

OUR MILITARY KIDS

THE BRIEFING

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FALL 2009

MILESTONES

11,500 grants totaling \$4.3 million have been awarded as of August 31, 2009

A Message From the Co-Founders

Speaking with the spouses of deployed service members and hearing their stories continues to be an enlightening experience for all of us at Our Military Kids. Working with Guard and Reserve families over the past five years has revealed two basic facts. 1) Mothers and fathers want to create happy and nurturing environments for their children, particularly when times are difficult during a deployment or when a parent is recovering from a severe injury away from home. 2) Exposing children to new activities and ideas gives them a better sense of who they are and what their role is within their family and community.

Through the generous support of its contributors, Our Military Kids has now provided over 11,000 grants to children living across the country. By providing these kids with meaningful opportunities they might not have had otherwise, our donors become an integral part of their support system, helping military families feel more connected to and appreciated by the larger national community. We wish that all our contributors could be in the office when we receive telephone calls from service members in Iraq or Afghanistan thanking us for making life better for their families back home. We

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A Great Evening for Baseball and OMK!

Most kids would jump at the chance to throw out the opening pitch at a major league baseball game so Our Military Kids was thrilled when one of our recent grant recipients, Riley Anderson, got such an opportunity. On Tuesday, July 21, Riley took the mound to kick off the game as part of "Tribute to Our Troops Night" at Nationals Park. Organized in support of Our Military Kids, the evening was sponsored by WTOP radio (103.5 FM), ABC 7, Federal News Radio 1500 AM WFED, and Mission Get Hired, a program of Careerbuilder.com aimed at helping U.S. veterans find jobs and providing support for military families.

Meteorologist Doug Hill from ABC 7 and WTOP "Man About Town" reporter Bob Madigan presented Linda Davidson and Gail Kruzell with a check for \$5,000 down on the field before the game. Our Military Kids was grateful for the donation and was thrilled that so many military families were honored for their service at the event. Mission Get Hired distributed 1,500 tickets to Washington, D.C. area military families,



Olivia, Adrian, Kathy, and Riley Anderson cheering on the Nats at "Tribute to Our Troops" night.

including several hundred to Our Military Kids grant recipients. It was a perfect evening to enjoy a night of baseball.

The Anderson family was among the many military families present who had a blast at the event. Kathleen Anderson and her children Olivia, age 12, and Adrian, age 8, watched from the field as Riley, age 14, threw out the first pitch. Riley received a grant from Our Military Kids this past February to play baseball. He loves the sport and his favorite position is second base. His younger brother Adrian was also awarded a grant to play baseball while their sister received a grant to play basketball. Adrian's favorite part of the evening was attending the special party hosted by the event's sponsors in an

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And the Award Goes to...



Our Military Kids couldn't be prouder of Master Sgt. Lorene Kitzmiller who was recently chosen as one of the Air National Guard's Outstanding Airmen of the Year. This past fall, Lorene worked for Our Military Kids helping to process applications and answer phone calls before she was activated to serve with her unit at Andrews Air Force Base. "Working at Our Military Kids was so fulfilling and rewarding for me," Lorene says. "I get to be a first sergeant with my unit, but being able to talk to families on the phone was awesome. It was just great to be able to tell them how important they are in the whole deployment scheme. Those left behind help

hold the family together which allows the soldiers to pursue their mission overseas."

Out of 93,000 enlisted Airmen, Lorene and five other members of the Air National Guard were chosen as "the

best of the best." The six Outstanding Airmen of 2009 were honored at a series of special events the second week of June, including an awards ceremony on June 9 at the Air Guard Readiness Center on Andrews Air Force Base. Several Our Military Kids staff members and dedicated volunteer, Angela Kolares, attended the ceremony. Everyone in attendance agreed that Lorene's friendly



Former OMK staff member Lorene Kitzmiller and the other Outstanding Airmen of 2009.

voice and kind-hearted spirit have been greatly missed around the office but we know she is serving where she is needed most, supporting the members of the 118th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron. —*Mary Carolyn Voght*

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executive suite at Nationals Park. "It was great," he said, "especially all the food!" Beyond his shining moment out on the pitcher's mound, Riley was most excited "that the Nats actually won a game."

The children's father, Master Sergeant Jay Anderson, is currently deployed to South America with the 20th Special Forces Group of the North Carolina Army National Guard in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. "Being a single parent has been the biggest challenge of this deployment," notes Kathleen Anderson. "I have to coordinate everyone's schedules myself which

is sometimes difficult without a spouse to help out." Riley, Olivia, and Adrian all miss their father and are excited that he is expected to come home in August. "I'm looking forward to playing card games and board games again," said Riley. "We haven't gotten to do that that much since my Dad's been away."

In addition to raising funds for Our Military Kids, the "Tribute to Our Troops Night" at Nationals Park also helped raise awareness about some of the issues surrounding military families. WTOP radio ran commercials on air about Our Military Kids during the first three weeks in July leading up to the event. Lynne Pace, the wife of General

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Peter Pace and a member of Our Military Kids' advisory board, recorded one of the commercials while Arthur Rizer, the father of a former grant recipient, recorded the other one. Many thanks to both of them for volunteering their time and efforts to help spread the word about our grant program and to make the general public more aware of the sacrifices military families are making on behalf of our nation. —*Mary Carolyn Voght*

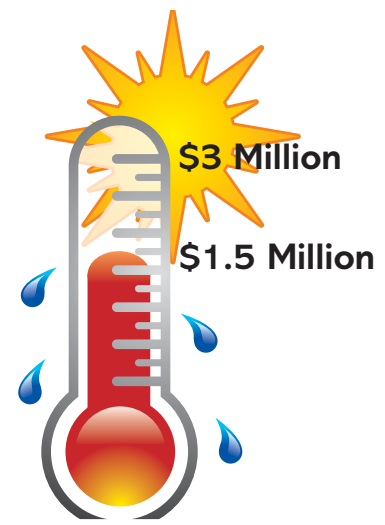
Turn Up the Heat!

