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Children Are Part of Army's Commitment to Improve Warrior Care

Children Have A Voice in the Army Wounded Warrior Program's Fourth Annual Symposium

Indianapolis, Ind. —The Army Wounded Warrior Program (AW2) has teamed up with the National Military Family Association's (NMFA) Operation Purple® Summer Camp program to host a six-day camp for children of severely-wounded warriors during the AW2 Symposium.

Indianapolis is hosting the AW2 Symposium, titled "I AM AW2," from June 22-27 with more than 90 severely-wounded, injured or ill Soldier and Family member delegates and senior Army leaders attending. The symposium is a forum for wounded Soldiers and Family members to participate in focus group discussions on ways to improve the military health system. This is the fourth annual AW2 Symposium and the first time children have been included in the process.

The Operation Purple® camp allows children five and up to release their boundless energy for the duration of the AW2 Symposium. The camp includes activities such as rock climbing, arts and crafts, and horseback riding, as well as trips to local state parks and museums, and counseling sessions where children can discuss their issues with peers. There is no cost for children to participate in the six-day Operation Purple® camp during the symposium.

Col. Jim Rice, Director of the AW2 Program, says including children in the AW2 Symposium exemplifies the Army's commitment to caring for the families of wounded Soldiers. "The Army recognizes that supporting the family is paramount to a Soldier's recovery. We also have learned children process and cope with a parent's injury in different ways and the Operation Purple® program is giving the children a way to express their fears and frustrations with other Army children in similar situations."

Joyce Wessel Raezer, Executive Director of NMFA, added, "NMFA understands that these are trying times for our youngest heroes. We're pleased to collaborate with AW2 to help military children dealing with the stress of war and help give them a voice." NMFA is the only nonprofit organization that represents families of all ranks and services, prepares spouses, children, and parents to better deal with the unique challenges of military life.

For the last four years, AW2 has provided personalized local support to severely-wounded, injured, and ill soldiers and their Families for as long as they have a need. Each AW2 Soldier and Family member is assigned an AW2 Advocate to assist them when they return home. AW2 assists the unique population of Soldiers who have, or are expected to receive, an Army disability rating of 30% or more in one of several specific categories.

For more information about the Army Wounded Warrior Program, call 1-800-237-1336 toll-free or visit <http://www.AW2.army.mil>.

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MEDIA NOTE: For more information about the program or symposium, please contact Lt. Col. Richard McNorton, U.S. Army Human Resources Command Public Affairs Officer, at 703-325-9904 or HRCPAO@conus.army.mil.