



## **Foundation Purchases Playground Equipment for School That Serves World's Largest Marine Base**

***March, 2003: Twentynine Palms, California***

As the United States military launched its campaign in Iraq, on March 21, 2003, the Board of Directors of the William H. Hannon Foundation voted to approve a grant for new playground equipment at an elementary school where 65% of the students are from military families. The grant request by Blessed Sacrament School required the Foundation Board to suspend its standard policy of not providing funding for construction or facility projects at elementary schools.

The motion to support the school's request, made by Director Nancy Cunningham, centered on the fact that a majority of the school's students come from military families assigned to the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center in Twentynine Palms, California, the world's largest Marine Base occupying 932 square miles north of the City.

"Clearly, bending our rules right now to support the children of America's military is the right thing to do. We call on others to do what they can to support our men and women fighting in Iraq and especially their children back here at home," said Kathleen Hannon Aikenhead, President of the William H. Hannon Foundation.

The median annual income in the high desert community of Twentynine Palms is only approximately \$36,000 and the total population of the City is 16,000 people. With the small population and low-income levels, raising funds for the playground equipment was a challenge for the small Catholic school.

“This is yet another miracle in the desert. A majority of our parents are consumed in supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. This grant comes at a critical time for us both emotionally and economically. We are grateful to the Directors of the William H. Hannon Foundation for their kindness and understanding our very special circumstances,” said Jackie Voeltz, Principal of Blessed Sacrament School. Voeltz reported that with the Foundation’s grant commitment the School ordered the playground equipment and had it installed within thirty days.