advanced degrees; I will have spent 11 years in college before entering the workforce!” Armstrong is working on a doctorate in counseling psychology at Auburn University, Auburn, Ala., and plans to pursue a career in counseling psychology with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

And then, of course, there’s the psychological payoff of earning a scholarship. “If anything, the scholarship provided a sense of support in knowing that DeCA and Fisher House believed in my potential,” explained Joshua Lanzet, a 2003 scholarship recipient from Cairo, Egypt. Lanzet put his scholarship to good use, graduating magna cum laude from George Washington University, Washington, D.C., with a bachelor’s degree in international affairs. He is working for the Coca-Cola Company’s North and West Africa Business Unit in public affairs and communications.

What could you accomplish with the help of a \$1,500 scholarship? You’ll never know if you don’t apply.

Only dependent, unmarried children (under the age 23) of active-duty, Reserve/Guard and retired military members, survivors of service members who died while on active duty or survivors of individuals who died while receiving retired pay from the military may apply for a scholarship. Eligibility is determined using the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System database. Applicants should ensure that they, as well as their sponsor, are enrolled in the DEERS database and have a current ID card. The applicant must be attending or planning to attend an accredited college or university full time in the fall of 2009, or be enrolled in a program of studies designed to transfer directly into a four-year program.

Be sure to check your materials carefully for simple things, like making sure the application is signed and that you are using the 2009 application, not one from previous years.

For details about the program, check out the “Frequently Asked Questions” page on the Military Scholar Web site.

Scholarships for Military Children is funded through donations by the general public and by product manufacturers and brokers that sell groceries in commissaries. Fisher House Foundation, a nonprofit organization best known for building comfort homes near military medical facilities, administers the Scholarships for Military Children Program. Fisher House Foundation uses the services of Scholarship Managers, a professional firm that has handled more than 400 programs, to screen applicants and award scholarships. Neither Fisher House nor DeCA is involved in the decision process.

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About DeCA: *The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. Shoppers save an average of more than 30 percent on their purchases compared to commercial prices – savings worth about \$3,400 annually for a family of four. A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America’s military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.*