



EDUCATE HONOR CHALLENGE

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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Conservation Easement Placed on Medal of Honor Grove Valley Forge Open Space Preserved as Living Tribute to Recipients

VALLEY FORGE, PA – April 17, 2017-- Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge is pleased to announce, in cooperation with Schuylkill Township, Chester County, and Natural Lands Trust, a conservation easement on the Medal of Honor Grove. The Grove is the oldest living memorial dedicated to Recipients of the Medal of Honor and this easement ensures that it will be preserved for perpetuity.

The **Medal of Honor** was instituted by President Lincoln and first awarded to Recipients from the Civil War. It is the highest award for valor in action against an enemy force which can be bestowed upon an individual serving in the Armed Services of the United States. Thomas Kelley, President of the Congressional Medal of Honor Society stated, "In October 1964, over 100 Medal of Honor Recipients came to participate in the dedication of the Grove, bringing to bear the significance of its vision. It's been over 50 years since that day and the Grove is just as important now as it was then, perhaps more so. I can't be more pleased that this easement will secure its preservation and its tribute for generations to come."

The sprawling Grove makes up the majority of the Freedoms Foundation 72-acre campus, paying tribute to those Recipients through memorials and obelisks located on land set apart for each of the fifty states and two U.S. territories. This historic part of the Freedoms Foundation campus is noted for its walking trails, woodland beauty, and peaceful reverence befitting the recognition of those it honors. Wally Nunn, board chairman for Freedoms Foundation and founding chairman of The Friends of the Medal of Honor Grove stated, "The Grove is now preserved for future generations, so that they may experience this spiritual place, which represents duty, honor and country."

Ongoing maintenance and beautification of The Grove has been through the commitment and efforts of a nonprofit, volunteer organization known as The Friends of the Medal of Honor Grove. Founded in 2011, the small nonprofit has raised funds and

organized volunteers to improve, enhance, and maintain the dignity of the Medal of Honor Grove. Michael Di Yeso, president and CEO of Freedoms Foundation stated, "The Friends of the Medal of Honor Grove, exemplify the type of engaged citizenship that our organization fosters. They lead by example and we are grateful for all that they have done and continue to do. The Grove has been an important part of our teacher professional development programs, our youth civic education programs, and fulfillment of our mission to educate, honor, and challenge Americans to become engaged citizens."

Open Space easements have shown over time to be a successful method of land preservation for local communities. Bob Mauch, chairman of Schuylkill Township Open Space Commission, stated, "With the continued growth in Schuylkill Township, it is important to conserve areas of natural beauty that enhance our environment and quality of life."

Molly Morrison, president of Natural Lands Trust added, "We are delighted to have played a role in the permanent conservation of this sacred green space."

About the Freedoms Foundation

Freedoms Foundation is a national nonprofit organization located in Valley Forge, PA. Its mission is to educate about American rights and responsibilities, honor acts of civic virtue, and challenge all to reject apathy and get involved. It has over 25 chapters throughout the United States that support this mission through local programs and fund raising efforts. To learn more about Freedoms Foundation, visit www.freedomsfoundation.org.



About Natural Lands Trust

Natural Lands Trust is the region's oldest and largest land conservation organization and is dedicated to protecting the forests, fields, streams, and wetlands that are essential to the sustainability of life in eastern Pennsylvania and southern New Jersey. Since its founding in 1953, Natural Lands Trust has preserved more than 125,000 acres, including 43 nature preserves totaling more than 22,000 acres. Today, some 2.5 million people live within five miles of land under the organization's protection. For more information, visit www.natlands.org.

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