

ThanksUSA



*More than 4,200 scholarships awarded,
total value over \$13 million*

Introducing 2017-2018

Heartland 4 Heroes / ThanksUSA

Scholarship Recipients

Army dependent **Mariah Smith** explains how a mix of military life and competitive golf have helped her grow and mature. "Both experiences have taught me the importance of honesty, determination, persistence and a strong work ethic. These experiences have allowed me to become a leader in the community and a role model for others. With those social skills, I am able to instill strong, developmental qualities in children while introducing them to the great game of golf -- a far greater reward than any trophy or medal."



With the assistance of a \$3,000 Heartland 4 Heroes/ThanksUSA scholarship, Mariah has drawn from these skills as a Chemistry major at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.

Accepted to the prestigious Honors Program, Mariah intends to pursue a curriculum that will prepare her for medical school. "My dream has always been to become a doctor, specifically an anesthesiologist." She looks forward to balancing academic pressures by playing golf as a member of the University of Tennessee Women's Golf team.

"Thank you for this opportunity. I am excited to represent the Heartland 4 Heroes/ThanksUSA scholarship and thank you for lessening the financial burden of college education."

Army National Guard dependent **Justin Ramos** has received consecutive Heartland 4 Heroes/ThanksUSA scholarships totaling \$6,000 for an Exercise Science major at Campbellsville University in Kentucky.

An avid athlete, Justin is a defensive back for the Campbellsville University Tigers football team. He is also active in Baptist Campus and Sports Reach ministries.

Justin has interned at The Kid's SpOT Center and the Taylor County Schools Occupational Therapy program. He now plans to pursue a Doctorate of Occupational Therapy and work within the public school system.

"Thank you so very much for the Heartland 4 Heroes/ThanksUSA scholarship. I look forward to working as an occupational therapist and helping children achieve their goals. Thank you for providing this opportunity to prove myself."



Kaitlynn Newcomb, a Navy dependent from Gray, Tennessee, received her second \$3,000 Heartland 4 Heroes/ThanksUSA scholarship to continue a Theatre major and Business Management minor at Middle Tennessee State University.

Kaitlynn's concentration is in performance and directing. Earlier this year she was inducted into the Alpha Psi Omega National Theatre Honor Society and worked as Assistant Stage Manager for the MTSU production of *How I Learned to Drive*. Most recently, Kaitlynn played the role of Sunflower in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Her next project will be assistant-directing *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* in the Spring of 2018.

Although Kaitlynn loves performing on stage, her ultimate goal is to own a theatre or be the artistic director of a theatre.

"Thank you so much for the Heartland 4 Heroes/ThanksUSA scholarship! It means so much to receive this scholarship again for sophomore year. Your generosity has been such a blessing to my family. If you are ever in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, please let me know and I will get you tickets for one of our campus shows!"

Nia Gibbs-Francis has received consecutive Heartland 4 Heroes/ThanksUSA scholarships totaling \$9,000 for a Social Work major at Austin Peay State University.

This Army dependent from Fort Campbell, Kentucky is in her third year of undergraduate studies and recently completed an internship at Mary's Center in Washington, D.C.

Nia aspires to establish a non-profit organization to help runaway teens. "I want to get them back in school and on the right path to ensure they have a bright future."

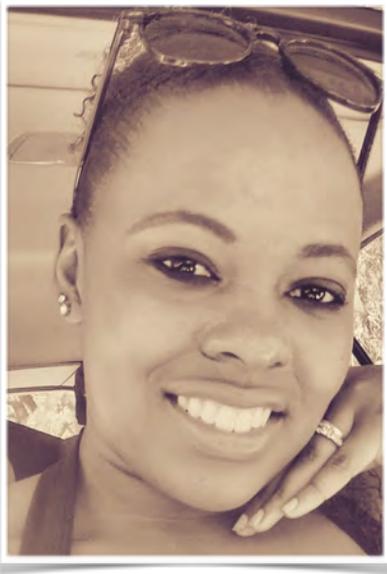


To complement her studies, Nia is a member of the Social Work Club, Alpha Lambda Delta Honors Society, and the Catholic Student Association. She is dedicated to serving the community by volunteering with Habitat for Humanity and Purpose on Purpose, an on-campus mentoring group for women of color.

A member of the Austin Peay State University Track and Field Team, Nia was a 2017 Arthur Ashe Jr. Sports Scholar, is the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee Programming Chair for the 2017-2018 academic year, and has served as a peer-mentor for incoming student-athletes. In November, she represented Austin Peay State University and the Ohio Valley Conference at the 2017 NCAA Student-Athlete Leadership Forum in Washington, D.C.

