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## **Picerne Military Housing charitable foundation wins People's Choice**

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The Our Family for Families First Foundation, the charitable arm of Picerne Military Housing, was honored at the White House for its work on behalf of military families by First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden.

The Foundation was recognized as People's Choice winner of the Joining Forces Community Challenge (<http://joiningforces.challenge.gov/>) during a ceremony held on the South Lawn of the White House to spotlight citizens and organizations with a demonstrated, genuine and deep desire to be of service to military families.

"Our company is built on the pillars of success, heart and dedication. The Our Family for Families First Foundation is another way for us to show our respect for the service members and families that we serve every day," said John Picerne, president and CEO of Picerne Military Housing, who established the Our Family for Families First Foundation in 2006.

As part of its charitable mission, the Foundation provides educational scholarships and grants to the spouses and children of active-duty service members stationed at the seven military installations served by Picerne Military Housing.

A 2009 scholarship recipient, Jada Salahuddin, and her father, Army Master Sergeant Majid Salahuddin, of Fort Bragg, North Carolina, attended the White House event with John Picerne and Maria Montalvo, executive director of the Foundation. Salahuddin is currently studying journalism at Hampton University in Hampton, VA.

"Jill and I are so proud of all of these finalists and the work that they have done for our military community," First Lady Michelle Obama said in announcing the finalists. "Our military families demonstrate such strength, service, and sacrifice every single day, and we're so grateful for everyone who is stepping up to give back to these families. The challenge winners are leading by example, and showing that all of us can find a way to serve those who serve us."

The Foundation qualified as a finalist for the award after being evaluated by a national selection panel composed of representatives from the service branches, Department of Defense, experts on family well-being, and community organizations. It earned the "People's Choice" distinction after receiving nearly 17,000 votes during a seven-week public voting period.

"The Joining Forces Challenge is a great way to let military families know that Americans are always thinking about them and to recognize the great sacrifices their families have made in service to our country," Montalvo said. "We're honored to be welcomed at the White House and proud to be able to stand shoulder to shoulder with so many quality organizations that are doing great work to improve the quality of life for military families."

The Foundation (<http://ourfamilyforfamiliesfirst.org/>) is committed to supporting military families in the pursuit of higher education, establishing a tradition of community service, and encouraging

professional career paths. Each year, it awards 10 four-year scholarships of up to \$50,000 to graduating high school students, and up to 20 \$5,000 grants to spouses in any phase of education. More than \$3 million in scholarships and grants have been awarded since 2006.

The Foundation also runs an Adopt-a-Charity Program and works with each Picerne Military Housing installation team to identify local charities for "adoption" by the organization. Picerne Military Housing is an active member of the Rhode Island philanthropic community and has recently supported The Leader Institute's Build-A-Bike program, Ronald McDonald House and Habitat for Humanity.

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