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Night of 1000 Dinners™ Raises Money for Demining Efforts

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On November 30, 2001, friends, family and colleagues came together with the hope of alleviating the suffering caused by landmines in a landmark event called the Night of 1000 Dinners.

by Nicole Kreger, MAIC

Introduction

The Canadian Landmine Foundation (CLF) and the United Nations Association of the United States of America (UNA-USA) sponsored a worldwide charity event called the *Night of 1000 Dinners* (N1KD). This unique event, which benefited the Adopt-A-Minefield® Campaign, among other organizations, spanned over 30 countries, including the United States, Lebanon, Croatia, Greece, Canada, Norway, Pakistan and Mozambique. People invited friends and family to their homes or hosted events through their businesses, schools or religious organizations. Guests were asked to make contributions to the landmine cause, while hosts were encouraged to prepare a meal native to one of the more than 70 landmine-affected countries in the world. The event was designed not only to raise money for the cause, but also to raise awareness among the general public about the worldwide threat that landmines pose.



Guests sample Lebanese cuisine at this Night of 1000 Dinners.
c/o MAIC

About Night of a Thousand Dinners

Background

The N1KD event was created so that people everywhere around the world could support the Adopt-A-Minefield campaign by doing something as simple as having dinner with their family, friends and colleagues. The N1KD concept was the brainchild of Frank O'Dea, Chair of the Canadian Landmine Foundation. It is a uniquely creative idea that allows people from literally all walks of life throughout the world to support mine action in their own personal ways. Thousands of individuals around the world, in essence "break bread" together to help resolve the global landmine crisis. Adopt-A-Minefield hopes to have the event annually on December 3rd in honor of the Mine Ban Treaty anniversary.

Dinner Ideas

Hosts were encouraged to invite friends, family and colleagues to their dinners. Many different types of dinners were held, ranging from large galas to intimate gatherings. Suggestions for meals from the N1KD website included holding a potluck dinner or serving food from any of six mine-afflicted countries: Croatia, Afghanistan, Vietnam, Cambodia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Mozambique. The recipes included Croatian Cookies, Afghan Lamb with Spinach, Vietnamese

Chicken Salad, Green Mango Salad from Cambodia, Clam and Peanut Stew from Mozambique and Musaka from Bosnia-Herzegovina ([see the end of this article for these recipes](#)).

Adopt-A-Minefield hoped that, in addition to enjoying a meal with friends, guests would take the opportunity to become more aware of the global problem posed by landmines. For this reason, hosts were supplied with a number of ideas on how to discuss the topic. Each host was encouraged to show a video about Adopt-A-Minefield, invite a guest speaker, start to get the community more involved, write letters to a government representative or simply discuss the issue with his/her guests. Spreading awareness in this manner, in addition to raising money to help clear mine fields, helps Adopt-A-Minefield fulfill its primary objectives.

Who Was Involved?

The N1KD event took place all over the world, with people participating in 35 countries such as Albania, Australia, Austria, Bermuda, Bosnia, Canada, Croatia, Denmark, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Finland, England, Greece, Hong Kong, Israel, Kenya, Eritrea, the Krygz Republic, Ethiopia, Lebanon, the Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Norway, Pakistan, the Philippines, Portugal, South Africa, Scotland, South Korea, Slovenia, Sudan, Sweden, Thailand, the United Kingdom, the United States and Vietnam. A number of celebrities also hosted events, including Paul McCartney and Heather Mills, Queen Noor of Jordan and Martha Stewart. Other opportunities to get involved included being an affiliate organization or a corporate sponsor.

N1KD Affiliates

Several other organizations were affiliated with the N1KD event. These included Physicians Against Landmines (PALM), the Center for International Rehabilitation, the Marshall Legacy Institute (MLI), Clear Path International, The United States Campaign to Ban Landmines (USCBL), Physicians for Human Rights, Roots of Peace, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), Landmine Survivors Network (LSN), the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVAFA), The Cambodia Trust, the International Institute of Prosthetic Rehabilitation of Landmine Survivors (IPRLS) and the Canadian International Demining Corps (CDIC). Hosts were able to select an affiliate organization to receive their donations. The affiliate organization received 85 percent of those donations, and Adopt-A-Minefield received the other 15 percent.