"I am truly grateful to all who donate to ThanksUSA. The Heartland 4 Heroes/ThanksUSA scholarships have made a huge impact on my education."





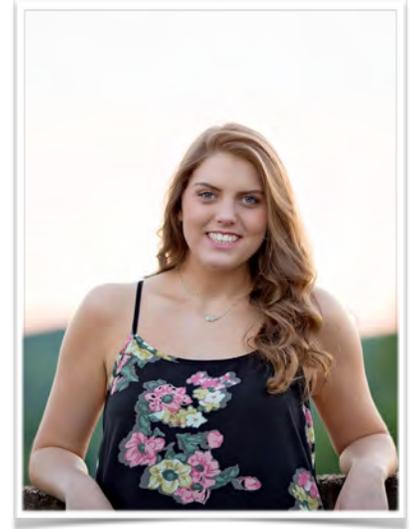
Deju Green's husband, Sergeant Bo Green, suffered debilitating injuries during his last tour in Afghanistan which left him permanently disabled. "I had been planning to enroll in school but plans changed abruptly. At 23 years old, I became my husband's primary caregiver."

Now, with the assistance of a \$3,000 Heartland 4 Heroes/ThanksUSA scholarship, this Army spouse is pursuing an Accounting major at Gwinnett Technical College in Georgia. Deju's ultimate goal is to obtain a Master's degree, become a certified Public accountant, and work for one of the Big Four Accounting Firms.

"I am determined to overcome all obstacles and achieve my goals so that I can provide financial support for my husband and two children."

With the assistance of a \$3,000 Heartland 4 Heroes/ThanksUSA scholarship, **Grace Gilland** began a Public Relations major at Pepperdine University in California.

An Army dependent from Fort Campbell, Kentucky, Grace plans to seek employment in the sports or entertainment industries. She is already looking into study-abroad opportunities and will be applying for summer internships.



Devin Sigley from Austintown, Ohio, received a \$3,000 Heartland 4 Heroes/ThanksUSA scholarship to begin undergraduate studies at Youngstown State University.

A love for computers inspired this Air Force dependent to major in Computer Science. "After college, I hope to attain a career with a high-tech company such as Google or Facebook. My ideal position is one where I am able to make a positive impact on humanity."

Graduating as valedictorian of his high school class, Devin plans to earn similar recognition during college. "Being honored for hard work in school, especially with a monetary reward, is a great beacon lighting the way to my success. Thanks again for bestowing the generosity of the Heartland 4 Heroes/ThanksUSA scholarship."

The daughter of an active-duty soldier stationed at Fort Campbell, **Francheska Rivera** was awarded a \$3,000 Heartland 4 Heroes/ThanksUSA scholarship to begin a Chemistry major at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Though she has always held an interest in the medical field, Francheska admits that she is not very comfortable with blood. "As I researched careers in the medical field, I discovered pharmacy. I believe that obtaining a PharmD will result in many job opportunities."

Francheska plans to pursue a career in pharmaceutical research and development. "I'm beyond excited and determined for the next four years as I pursue an education and learn more about myself in the process."



Rebecca Baugher, the daughter of a permanently disabled Marine Corps veteran, has received consecutive Heartland 4 Heroes/ThanksUSA scholarships totaling \$9,000 for a Nursing major at John Brown University in Arkansas.

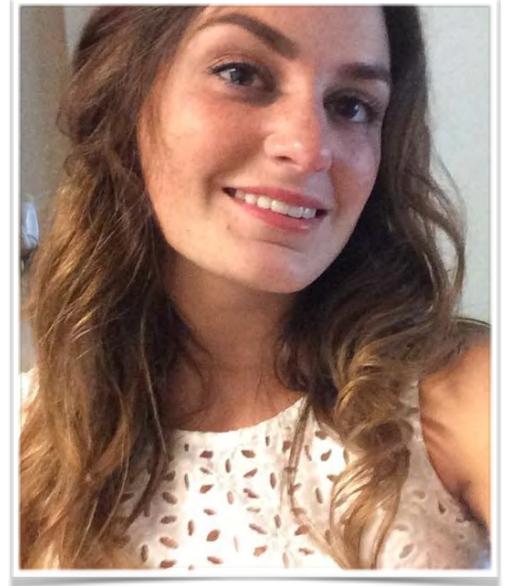


"The circumstances surrounding my dream to enter the medical field are, like many other people's, mostly tragic. My dad's diagnosis with a brain tumor resulted in months of hospitalization and physical therapy. Witnessing the effect that a medical staff can have on the experiences of a family in the throes of adversity had a great impact on my desire to enter the medical field."

