



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 8, 2009

Please contact:

Maria Montalvo  
Executive Director  
Our Family for Families First  
401-228-2836

**Our Family for Families First Foundation  
Celebrates Award of \$40,000 Scholarships to Military Children**

Our Family for Families First, John G. Picerne's private charitable foundation, awarded 10 scholarships to Army children March 27, 2009. To date, the Foundation has awarded more than \$2 million in scholarships to the families of active-duty Army Soldiers. Among this year's scholarship recipients are aspiring newscasters, scientists, and nurses as well as a number of students who have done much to give back to the Army communities they live in.

Graduating seniors of active-duty Soldiers stationed at Forts Meade, Bragg, Polk, Rucker, Riley and Sill received the scholarships in the amount of \$10,000 per year for four years to pursue a secondary education at colleges and universities around the country.

"Each year, as we receive more applications, the selection process gets harder," said Maria Montalvo, Foundation executive director. "We read many stories of parents who saw dramatic cuts in even the smallest college savings accounts, not to mention the reduction in available student loans. At the same time, all of the applicants were hard-working students who are active in their schools and communities and more than deserving of a college scholarship."

Students receiving the scholarship will begin school in the fall and all will attend the four-year institution of their choice. This year's award marks the fourth class of *Our Future* scholarship recipients. Currently, there are 32 students who previously received scholarships attending college.

John Picerne, Foundation Founder, said, "I am always so moved by these students - their goals, dreams, and inspiration. We are so happy to be able to make a positive impact on their lives."

Awards were all based on merit and need. Students also submitted 1,000-word essays on the topic "What is the impact on your life of having a parent who is an active-duty Soldier and how has your parent inspired you?"

The names of the outstanding student(s) who received the award are below:

**Fort Polk, Louisiana**

**Brian Sweet** attends Leesville High School and is an active member of his community. He works at the PX, serves as his church webmaster, plays golf, is a member of Key Club, band and FBLA, and volunteers for Red Cross. He plans to attend the University of Texas El Paso to pursue a degree in business administration and computer technology.

**Fort Sill, Oklahoma**

**Jada Salahuddin** attends MacArthur High School and has a 4.17 GPA so far in her senior year. She works part-time as a daycare provider, and is involved in Key Club, track, cheer, volleyball, drama, and various volunteer efforts. She has been accepted to Hampton University and plans to study public relations (she wants to be a journalist).

**Fort Riley, Kansas**

**Autumn Conley** attends Saint Xavier High School and is an excellent student. She participates in a wide variety of activities, including the Scholars Bowl, church, volleyball, track, cheerleading, basketball, National Honor Society, various volunteer efforts including the Family Readiness Group (FRG), student council, and she works part-time. She is not yet sure where she wants to pursue broadcast communications, but is currently leaning toward the University of Missouri.

**Fort Meade, Maryland**

**Serena Walker** attends Meade Senior High School and has a 4.0 GPA. She is very involved in community service, church, Key Club, swimming, and plays piano. She has set her sights high and has applied to Harvard University, Yale University, Washington University and William and Mary and has already been accepted to Baylor.

**Fort Rucker, Alabama**

**Johanna Almquist** attends Enterprise High School and also carries a 4.0 unweighted GPA. She is a member of the school band, National Honor Society, and a number of extracurricular activities, participated in local tornado clean-up efforts, and works after school at a local restaurant. She has also been a student with dual enrollment at the local community college this year. She wants to attend Kansas State University (as two generations did before her) and become a nurse.

**Fort Bragg, North Carolina**

**Whitney Pugh** attends Reid Ross Classical School with a 4.3 weighted GPA. Both of her parents are active-duty, and she works part-time. She is involved in a number of school activities, theater, choir, gymnastics, National Honor Society, many volunteer efforts and more. She wants to attend Auburn University to obtain her doctorate in clinical and child psychology.

**Miguel Espinoza** attends Terry Sanford High School with a 4.4 weighted GPA. He is president of the Environmental Club, VP of the National Art Honor Society, and a member of the National Honor Society, and he is also involved with the Family Readiness Group (FRG) and many volunteer activities. He wants to attend and has been accepted to the University of California at Davis. He wants to study architecture.

**Shamera Robinson** attends E.E. Smith High School, also with a 4.4 weighted GPA. She is involved in just about every activity, including the Science Olympiad, Math Club, Science Club, band, Spanish Club, step team, student government, soccer, Spanish Honor Society, Black History Club, Key Club and more. She has received a number of awards and has participated in a wide range of community service activities. She wants to attend Spelman College and wants to be a geneticist.

**Lance Long** attends Massey Hill Classical High School and is an excellent student. He is an active member of the Key Club, Theater Arts Club, National Honor Society, wrestling and football, his church, and performs a wide range of volunteer internship work. He will attend NC State University and wants to pursue International Studies and Arab Studies in order to work for the State Department as a U.S. diplomat to a Middle Eastern country.

**Christopher Harris** attends Seventy-First High School with a 4.14 weighted GPA. He has moved every year in high school with his family but is still the captain of the wrestling team and is ranked #3 in NC. He works part-time as a grocery store bagger and has received select academic awards and honors. He plans to attend the University of Georgia. He wants to become a surgeon or a pediatrician.

### **Our Family for Families First background:**

Our Family for Families First was created by John Picerne, President and CEO of Picerne Military Housing, to support the spouses and children of active-duty Soldiers assigned to Forts Meade, Bragg, Polk, Rucker, Riley, and Fort Sill. Families do not have to reside in on-post housing in order to qualify for grants or scholarships. The Foundation is committed to supporting military families in the pursuit of higher education, instituting a tradition of community service and encouraging professional career paths through education, internships and mentoring programs. It also serves to further the primary mission of Picerne Military Housing – putting military Families First™.

The Foundation also awards up to \$5,000 one-time grants to spouses of active-duty Soldiers. Applications for grants are due May 29, 2009.

Applicants for grants should go to the website at [www.ourfamilyfoundation.org](http://www.ourfamilyfoundation.org) to download the 2009 grant application. Interested individuals may also call 401-228-2836 or email [grants@ourfamilyfoundation.org](mailto:grants@ourfamilyfoundation.org) for more information.