

Knoxville, TN, Medal of Honor

# Honor program teaches respect

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## Medal recipients speak at schools

By Les Neuhaus  
Special to the News Sentinel

As a part of the lineup of events scheduled during the Medal of Honor Convention due to be held Sept. 10-13 in Knoxville,

### INSIDE

As Medal of Honor recipients prepare to come to Knoxville, the News Sentinel remembers Tennessee's honorees and recognizes the 78 living recipients in our special section, inside today.

recipients of the nation's highest military decoration will be traveling to middle and high schools throughout the area as a

part of the annual convention's character development program.

The character development program, or CDP for short, is a curriculum resource developed by teachers to provide students with opportunities to explore the Medal of Honor and the ideals it embraces, according to Don Naab, director of education for the Knoxville Medal of Honor

Convention.

"The program looks to perpetuate that legacy of the Medal of Honor through its six core values: courage, sacrifice, integrity, commitment, patriotism and citizenship," said Naab, whose day job is working as a project manager for a company called Strata-G.

"When Joe Thompson and I started talking about

this three years ago, we knew that if we, as a city, wanted to solidify our right to earn the convention, we knew we had to make the CDP a centerpiece of the Knoxville convention. So we've made it a benchmark of our convention."

He said the program, in conjunction with the

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Central High School teacher Michael McDaniel teaching the Medal of Honor Convention's character development program during class Friday. McDaniel also teaches social studies courses like U.S. government, U.S. history and economics.

### CONVENTION SCHEDULE

Schedule of Events for Medal of Honor Convention:



**Character Development Program Dinner**, Tuesday, 6-8 p.m., by invitation, Neyland Stadium

**Veterans Appreciation Luncheon**, Thursday, noon-2 p.m., by invitation, Knoxville Convention Center ballroom

**Knoxville Welcome Honors Concert**, Thursday, 7-9 p.m., ticketed public event, Tennessee Theatre

**Medal of Honor Recipient School Visits**, Friday, 8:30-10 a.m., various Knoxville schools

**Town Hall Meetings**, Friday, 10-11:30 a.m., University of Tennessee and UT

**Medal of Honor Book Signing**, Friday, 2-5 p.m., ticketed public event, Holiday Inn

**Sponsor Dinner**, Friday, 6:30-9 p.m., by invitation, Tennessee Theatre

**Patriot Award Gala**, Saturday, 6:30-10 p.m., by invitation, Knoxville Convention Center ballroom

### MEDAL from 1B

convention, has trained nearly 1,000 teachers across the state to teach the course.

"And let's say each teacher touches 80 students a year, exposing them to the CDP, then that means every year we are reaching almost 80,000 students a year," he said. "These materials are not about aggression. They're not about war. And these guys don't do this for self-glory, they do it to help people in this country remember that the liberties that we have today are due to sacrifices made for freedom."

One teacher already following the program is Dr. Michael McDaniel, who teaches social

studies courses like U.S. government and history at Central High School in Knox County. McDaniel, a Navy veteran and former employee of Boeing who was contracted out to NASA's Kennedy Space Center for 16 years as a payload process engineer and currently serves on the education subcommittee for the convention, said his angle has been to make sure students know they can do the same thing as Medal of Honor recipients, just in everyday situations and not combat.

"The focus is on the development of good citizenship," he said. "This has nothing to do with getting students to sign up for the military. I think there are several things they (the students) take away from the character

development program lesson — and, of course, they see the courage of the recipients. But one thing they can do in daily life is to help in situations where they can help other people."

McDaniel got into the program two years ago, just as the idea of bringing the convention was still being hatched by Knoxville leaders. He put it in place then for the Central High School Key Club, which he serves in a mentoring leadership role. The students in the club took to the tenets of the CDP lessons so quickly they decided to draft a joint resolution for the Tennessee General Assembly in Nashville to approve having the program taught in schools across the state.

It worked.

"State House Joint Resolution 45 was passed (later) in early 2013," Naab said. "Tennessee was the first state to endorse the CDP at the state level. It's proof-positive that this program does inspire young people to get involved and do things for their country."

The Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation, with offices in Washington, D.C., and Charleston, S.C., works with schools around the country to promote the lessons of the character development program. It is the guardian of the CDP and works with every convention.

Noel Wall, director of

development and education for the foundation, said their goal is to get it into every middle school and high school in the U.S. because the character traits the program teaches are universal.

"It's been a great joy to work with the convention planning committee there (in Knoxville)," Wall said on Aug. 28 by telephone from Charleston. "But for me, one of the most important things they've done is focus on education. By focusing on getting these lessons and stories into these schools, it will allow for these lessons to carry on for generations to come. As a foundation our purpose is

to perpetuate the legacy of the Medal of Honor recipients and this is a great way to do it."

The following area schools are being recognized during the convention for their successful implementation of the character development program: Cedar Bluff Middle School, Maryville High School, Alvin C. York Institute, Greenville High School, Elizabethon High School, Seymour Middle School, L&N STEM Academy, Hardin Valley Academy, Sacred Heart Cathedral School, Knoxville Catholic High School, Holston Middle School and Central High School.