Rebecca has participated in medical missions in Cambodia and Papua New Guinea and is enjoying clinical and upper-level nursing courses. "After graduation, I plan to work in an underserved area of my home state, Missouri. Eventually, I hope to become a nurse practitioner and work in disaster relief."

In addition to her studies, Rebecca is Captain of the JBU Women's Rugby Team and was named Most Valuable Player during the 2016-2017 season.

Lydia Lawrence was awarded a \$3,000 Heartland 4 Heroes/ThanksUSA scholarship to continue a Biology major at Austin Peay Stat University. An Army spouse stationed with her husband at Fort Campbell, Lydia follows a demanding Pre-Med curriculum and expects to graduate in December 2018. "I have always had my mind set on working in the medical field. I plan to work part-time as a medical coder while volunteering in a hospital. After gaining experience, I will apply to Medical School or Physician Assistant School."



In addition to her studies, Lydia serves on the Keys to the World Council, promoting studies-abroad and service learning opportunities. During a 2016 study-abroad in Trinidad, Lydia had the opportunity to work with Habitat For Humanity in Tobago.



Lydia is also a member of the Austin Peay Grant Committee, the Pre-Professional Health Society, and volunteers with the Red Cross.

"I wish to thank you for the very generous \$3,000 Heartland 4 Heroes/ThanksUSA scholarship. Being a student and a military wife can be stressful. The extra help from those who believe in my success only adds to the enthusiasm that I have for my future."



Lydia with the Austin Peay University Habitat for Humanity team in Toago.



Army National Guard dependent **Taylor Stephen** was awarded a \$3,000 Heartland 4 Heroes/ThanksUSA scholarship for his junior year of undergraduate studies at the University of Missouri in Columbia.

Planning for a career in commercial real estate, Taylor majors in Finance, Real Estate, and Economics. To enhance post-graduate job prospects, Taylor has taken classes toward an entrepreneurship certificate and started a book buyback company. He credits early childhood memories for his entrepreneurial interests: *“My dad ran a small postal service and during my younger years I witnessed how hard he worked as a business owner to make his ideas successful. The desire to help self-starters like my dad is one of the main influences for my educational pursuits.”*

Taylor has joined the Entrepreneurship Alliance and Tiger Leadership Institute and recently completed an Institutional Investor Services internship at State Street in Kansas City, Missouri.

“Thank you so much for donating to ThanksUSA scholarships. My dad spent 20 years serving his country and it is amazing to have people willing to help my family in his honor. I really appreciate the generosity I have been shown and cannot express enough gratitude to this program and the Heartland 4 Heroes/ThanksUSA scholarship.”

Keili Keoho received her second \$3,000 Heartland 4 Heroes/ThanksUSA scholarship to continue undergraduate studies at the University of Tennessee in Chattanooga.

The daughter of an active-duty Army Major stationed at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, Keili majors in Business Accounting and plans to take the CPA exam and apply to law school.

“I want to use my status as a CPA to work through law school. My ultimate goal is to use the experience gained from law and business to become a successful politician.”

“I want to thank you for the Heartland 4 Heroes/ ThanksUSA scholarship. I am deeply grateful for this award that allows me to maintain the focus on school. Thank you again!”





Army dependent **Caehlen Roberts** was awarded a \$3,000 Heartland 4 Heroes/ThanksUSA scholarship to begin undergraduate studies at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas.

Majoring in English, Caehlen is already a published poet who completed 26 college credits during her final two years of high school. She now hopes to earn teaching certification and become a high school English teacher.

On May 7, 2008, Caehlen's father, Army Staff Sgt. Kevin C. Roberts, was killed by a roadside bomb in Afghanistan's Sabari District. He was one of the first casualties of Fort Campbell's 101st Airborne Division's Fourth Brigade Combat Team to die in Afghanistan.

Caehlen is the second member of her family to receive a Heartland 4 Heroes/ThanksUSA scholarship. In 2013, Caehlen's mother, Donnice, was awarded a \$3,000 heartland 4 Heroes/ThanksUSA scholarship for her own undergraduate studies at Stephen F. Austin State University.

"Thank you everyone for donating to the Heartland 4 Heroes/ThanksUSA scholarship. I am able to have a chance for my dream career because of this scholarship. It means the world to me!"



Caehlen and her father



College move-in day