Attending a Dinner

An Intimate Cocktail Party

I was fortunate enough to be able to attend one of the "1000 dinners" on the evening of November 30. The event was a small cocktail party held by Rania Kfuri, a United Nations Association National Command Authority (UNA-NCA) employee who works closely with Adopt-A-Minefield. Ms. Kfuri hosted about 15 people at this intimate gathering, most of them friends she knew from her neighborhood.

Most of the menu consisted of traditional Lebanese cuisine that the hostess prepared herself. The food included Kibbeh balls, which are balls of meat stuffed with minced meat, pine nuts and onions; spinach pastries, consisting of triangles of dough stuffed with spinach and diced onions; hummus, made of crushed chickpeas mixed with lemon juice, garlic and palm seed oil (*tahina*); *Baba Ghannouj*, or roast eggplant puree; and *Lahem Bi Ajeen*, meaning "meat and dough," which are thin bases of dough topped with minced meat and pine nuts.

We watched the video provided by Adopt-A-Minefield, which included statistical information about landmines, as well as a short speech from Colin Powell. Since most of the attendees were of Middle Eastern descent, the landmine problem is one that directly impacts their homelands. The guests were interested in finding out information about landmines as well as learning more about the global landmine crisis.

A More Formal Gathering with the OAS

The Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), Dr. César Gaviria, and the Permanent Representative of Canada to the OAS, Ambassador Paul Durand, hosted a cocktail reception on November 29 on behalf of the OAS. The OAS's interest in raising awareness and funds for mine action stems from the fact that its Member States have adopted the goal of the

global elimination of AP landmines with the hope of making the Western Hemisphere an AP landmine-free zone. One of the OAS's main partners in their anti-landmine campaign is the Inter-American Defense Board (IADB), which provides military technical advice and assistance. Many of the members of the OAS and IADB were among the approximately 100 guests at the event.

During the gathering, His Excellency Paul Durand, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Canada to the OAS spoke about the success of the OAS demining programs in Honduras, Guatemala, Costa Rica and Nicaragua. Also, he commended Canada's involvement with the Ban Treaty and with demining in general. In addition, Ambassador Luigi R. Einaudi, Assistant Secretary General of the OAS, addressed participants and spoke about the successful cooperation that is helping to rid these countries of landmines. All attendees are looking forward to their end goal, a hemisphere free of landmines, and because of the cooperation of these organizations, it is a goal that is within their reach.

Colin Powell's N1KD Event

U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell hosted an N1KD-related dinner on November 27 to celebrate public-private partnerships in humanitarian demining. Some of the people in attendance at this event included Bobby Mueller, a Nobel laureate and President of the VVAF; Senator Pat Leahy; Dennis Barlow of James Madison University's Mine Action Information Center (JMU-MAIC); Jerry White and Ken Rutherford, co-founders of the LSN; Queen Noor of Jordan; William H. Luers, the President and CEO of UNA-USA; and Lincoln Bloomfield, the new President's Special Representative for Global Humanitarian Demining.

During the event, Powell gave a speech commending the activities made possible by public-private partnerships. In his remarks, he said, "[M]y friends, we gather tonight to honor the wonderful work that has been done through public/private partnerships for mine action, and to recommit ourselves to this life-saving work. Our goal is to mobilize support for landmine clearance, mine awareness, survivor assistance and to find new demining technologies that will make the work that we do even more effective." He also announced that similar dinners in conjunction with the N1KD event were being held at 14 American embassies around the world. Powell emphasized the importance of mine action in maintaining public safety and in the reconstruction processes of affected countries: "Mine action is about healing the wounds of war, reaching out to its victims, opening economic opportunities for shattered communities and creating a secure and stable environment where political and economic freedom can thrive." He also said that while mine action personnel may at times disagree on how to go about their work, they all agree "that the goal is a mine-safe world."

Conclusion

Adopt-A-Minefield has calculated that there were around 900 registered dinners with an estimated attendance level of 20,000. Also, many others are sending in checks without having registered. All of the information about the event will be posted on the N1KD website once most of the checks have been registered.

Alyse Schrecongost, Marketing Coordinator at Adopt-A-Minefield says of the N1KD event, "It is a great way to bring people together to not only raise money for mine action, but more importantly, to raise awareness of the landmine problem. People who may find landmines an overwhelming or impossible-to-resolve subject find the issue 'approachable' through the *Night of 1000 Dinners*. Many others learned about the issue for the first time through a friend's dinner." Information on next year's event will be posted at the N1KD website.

