



NEWS RELEASE

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Scholarship program rewards more than 600 military children

By Tammy Moody

DeCA Marketing and mass communications specialist

FORT LEE, Va. – The 2009 Scholarships for Military Children Program has awarded 625 scholarships worth \$1,500 each to children across the United States and overseas.

“We know education is the key to a better future,” said Defense Commissary Agency Director and CEO Philip E. Sakowitz Jr. “And, over the past nine years, the Scholarships for Military Children Program has provided an important financial benefit of more than \$7.3 million to nearly 4,800 well-deserving students to make their journey toward higher education a little more affordable.”

The scholarships program is administered by Fisher House Foundation, a nonprofit organization that provides assistance to service members and their families. Funding for the scholarships comes from commissary vendors, manufacturers, brokers, suppliers and the general public. Every dollar donated to the program goes directly to funding the scholarships.

“For the 2009 scholarship program, more than 6,100 military sons and daughters applied for scholarships,” said Jim Weiskopf, Fisher House executive vice president of communications. “The average grade-point average was 3.8 on a 4.0 scale. We are truly getting the best and the brightest of our military’s children,” he added.

Fisher House Foundation administers the program through Scholarship Managers, a company that has used the same basic guidelines for nine years in selecting the scholarship

winners.

“The applicants’ grade-point averages are really high, so we also look at the number of school and community activities, extracurricular and volunteer activities, and part- or full-time work experience,” said Scholarship Managers President Bernard Coté. “Of course, the applicants submit an essay that is a very important element as well.”

Scholarship recipients Julie Robertson and Diana Campbell, who applied through the Fort Lee Commissary, Va., were introduced to commissary employees and industry members during the DeCA 2009 Conference and Training Event May 19 in Richmond, Va.

Weiskopf said Robertson maintained a 3.99 grade-point average at Thomas Dale High School in Chester, Va., where she ranked 7th in a senior class of 552 students and wore a total of 14 varsity letters.

When she’s not attending classes, Campbell, who will graduate from Virginia Tech in 2010, is a substitute teacher in Colonial Heights, Va., and works with the Colonial Heights school wrestling teams. She also serves as president of the U.S. Army Quartermaster Foundation’s Collegiate Advisory Board.

Sakowitz said students like Robertson and Campbell are typical scholarship recipients and noted that the program is representative of DeCA’s commitment to improving quality of life for America’s military by making paychecks go further in today’s uncertain economy.

“This program is a wonderful opportunity to give back to the military communities we serve,” Sakowitz continued, “and we at the Defense Commissary Agency are proud to be connected with such a worthy endeavor.”

The 2010 scholarship season begins Nov. 1. For more information about the program, log on to <http://www.militaryscholar.org>. To see a list of this year’s recipients, click on “view 2009 winners.”

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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.