July is known for being a particularly hot month in Washington D.C., so Our Military Kids thought it was the perfect time of year to roll out our *Turn Up the Heat* fundraising campaign. The goal is to raise \$3 million dollars by the end of 2009. As of August, 2009, Our Military Kids has raised almost \$1.5 million which means we are about half way to achieving our goal. We are calling on all friends of the program and previous donors to help us reach this important target. The more money we raise, the more military children we can help with grants for extracurricular activities.

Currently, Our Military Kids has a public private/partnership with the National Guard Bureau which provides funding for grants awarded to children of deployed Army National Guard service members. We are grateful for the Guard's

support but are also mindful that this funding is contingent on Our Military Kids being able to raise matching funds. From the earliest days of the program, Our Military Kids has always relied on generous contributions from corporate, foundation, and individual donors. In fact, the program was created in part as a way for ordinary American citizens to help support the children of those who are sacrificing so much on our behalf. Even though Our Military Kids has grown leaps and bounds over the past few years, this core component of our mission has remained the same.

Spouses of deployed Guard and Reserve personnel often tell us that it means as much for their children to know that fellow citizens recognize and value their family's service as it does for them to receive funds to participate in an activity. The mother of several recent



grant recipients remarked, "This program let my children know that there are people who appreciate their father's commitment and the sacrifices that both he and our family have made." All those who contribute to the Our Military Kids' 2009 fundraising campaign can feel good about helping "*Turn Up the Heat*" for military families by warming their hearts with sincere gratitude for their selfless service to our country.

—Mary Carolyn Voght

New Faces at Our Military Kids

This summer Lana Westfall assumed the position of Director of Development at Our Military Kids and is already hard at work identifying and developing new sources of income. For over a decade, Lana held the position of Director of Constituent and Legislative Services to retired Virginia Senator Russ Potts who served as Chairman of the Senate Education and Health Committee. In recent years, Lana formed her own public affairs and government relations consulting firm representing nonprofit organizations on project management, fundraising and grant writing.

As the wife of a now retired Lt. Colonel in the Air Force Reserve and the mother of five, Lana experienced the challenges and difficulties that many Our Military Kids families face. The Westfalls

went through frequent overseas training exercises and deployments during Lt. Colonel Westfall's 38 years of service. Excited about joining the Our Military Kids team, Lana says, "I'm glad to take an active role in helping the families of our citizen soldiers."

Lieutenant General Charles L. "Chuck" Johnson recently joined Our Military Kids' Board of Directors. The Vice President for Mobility, C3/ Networks and Support Systems for Air Force Systems at The Boeing Company, General Johnson served 36 years in the Air Force with his last assignment as Commander of the Electronic Systems Center at Hanscom Air Force Base. Prior



Lana Westfall



Chuck Johnson

to this assignment he commanded the Air Force's largest Air Logistics/Maintenance Center where he institutionalized continuous process improvements that won all six major DOD and Air Force logistics/maintenance awards in the same year—a feat that had never before been accomplished! As a command pilot and instructor, General Johnson logged more than 4,000 hours flying airlifters, tankers, bombers, AWACS and helicopters. Our Military Kids is thrilled to welcome him to our executive team and greatly

appreciates his willingness to serve.

—Mary Carolyn Voght

Become a Fan of OMK on Facebook

Our Military Kids is now on Facebook! Check out our page and become a fan. A recent picture posted on OMK's facebook page of Britney, Maranda, and Courtney McAlpine. (right)

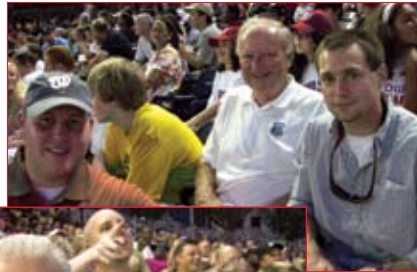


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wish that every friend of Our Military Kids could see the touching thank you notes that come in the mail each day expressing gratitude for the opportunity to participate in an activity as well as pride that their parent is serving our country. Those calls and notes may come to our office but the sentiments they convey go to everyone who is a part of the Our Military Kids family, including our donors who keep this program going with their generous support.

Thank you for your compassion and your desire to help build the resiliency that these families need to face the challenges of deployment so they can stay strong until mommy or daddy comes home. —Linda and Gail

Take Me Out to the Ballgame



Game spectators included grant recipient **Isaiah Padgett and his family (far left)**, advisory board member **Ron Redmond**, board member **John Stirk**, Air Force Reservist **Devin Watson (above)**, and dedicated volunteer **Angela Kolares and her husband Demo (left)**.

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Our Military Kids, Inc. is a 501 (c) (3), non-profit organization that wants to ensure school-age children of deployed and severely injured Reserve and National Guard military have the opportunity to participate in youth sports, fine arts, and tutoring programs without the expense of such programs creating a financial burden on a family that has already been asked to make sacrifices and accept new challenges.

SUPPORTING NATIONAL GUARD AND MILITARY RESERVE FAMILIES
One Child at a Time