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## Magazine Honors Military Spouse of the Year

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WASHINGTON, May 6, 2008 – Military Spouse magazine honored Michelle McIntyre-Brewer as the 2008 Military Spouse of the Year here today.

The wife of an Army second lieutenant, McIntyre-Brewer somehow finds time to volunteer at the United Service Organizations, Soldier's List, American Red Cross, American Heart Association, and March of Dimes, all while raising two young children, including a daughter born with a heart defect.

During the award ceremony today, McIntyre-Brewer, 29, said the award represents the idealized military spouse, one who supports the mission of an American military that aims to improve conditions in parts of the world less fortunate than the United States.

“As military spouses, we have a responsibility that we are humanitarians, that we are not war mongers. We are people who want to be able to bring and instill peace around the world,” she said receiving the first-ever award. “We want to show people that our hearts are made of gold.”

McIntyre-Brewer, who has been described as an “alpha mom,” told the audience she feels obligated to empower other military family members to make change the world for the better.

“It is my responsibility to give back and give forward, and to make sure that everybody else who’s risking the loss of their children, or their husbands or their community, are able to make a difference in this world,” she said.

Army Second Lt. Stephen Brewer said his wife wanted to accept the award, not to celebrate her own virtue, but for the honor it bestows on all military spouses.

“I think it’s time that the spouses and families are more recognized for the hard work and effort they put in,” he said. “As military people, we volunteer, but our families don’t, and yet they put forth so much effort with very little recognition. They like to give us medals and ribbons, but very rarely is a spouse given his or hers.”

The Army officer, who is pictured with “Chelle” on the cover of Military Spouse Magazine, said he generally avoids the limelight. “But to be on there with her is definitely something special,” he said.

Babette Maxwell, Military Spouse magazine co-founder and executive editor, called McIntyre-Brewer an inspiration.

“Chelle is a reminder that inside each of us is the same passionate and committed spirit that puts others before themselves, sees the need and fills it, and follows dreams,” Maxwell said. “Chelle’s relentless dedication to her family and others in need make her a most deserving candidate for military spouse of the year.”

Dave McIntyre, the president and chief executive officer of TriWest Healthcare Alliance - which sponsored today’s ceremony -- donated a check to a non-profit group that is fulfilling Chelle’s call to action.

Thanks USA is a non-partisan charitable effort to mobilize Americans of all ages to thank the men and women of the United States armed forces by providing college, technical and vocational school scholarships for their children and spouses.

Accepting the donation on the group’s behalf was Robert Okun, who helped his daughters develop the Thanks USA concept in August 2005. To date, the program has awarded 1,350 scholarships, totaling almost \$4 million.

“We, as a civilian family, wanted to do more to thank the troops, and the way we thanked the troops was by giving the gift of education to their families, and their families includes both their dependents as well as their spouses,” Okun said. “In terms of what the troops do every day and what the families do, particularly the military spouses, thank you so very much.”

In a video message to the audience, first lady Laura Bush said the award presented was a chance to pay tribute to the hard work and dedication of military spouses, as embodied by McIntyre-Brewer.

“I offer her my heartfelt congratulations on receiving this award,” Bush said of McIntyre-Brewer. “Chelle, you’re an inspiration. To all the military spouses: President Bush and I are proud of your service, and the American people are grateful to your sacrifice.”

Meanwhile, the president today addressed 1,100 military spouses who gathered for a Military Spouse Day celebration at the White House.

“Whether you signed up for military life at the recruiting station or at the altar rail, each person’s a volunteer,” he said. “And when you married your soldier, sailor, airman, Marine or Coast Guardsman, you became more than just part of a family; you became part of our nation’s military family.”