

- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -

Local Heroes Lend Support to Benefit Area Park

SUTTONS BAY, MICHIGAN – December 11, 2012 – Three distinguished area residents will share their stories of danger, heroism and victory at a fund-raising event benefiting the continued expansion of Herman Community Park in Suttons Bay.

The evening event – titled “LIFTOFF 2013: Launching Your Best Year” – will feature keynote speaker and northern Michigan resident, Captain Jerry Linenger.

A retired United States Navy flight surgeon and NASA astronaut, Linenger spent nearly five months aboard the Russian space station *Mir*, and also held the American record for the longest time in space. In 1998, NASA awarded Linenger the Distinguished Service Medal, its highest honor. Linenger is author of *Off the Planet* and *Letters from Mir: An Astronaut's Letters to His Son*. He also collaborated on and appeared in numerous documentaries and frequently serves as a space analyst for *Today*, *Nightly News* and MSNBC, CBS, CNN, PBS and Fox.

The event will also feature Major Dick Grout and Captain Robert Maynard, World War II veterans and Suttons Bay residents. Grout participated in D-Day landings at Normandy and later received the Purple Heart medal after being wounded at the Battle of the Bulge. Maynard led part of the Tank Destroyer Battalion, which landed at the beaches of Anzio, marched up through Italy, into southern France, and eventually driving the Nazis through fortified France and back into Germany.

This inspirational event will take place on January 10, 2013, from 5:30 to 8 p.m. at the Dennon Museum Milliken Auditorium in Traverse City. Tickets are just \$99, and include a pre-event reception with light appetizers and wine. To purchase tickets or for more information, please visit www.utopiafound.org.

About Herman Community Park

In August 2009, through the efforts of Suttons Bay Township and the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation 126 acres of land was purchased with the goal of creating a "Gathering Place in the Heart of Leelanau County". Generous Grants provided by the Michigan Department Natural Resources Trust Fund, Traverse City Rotary Charities, Leelanau Conservancy, Oleson Foundation, Schmuckal Family Foundation, Suttons Bay Bingham Endowment, GTRCF Youth Advisory Endowment and many private donations allowed the purchase and initial development. The park is located on the edge of Suttons Bay Village and adjacent to the Leelanau/Tart Trail. The land is in the developmental stage and already includes a paved parking lot, 18 Hole Disc Golf Course, a fishing pond and multi-use athletic fields. The proceeds from the benefit will allow the added development of tennis courts, community pavilion and a connector trail to the Leelanau/Tart Trail. The park will have universal accessibility. For further information, please go to <http://www.suttonsbayparks.org> or phone 231-499-8502

About Utopia Foundation

Paul Sutherland founded the Utopia Foundation in 2007 with the team support of innovative and dedicated fellow board members. Utopia Foundation is committed to providing opportunity for people to express their good intentions in local and international communities. We invest in Champions that have the desire to create or are part of resilient projects that create sustainable improvements in the livelihoods of those in need. Our approach is pragmatic, creative, and entrepreneurial, as we seek opportunities to implement our mission.

www.utopiafound.org