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'Our Military Kids' Forced to Limit Availability of Grant Program to Children of Deployed Service Members

McLEAN, Va. – April 25, 2011 – Effective May 1, 2011, the nonprofit organization Our Military Kids will only award one grant per deployment to children of National Guardsmen and Military Reservists who are deployed overseas. The grants awarded cover the fees associated with six months of participation in a sport, fine art, or tutoring program. The decision comes as federal government funding for the grant program was reduced last week as the result of budget cuts.

Grants from Our Military Kids are designed to reduce stress for children during the difficult time of deployment. One grant will pay up to \$500 for six months of participation in an extracurricular activity. Second grants were available to children whose parents are serving a deployment of at least 365 days, and are intended to fund the child's activity through the entire deployment. In 2010, Our Military Kids provided 2,798 second grants to children, totaling nearly \$1.2 million.

"Our Military Kids has seen a tremendous increase in demand for the grant program over the past six years, but donations are not growing at the same rate as the stack of applications in our office," said Linda Davidson, Executive Director and Co-Founder of Our Military Kids. "In order to continue offering this unique program with less funding from the federal government, Our Military Kids must rely on private donors to help fill the gap."

Our Military Kids had previously received a significant monetary gift from the Iraq Afghanistan Deployment Impact Fund (IADIF). It provided \$3 million paid out between 2008 and 2010. The expiration of this fund, coupled with the reduction in federal grant money, creates a significant shortfall of available funds. It is the hope that future funding will allow Our Military Kids to once again award second grants.

"We have already received phone calls from disappointed and distressed parents who tell us of the immensely positive impact the first grants had on their children," added Davidson. "It is extremely difficult to turn away military spouses who were under the impression Our Military Kids would be able to help them with second grants to keep their children in their activities. We hope grateful citizens across the nation will donate to Our Military Kids so we can once again offer second grants to families that sacrifice so much for our safety."

A number of third-party studies have supported the mission of Our Military Kids, including one completed by Leonard Wong of the Army War College. It found participation in extracurricular activities, especially sports, was the most influential factor in reducing stress for the child.

About Our Military Kids

Our Military Kids was founded in 2004 to support children ages three to 18 of National Guard and Reserve families that often become financially stretched during a deployment. The organization provides \$500 grants for activities such as sports, fine arts, and tutoring programs that nurture and sustain children while a parent is serving our country overseas. Additionally, the program is available to children of Wounded Warriors in all branches of the military. Our Military Kids is funded by corporations, private donors, and government grants. For more information, please visit www.ourmilitarykids.org.

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