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UNIVERSITY HELPING CHILDREN OF FALLEN VETERANS

February 19, 2015

Lindenwood University is now a partner of Gold Star Kids, a foundation based in St. Charles that provides educational funds for children who've had a parent die in combat. Gold Star Kids also provides mentors, mental health, and family support.

The foundation's mission is to alleviate the fears a surviving parent may have about providing a college education. Gold Star Kids founder Harold Hogarth is a Vietnam veteran. Hogarth said he wanted to give children and their parents a chance at a college education that wasn't offered to military veterans of his era. He got the idea for the foundation in July 2013 when he was watching a commercial about veterans.

"I wondered, 'what if dad didn't come home?'" said Hogarth, who lives in O'Fallon. "What is the future for the kids, and does it involve education? I felt something had to be done."

Becoming partners with Gold Star Kids is yet another way Lindenwood supports military veterans and their families. For six straight years, Lindenwood has been named a "military friendly" school by G.I. Jobs Magazine. The university's Veterans Affairs Center is dedicated to veterans and active military members.

"Our role is to help students obtain an education," said Dr. Joe Parisi, Lindenwood's vice president for enrollment management. "One of the great attributes of Lindenwood being a military friendly school is that it isn't just a slogan. Whether it's a son or daughter of a fallen soldier, Lindenwood takes great pride in assisting those who have served our country."

Lindenwood students are already helping the foundation as big sister role models for a teenage girl who lives in St. Charles. Hogarth said the foundation is assisting 234 children nationally, but much work needs to be done, because there are 13,000 Gold Star Kids who may need help.

Lindenwood will allocate funding to assist in tuition for the foundation, Parisi said. In turn, the foundation will help Lindenwood identify potential Gold Star Kids who might attend there. Admissions representatives from Lindenwood will build portfolios to determine if the student meets admission standards and set up a financial aid strategy.

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