FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

"What was once thought to be an insurmountable task, now seems to be achievable in 10 to 20 years rather than a century"

Dear Friends,

I am writing you today to let you know that, together, we have come a long way. What was once thought to be an insurmountable task - estimated to take 1000 years - of clearing the millions of leftover bombs from Laos, now seems to be attainable in 10 to 20 years. I've never felt more confident about what we will be able to achieve in the coming years if U.S. support for this work remains strong.

Our sustained education and advocacy has resulted in an increase in U.S. government funding from an average of $2.5 million prior to 2010 to $19.5 million in 2016. Thanks to the Congressional leadership of Senators Leahy and Franken and Representatives Honda and McCollom and many others. This means just in the last five years, groups working on the ground have been able to clear 26,000 hectares of land, destroy over 187,000 pieces of Unexploded Ordnance (UXO), and reduce casualty rates from 300 in 2008 to less than 50 in 2015. Over 1,000 survivors are receiving care, services and training by victim assistance groups.

Our impact is evident today and our efforts will be felt for generations to come.

But for Koua Lor, 13, who was involved in an accident 3 years ago, the dangers of these bombs continue to be a daily threat to him and his community. In 2013, Koua and his friends were playing in the forest when they found a bomblet, which exploded, instantly killing his friend and injuring Koua so severely that he missed school for two months. Fortunately, over the last three years, Koua has received ongoing support and services through a U.S.-funded victim assistance group. Today, he is healthy and attending school. But just last month, three years after his accident, 191 pieces of UXO were found surrounding his family's home. This threat was cleared, preventing further harm because demining teams were available.

Our work is far from done. We need your help to make sure Koua and the next generation of children and families don't have to worry about where they play or go to school or grow their food.

Now is a critical time. Our support is growing, but the UXO sector in Laos needs a strong commitment of sustained funding over the next decade to complete the job. In May 2016 nearly 20 members of Congress joined our call for $25M in U.S. funding in 2017 to expand clearance teams, support more victims and implement a new survey methodology for improving bomb removal nationally.

In advance of President Obama's visit to Laos in the Fall, your support is critical to our advocacy efforts. With so many growing and
Learning Tour to Laos - Spring 2017
Join us for an exclusive, intimate trip to listen, learn from the people affected, and identify actions to make a difference.

They said it would take 1000 years.
We’re going to do it under 20 years.

We can turn these problems of bombs and safe land (an insurmountable) problem in our lifetime.

Of the $85M total in US funding in the last 40 years, about 50% came in the last 5 years as a direct result of our advocacy. Together, with your help, Legacies has achieved a six-fold increase in U.S. funding to Laos. This means more land cleared, lives saved and victims supported. I’m so grateful for all the ways you’ve contributed to make this possible.

Legacies of War hosted several community education events throughout the country, including a San Diego BBQ Fundraiser and NYC Tribeca event with Mandy Patinkin as one of our inspiring speakers. A big shout out to all our supporters in the diaspora community, who joined Legacies to mix, mingle, enjoy Lao cuisine, and watch traditional Lao dancing. For more details on our events, check out our events page. Please visit our Flickr website here for photos.

Voice of America - Obama Set to Announce More Funding for Clearing Old Bombs in Laos
Legacies was featured in a recent Voice of America’s report in June, revealing that the President will announce an increase in funding for UXO clearance in Laos. We do not know the exact amount or duration. Legacies will use the President’s visit to gain more support in Congress to achieve our goal of increasing US funding to $25M next year and allocate more to support the 12,000 victims.

BE THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO SEE IN THE WORLD - 5 THINGS YOU CAN DO
http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?m=11018144900173&c=3706fd2-2a08-4b00-ada2-0987380eafc1
1. **JOIN** us and become part of the conversation on social media. Like and share on Facebook and Twitter.

2. **WRITE/CALL** your Congressional representatives. Make sure they know that UXO clearance and the US legacy matter to you!

3. **VOLUNTEER!** Host an event in your community to raise awareness. Contact us to find out more.

4. **SAVE** the date! We have multiple events and programs scheduled, including our annual Fashion Meets Philanthropy Gala on October 15th in NYC! Keep an eye out for our events.

5. **DONATE!** Support Legacies directly by donating on our website! Each contribution will bring us a step further to solve the UXO clearance problem.

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**INSIDE LEGACIES OF WAR - INTERVIEW WITH OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS**

It has been an amazing year of organizational growth at Legacies! We are excited to welcome our two passionate and dedicated new board members, Orathai Phommala and Srida Moua! We asked our new board member Orathai for some insights:

After relocating from refugee camps in Thailand and the Philippines, Orathai and her family arrived in upstate New York during the winter of 1987. Orathai received her bachelor's degree from Rochester Institute of Technology, and recently completed a certificate program from New York University Schack Institute. She has been living in New York City for the past 9 years and works for a real estate developer.

1. **How did you initially become involved in Legacies of War?**

   I was initially in the planning committee for Fashion Meets Philanthropy: Laos in NYC event. What a thrill it was to be a part of something big! It was exciting to be involved in the planning process and to witness creative passionate minds at work.

2. **What has surprised you most about working at Legacies?**

   Most surprising is Legacies' small yet effective team. From 1995 to 2015, US funding increased from $2.5 million to $15 million - a direct result of Legacies' work. None of the funds goes to Legacies, we rely entirely on our generous supporters and donors. Now imagine a world without Legacies of War. Casualties will increase, deaths will increase, an entire nation's growth halted for generations and generations. We need your support to continue our efforts!

3. **What would you tell someone who is thinking about volunteering at Legacies?**

   I urge you to volunteer, you will take more from Legacies than you give. From my experience, Legacies has given me a new perspective & understanding, answers to questions, connections, and merging the past & present. We are a community working towards a solvable problem.

4. **If Legacies was to be on the cover of your favorite newspaper/magazine in ten years, what would be the story about?**

   I would really like to see Legacies on Time Magazine. A case model for other advocates and countries affected by cluster munitions.

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Catch our panel at ICLS in Bangkok, July 8th
Our Executive Director Channapha Khamvongsa will participate at a panel on "Legacies of Peace: Addressing the UXO Issue in Laos" at the 5th International Conference on Lao Studies at Thammasat University in Bangkok, Thailand. The panel will explore the history of the bombing in Laos and the current efforts to address the issue in the light of the planned visit by President Barack Obama. The panelists include distinguished representatives of the U.S. Embassy to Laos, the Mines Advisory Group (MAG), World Education and the Quality of Life Association. The agenda can be found here.

July/August 2016: Community Education at the Center for Southeast Asians in Rhode Island and the Lao Heritage Foundation in Washington, DC

Legacies will conduct two educational workshops on the UXO issue in Laos for children and youth this summer! We are excited to meet the children at the Center for Southeast Asians CSEA in Rhode Island on July 20th, 2016 and the Lao Heritage Foundation on August 11th, 2016. Please stop by and say hello if you are in the area!

Thank YOU, Kop Chai, and Ua Tsajg to Our New Donors and Supporters!
time donors - who are so important to helping us build for the future. All our significant progress and achievements are made possible by the important support and capacity offered through your generous donations.

Welcome to our family of supporters!
We are deeply grateful to you.

The Legacies of War Team

Thank You / Kop chai / Ua koj tsaug

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