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## DOD Secretary Gates Honors 'Our Military Kids'

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WASHINGTON, April 7, 2008 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Secretary of Defense Robert Gates joined other dignitaries in honoring "Our Military Kids" at a Capitol Hill reception Monday, April 7.

The event recognized the nonprofit foundation for giving more than \$1 million to the families of deployed or wounded National Guard and Reserve members.

"Military children may experience a deep sense of loss when they have a parent serving far from home," Gates said. "Organizations like this one make our military kids feel special and loved," he said.

The reception was sponsored by Van Scoyoc Associates, Washington's largest independent government affairs firm and a long-time supporter of "Our Military Kids."

"One reason our military is so good," said "Stu" Van Scoyoc, president of Van Scoyoc Associates, "is the families who stand behind it, the wives and husbands who put up with long absences, the brave children who get far too used to saying 'goodbye.'"

The money, provided in small grants, helps military children play sports, study fine arts, or enroll in tutoring programs while their parent is often earning less than in civilian life. April has been designated by the Pentagon as the month of the military child.

Among those recognized for their contributions to "Our Military Kids" were U.S. Reps. Thomas M. Davis of Virginia, Solomon Ortiz of Texas, and Frank Wolf of Virginia; Virginia Gov. Mark Warner and State Delegate Brian Moran; the Boeing Company and General Dynamics, and William and Leonilla Perry and Robert and Olga Ryan.

A pair of \$167 grants to two St. Louis, Mo., brothers put "Our Military Kids" over the \$1 million mark. The money lets Jacob and William Bacon, 9 and 10, play in a local baseball league. Their father, Maj. John Bacon, is on his second deployment to Iraq. The boys' Army Reserve JAG Corps grandmother and retired Army Chaplain grandfather also have served in Iraq.

The boys were flown to Washington with their mother, Christine, for several days of celebration. They are staying at the Willard Hotel courtesy of the hotel, will enjoy box seats at a Capitals game courtesy of Van Scoyoc Associates, visit the International Spy Museum and meet with home-state Sens. Claire McCaskill and Christopher Bond.

"We wanted to recognize the sacrifices everyone in the family makes when a parent is deployed, and wanted to acknowledge the children for their role in serving our country," said Ms. Linda Davidson, co-founder of "Our Military Kids."

"We have been able to reach out to nearly 3,000 children in all 50 states, with grants that provide much-needed stability, structure and support for the children," added Ms. Gail Kruzell, co-founder of "Our Military Kids."

For more information about "Our Military Kids," go to <http://www.ourmilitarykids.org>.

SOURCE Van Scoyoc Associates

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