



# MILITARY CHILD EDUCATION COALITION™

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**DEFENSE SECRETARY GATES PRAISES COALITION  
FOR SERVICE TO MILITARY CHILDREN**

*Gates addresses closing session of 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference*

**HARKER HEIGHTS, TX, July 28, 2008** –The Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) closed their 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference in Dallas, Texas with a special address by Secretary of Defense Robert S. Gates in which he praised MCEC for their tremendous acts on behalf of military children.

“I have come here to thank organizations like the Military Child Education Coalition, which have done so much to help those in uniform and their families – helping to mitigate the effects of these sacrifices on their children – helping to make sure their children can reach their full potential,” he said.

The Secretary spoke before more than 750 conference attendees, including servicemen and women, school officials, parents and community leaders, gathered to address the needs of military children, including the more than 700,000 children who have seen a parent deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan.

Secretary Gates called it a “sacred responsibility” to care for the generation of American military children affected by military service in times of both war and peace, and

“Overall, organizations such as MCEC have embraced the nearly two million children whose parents serve in the armed forces. For that, I thank you,” said Gates.

Over the course of the three-day conference, MCEC led a series of trainings, seminars and workshops for community leaders, school and military officials and parents to empower individuals and communities to meet the needs of military children and the extra burdens they must bear.

In addition to Secretary Gates conference attendees heard from high-profile military officials such as Army Chief of Staff General George W. Casey, Jr; General William E. “Kip” Ward, Commander – US Africa Command; and Brigadier General Loree Sutton, the Director of the Defense Center for Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic

Brain Injury; and saw first-hand the determination and will of the nation's Armed Forces through the shared story of Greg and Kim Gadson. Lieutenant Colonel Greg Gadson was severely wounded while serving in Iraq.

Other speakers included Jim Collins, Dr. Darlyne Bailey, Major General Charles F. Bolden (Ret.), Dr. Kenneth Ginsburg, and Major Keith Lemmon, MD.

**About MCEC**

The Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that promotes partnerships and provides for networking of military installations and their supporting school districts. Their focus is to address transition and other educational issues related to the military-connected child, including active duty, National Guard, and Reserves. The MCEC seeks to include all military installations, their supporting schools, concerned organizations, and caring individuals. For more information, please visit [www.MilitaryChild.org](http://www.MilitaryChild.org)