



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **War Vet Turns up the Heat to Help Military Families**

*Aligns with the New National 'Joining Forces' Effort*

McLean, Va., May 24, 2011 – A former Army Ranger and now a recognized Bikram “hot yoga” instructor has taken on a new role: providing educational opportunities for military families.

Jim Ambrogi, a wounded veteran of Vietnam and Operation Desert Storm in Iraq, launched a fundraising campaign for ThanksUSA, a charitable effort to provide the families of military men and women with needs-based, post-secondary school scholarships. Throughout May – National Military Appreciation Month – Ambrogi is helping to fund scholarship awards through donations, drawings for yoga mats and outfits, and prizes offered by local businesses.

Ambrogi’s new initiative aligns with “Joining Forces,” the national program announced on April 12 by First Lady Michele Obama and Jill Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden. The initiative calls on all Americans “to mobilize, take action and make a real commitment to supporting our military families,” Michele Obama said.

Ambrogi is centering his campaign at his Bikram studio in Alexandria, VA. Bikram yoga involves strenuous poses and stretches, completed at 105 degrees Fahrenheit. This month, Ambrogi is asking his students and fellow yogis to stretch open their wallets, too.

“I discovered the healing powers of Bikram yoga firsthand when I turned to the discipline to help recover from my debilitating wounds. I became healthy and strong again both physically and emotionally,” explained Ambrogi. “Now, with Bikram, I can also help others, many of whom are vets just like me. I am just as dedicated to helping military families through ThanksUSA and the gift of education. There is healing in helping, too.”

“Jim is going above and beyond the call of duty in helping boost the number of scholarships we can award to the families of those who serve,” says Bob Okun, chair of ThanksUSA. “He’s a real inspiration spiritually and physically. His yoga stretches your body to the limits of heat and stress with extraordinary results, and his commitment to ThanksUSA is just as extraordinary.”

Ambrogi served in the Army for 22 years and suffered several combat injuries that left him with a 60 percent disability rating from the Veterans Administration. It was then that he turned to Bikram, becoming one of its top masters and introducing the hot yoga trend to the Washington, D.C. region.

The founder of Bikram yoga, Bikram Choudhury, sees the effort to support military families as an extension of the work already conducted in Bikram studios. “Our studios have helped to heal wounded warriors in many communities, and we would like to also support their families through ThanksUSA,” he said.

Ambrogi is challenging other Bikram studios nationwide to follow his lead and join his campaign by developing their own fundraising efforts. So far, 24 studios are participating in “Bikram Salutes Military Families”:

Bikram Yoga of Alexandria; Alexandria VA; Jim Ambrogi --703-212-9642  
Bikram Yoga Ashburn; Ashburn VA; Jameliah Penfield -- 703-858-9642  
Bikram Yoga Auburn; Auburn MA; Sam Goldman -- 508-832-9642  
Bikram Yoga Bethesda; Bethesda MD; Adam Pearlstein and John Kramer -- 301-215-7820  
Bikram Yoga Capitol Hill; Capital Hill, Washington DC; Elizabeth Glover -- 202-256-9156  
Bikram Yoga Charlottesville; Charlottesville, VA; Lizzie Clark -- 434-220-1415  
Bikram Yoga Concord; Concord, NH; Heather DeAngelis -- 603-415-9642  
Bikram Yoga, Dallas; Dallas, TX; David Buckner & Karen Buckner -- 214-824-9642  
Bikram Yoga Encinitas; Encinitas, CA; Mary & Michael Garrett -- 760-754-6803  
Bikram Yoga Evanston; Evanston IL; Stuart Getz -- 703-854-1611  
Bikram Yoga Hamden; Hamden, Baltimore MD; Sarah Ittmann -- 410-243-2040  
Bikram Yoga Lincoln; Lincoln CA; Kathryn Body -- 916-408-3900  
Bikram’s Yoga College of New Haven; New Haven CT; Robin Brace -- 203-785-0844  
Bikram Yoga Oak Park; Oak Park IL; Nancy Kalinowski -- 708-613-6055  
Bikram Yoga Oceanside, Oceanside, CA: Mary & Michael Garrett -- 760-754-6803  
Bikram Yoga Richmond; Richmond (South Side) VA; Garland Hume and Tighe Antrim -- 804-330-3353  
Bikram Yoga Richmond; Richmond (West End) VA; Garland Hume and Tighe Antrim -- 804-249-3355  
Bikram Yoga Severna Park; Severna Park, MD; Emily Norfolk -- 410-315-9642  
Bikram Yoga College Traverse City; Traverse City MI; Brandon and Jennifer Kietzman -- 231-392-4798  
Bikram Yoga Tysons; Tysons VA; Insel Metin -- 703-854-1611  
Bikram Yoga Westboro; Westboro MA; Sam Goldman -- 508-366-9642  
DC Bikram Yoga; Tenleytown, Washington DC; Elaine Rosenberg -- 202-243-3000  
Funky Door Yoga Berkeley; Berkeley CA; Karima Wilner -- 510-204-9642  
Sacramento Bikram Yoga; Sacramento CA; Julie Havelock -- 916-833-1772

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### **About ThanksUSA**

Since its inception in 2006, ThanksUSA, a 501(c)(3) non-profit, has provided more than \$6 million in academic scholarship assistance to America’s military families throughout all 50 states, with particular attention given to those whose loved one was killed or wounded in action. ThanksUSA’s scholarship program is unique in that both spouses and children of active-duty men and women can apply to the same organization for support. The scholarships directly benefit those who most need and deserve the opportunity to transform their lives, but lack the resources to do so. Recipients represent all military branches – Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, National Guard and Reserve – and come from each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia. To learn more about ThanksUSA, visit [www.ThanksUSA.org](http://www.ThanksUSA.org).