

Solana Beach family racing against autism

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SOLANA BEACH — Retired Marine Master Sgt. Buck Doyle fought in five combat tours as a Reconnaissance Marine and was severely wounded during his third deployment to Iraq. He is a recipient of the Purple Heart and was awarded the Bronze Star with "V" for his actions on the battlefield.

His wife Kyla is a Torrey Pines High School graduate and certified special education advocate who has lived in Solana Beach since 1975. His youngest daughter, Kate, was diagnosed with autism.

"Last summer, after my husband retired from the Marine Corps, we moved our family from my childhood home in Solana Beach to a beautiful little valley in northern Utah, where we are enjoying the seasons and the slower pace, Kyla said. "But now we're coming back."

On April 2, she and Doyle will get on a plane, and come back for a day to run in ACT Today for Military Families' 5K/10K race to benefit military families with children affected by autism.

"I've never run a 10K before, but this one's had me literally training in the snow since January, because the cause is so important to us," she said. "Kate is among the one in 88 military children with autism. But thanks to early, intensive intervention, Kate has gone from a diagnosis of severe autism at the age of 2, to being virtually indistinguishable from the other children in her new first-grade classroom.

"To get there, we have had to wage a five-year battle of our own — with our insurance company, the school district, the state; the people we had thought would be our allies — in order to get Kate the services she needed," Kyla Doyle said. "If you ask my husband which was harder: getting shot by a sniper in Iraq or trying to recover our daughter from autism, he'll tell you it was the latter, not the former."

ACT Today for Military Families is working to fill a gap that currently has many of our military families in crisis, she said. ATMF is helping to meet the immediate needs of families and children affected by autism, who are simultaneously under the stress and strain of sending their loved one into harm's way.

"I am often asked by friends and neighbors how they can show their support for our military," Kyla Doyle said. "My answer has always been to take care of their family here at home.

"Participating in the ACT Today 5K/10K run and One Hope Family Festival is a perfect opportunity to provide immediate help to military families and who are challenged even more than most," she said. "Buck and I invite the community to join us April 2, in hopes that Kate's success can be had by other children, and the road to that success can be made smoother by our efforts."

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