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AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE

NEWS ARTICLES**America Supports You: Foundation Stands Beside New Marines**

By Samantha L. Quigley
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, June 27, 2007 – Finances are no longer a reason to keep a Marine's family from attending his or her basic training graduation, thanks to the Marine Graduation Foundation.

"The men and women who choose to serve our country as a United States Marine endure more in one day of boot camp than most of us will ever experience in a lifetime," John Weant, the foundation's president said. "None of (them) should ever have to be alone on the day they can proudly say, 'I am a United States Marine.'"

Weant said it's "just not acceptable" for financial circumstances to stand in the way of families traveling to attend the ceremonies. Thanks to the Marine Graduation Foundation, families who want to attend a son or daughter's graduation at Camp Pendleton, Calif., or Parris Island, S.C., can request a grant from the Missouri-based organization through an online form.

The average grant is \$250 and can be awarded to a grandparent, parent or spouse of the recruit, according to the foundation's Web site.

The nonprofit organization accepts donations to help fund the grants. Visit the foundation's Web site, usmcgrad.org, for more information on making tax-deductible donations.

"No donation is too small, and with your help, we can make the Emblem Ceremony, as well as the graduation, a proud, memorable day for a man or woman who has chosen to serve our country as a United States Marine," Weant said on the foundation's Web site.

The Marine Graduation Foundation is a new member of America Supports You, a Defense Department program connecting citizens and corporations with military personnel and their families serving at home and abroad.

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