



For Immediate Release

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Congressional Gold Medal to be awarded posthumously to Rocco J. DeLuca of Norwich, at Easterseals Veterans Rally Point

Norwich, CT (November 3, 2022) – The Congressional Gold Medal is being presented to Joyce DeLuca Horey in honor of her late father, Rocco J. DeLuca of Norwich CT, on Wednesday, the 9th of November 2022 at 5 p.m. The ceremony will take place in the Hall of Flags at Easterseals Capital Region & Eastern Connecticut, Veterans Rally Point located at 24 Stott Ave, Norwich, CT.

Since the American Revolution, the United States Congress has commissioned Gold Medals, as the nation's highest award for military valor. The award states that it is in recognition of "Rocco DeLuca's 1944 heroism, sacrifice and success while fighting behind enemy lines with the 5307th Composite Unit Provisional." The 5307th served with distinction in the China Burma India Theater during World War II: its members were known as Merrill's Marauders.

The Army's famed Merrill's Marauders, the 2,997 Americans who served in the 5307th Composite Unit, answered the call for the most dangerous missions during World War II and were named after their commander, then Brig. Gen. Frank Merrill. The soldiers marched and fought through the jungles and mountains in Burma (now Myanmar) and defeated the Japanese 18th Division in five major and 30 minor engagements, according to the Army. Only two Marauders remain alive: Russell Hamler, 98, in Pa. and Gabriel "Gabe" Kinney, 101, in Ala.

In 2021, Rocco passed away at age 99. Easterseals Veterans Rally Point was honored to host his memorial service at Veterans Rally Point on Saturday, November 6, 2021, just prior to the ribbon cutting of the new facility serving active duty, guard, reserve, veterans, and their families. The state-of-the-art facility provides comprehensive services for those who have served to ensure their successful reintegration into all aspects of civilian life. Services include behavioral health, employment and resume assistance, educational and job skill training, financial assessment and coaching, peer meet-ups, a maker space, a fitness center with wellness programs, and more.

"As former member of the elite 75th Rangers, it is a true honor and privilege to preside over this ceremony in the presentation of the Merrill's Marauder Congressional Gold Medal in honor and

memory of this great American Hero, Rocco J. DeLuca. Rangers Lead the Way!" said Brigadier General (Ret.) Ron Welch.

"We are truly honored to host this event honoring Rocco who gave so much to our country" said Robin Sharp, President & CEO of Easterseals Capital Region and Eastern CT. "We thank Rocco's family, especially his daughter Joyce, for the opportunity to honor his service at this historic event."

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About Easterseals Capital Region & Eastern Connecticut

Overview of our life-changing 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization: For more than 70 years, award-winning and CARF-accredited Easterseals Capital Region & Eastern Connecticut has been serving children, seniors, veterans and adults with disability and other special needs. Through its unique Easterseals Veterans Rally Point services as well as its other services, including Medical & Vocational Rehabilitation, Neuropsychology, Dementia Clinic, Supported Education, Adult Day Support and Social Enterprise Businesses, Easterseals is leading the way to 100% equity inclusion and access for people with disabilities, families, and communities. All Abilities. Limitless Possibilities.

Visit www.easterseals.com/Hartford and www.veteransrallypoint.com to learn more.

About Easterseals

For more than 100 years, Easterseals has been the indispensable resource for individuals with disabilities, veterans, seniors, and their families. Together, our 68 affiliates in communities nationwide serve 1.5 million people annually through high-quality programs including autism services, early intervention, workforce development, adult day care and more. In schools, workplaces, and communities, we are fostering environments where everyone is included and valued — making a real and positive impact on us all. Join us in ensuring that everyone – regardless of age or ability – is 100% included and 100% empowered. Learn more at www.easterseals.com