



Clearing the Path 2016

The Marshall Legacy Institute's 19th Anniversary Gala and Awards Dinner

October 2016 – Washington DC – The Marshall Legacy Institute (MLI), a Virginia-based non-profit organization will host its 19th Anniversary **Clearing the Path Gala** on Wednesday, **October 26th**, at the elegant Mandarin Oriental Hotel, overlooking the Washington Marina. MLI is an international non-profit organization dedicated to helping war-torn countries eliminate the dangers and destabilizing effects of landmines. The 2016 Gala will celebrate the progress that has been made in freeing the world of landmines, while recognizing the challenges that remain. With the longtime support of dozens of Gala sponsors, including distinguished Gold Sponsors, the **Joan Wismer Foundation** and the **Association of the United States Army (AUSA)**, this annual event generates support for MLI's humanitarian programs around the world.

MLI helps severely contaminated countries implement sustainable and affordable programs that increase their capacity to remove landmines and improve livelihoods. Since its founding in 1997, MLI has donated 218 mine detection dogs (MDDs) to eleven countries around the world, including Afghanistan, Angola, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia Herzegovina, Eritrea, Iraq, Lebanon, Nicaragua, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. Through MLI's Children Against Mines Program (CHAMPS), MLI has reached out to tens of thousands of students and teachers in the U.S. and abroad to raise awareness about the landmine issue and to empower American students to take meaningful action to help others in mine-affected countries through service learning projects. MLI's Survivors' Assistance programs help landmine survivors overcome the devastating physical and psychological effects of their injuries by providing specialized training to doctors in mine-affected countries, and by providing extensive direct medical assistance, prosthetic devices, and vocational training to survivors.

The Gala promises to be another compelling and enjoyable evening when MLI will honor some extraordinary people, and animals, who have made exceptional efforts to help others in war-torn countries. MLI is pleased to announce that Tom Gjelten of NPR news service will once again serve as the Master of Ceremonies for the Gala evening. MLI is also delighted to be honored by the presence of **The Honorable Susan Rice, the United States National Security Advisor**, who will serve as the evening's Keynote Speaker.

MLI expects to celebrate the evening with 300 distinguished guests, including 20 Wounded Warriors, who will share in the evening's activities. General Gordon R. Sullivan, MLI's Founder & Chairman and former Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, will join congressional and international leaders in presenting awards to richly deserving Honorees, including: **Lance Corporal Nawarathne & his canine partner MDD Madjesty**, who are the 2016 Mine Detection Dog Team of the Year from Sri Lanka, having located nearly 500 landmines and other explosives in Sri Lanka, directly impacting thousands of lives; **Ms. Labibah Abdo Saif**, a young, inspirational landmine survivor from Yemen who will receive MLI's 2016 (International) Survivors' Award for her courage and tenacity in the face of overwhelming odds; Lieutenant Bradley Snyder, who will receive MLI's 2016 (U.S.) Survivors' Award for his remarkable service & sacrifice and inspirational perseverance in becoming a World Champion Paralympian after being blinded by an IED while serving in the U.S. military in Afghanistan; **Mrs. Linda Shirley**, a 4th Grade teacher from New Lebanon School in Greenwich, CT, who will receive MLI's U.S. 2016 CHAMPS Teacher of the Year Award for her amazing work in mentoring children to become actively engaged in global affairs and in helping others in mine-affected communities for the past 11 years; and **Ms. Larisa Jahić**, an English teacher from the 9 May School in Pazaric, Bosnia Herzegovina who will receive the 2016 CHAMPS International Teacher of the Year Award for her inspirational leadership in linking her children with American youth to provide prosthetic limbs and other assistance to 10 Bosnian landmine survivors.

During the evening, Voices of Service, a choir of talented veterans and active duty service members will delight guests with musical performances. The evening will also feature an exciting display filled with hand-made items from landmine survivors in Yemen who have participated in MLI's vocational training classes, where they have learned to sew beautiful scarves, purses, belts, and other unique items. All donations and purchases of these items will be used to directly support the survivors in Yemen who made the items.

The Gala will celebrate progress in freeing the earth of the horrific scourge of landmines, acknowledge the challenges that remain, and recognize those who make MLI's humanitarian work possible. MLI is deeply grateful to everyone who is so generously contributing to the success of the *Clearing the Path* Gala, including the many sponsors, donors, and volunteers. For more information about the 2016 *Clearing the Path* Gala, please contact Tycie Horsley at tycie@marshall-legacy.org or call 703-243-9200.