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Recipies

Afghan Lamb with Spinach

Ingredients:

2 1/2 lb lamb stew meat, preferably leg
 1/3 cup olive oil
 3/4 lb onions; diced large
 4 tsp. garlic; chopped
 2 tsp. turmeric
 1/4 tsp. nutmeg
 1/4 tsp. cardamom; ground
 1 tsp. (or to taste) red pepper; crushed
 1/2 tsp. cinnamon
 32 oz. can tomatoes; drained & chopped
 1 cup rich brown veal stock or 1 cup rich beef stock
 1/3 lb. fresh spinach; washed & drained
 1/2 cup yogurt
 1 Tbs. lemon peel; grated
 Salt to taste
 1/4 cup pine nuts

1. Roasted at 350° F. for about 3 minutes.
2. Sear lamb in the olive oil in a cast-iron skillet or Dutch oven.
3. Add the onions; sauté them for 2 minutes; then add the garlic and sauté it for 1 minute.
4. Put in the turmeric, nutmeg, cardamom, crushed red pepper and cinnamon and sauté the mixture for 1 to 2 minutes more, being careful not to burn the onions or garlic.
5. Add the tomatoes and veal stock and stir.
6. Cover the dish and bake at 350° F. for about 1 hour, until the meat is tender and begins to break up.
7. Remove the dish from the oven and add the spinach, stirring until the spinach is wilted and blended in.
8. Allow the stew to cool slightly.
9. Add the yogurt, lemon peel and salt to taste. Sprinkle with roasted pine nuts.

Yield: 4 to 6 servings. Serve over rice pilaf.

Vietnamese Chicken Salad with Hot Tahini Sauce

This is a wonderful spicy dressing, and it is best served on the side so that diners can adjust the heat level to their own preference.

Ingredients:

2 chicken breasts, whole; skin removed

8 green onions; julienned
 5 cups Bok choy; shredded
 2 Tbs. peanuts
 1/4 cup Tahini
 1 1/2 Tbs. Chinese hot oil
 3 Tbs. soy sauce
 1/4 cup peanut oil
 3 Tbs. red wine vinegar
 2 tsp. sugar
 1 small carrot; julienned
 1 garlic clove; minced

1. Cook chicken.
2. Cool and cut into thin strips.
3. Cut onions and carrot into thin julienned strips.
4. Mix chicken, onions, carrots and bok choy.
5. Sprinkle peanuts on top. For the dressing, beat tea into tahini in a small bowl then mix in all the remaining dressing ingredients.
6. Serve salad with the dressing on the side.

Croatian Nut and Jelly Cookies

Ingredients:

1/2 lb. sweet butter
 1/2 cup sugar
 1 egg yolk
 1/2 tsp. salt
 2 1/2 cups flour
 4 egg whites
 1 cup sugar
 3/4 cup walnuts; finely ground
 1 tsp. Lemon extract
 Blackberry jelly

1. Cream butter and sugar; add egg yolk and salt.
2. Add flour gradually and beat.
3. Pat dough into thin layer in 12 x 12 inch pan.
4. Beat egg whites; add sugar until mixture stands in stiff peaks.
5. Fold in ground nuts and flavoring.
6. Spread jelly over and swirl meringue on top.
7. Sprinkle with chopped nuts.
8. Bake at 350° F about 45 minutes.
9. When warm, cut in squares.

Yield: 1 panful

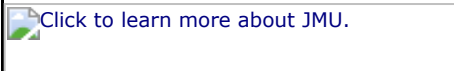
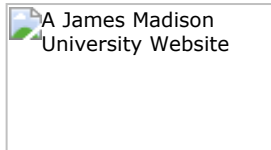
Green Mango Salad (Cambodia)

Ingredients:

1 Tbs. chile paste
 1 Tbs. chunky peanut butter
 1 tsp. fish sauce
 1 lime; juiced
 1 Tbs. fish powder
 1 green mango; peeled & julienned
 1 green tomato wedges; sliced thin
 2 shallots; sliced thin
 1 pickling cucumbers; sliced thin
 Salt and pepper to taste
 1 green onion; chopped

Red bell peppers; stemmed & seeded
Fresh basil or mint; chopped

1. Combine the chile paste, peanut butter, fish sauce, lime juice, and fish powder.
2. Toss with the mango, tomato, shallots, and cucumber.
3. Add salt and pepper to taste.
4. Garnish with the green onion, peppers, and basil, and serve.

	
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