



PRESS RELEASE



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A Construction Accident Survivor's Remarkable Journey to the Rose Parade

Olympian Cliff Meidl to appear on DigAlert's "Contact 811" float

Pasadena — Two-time Olympian and Team USA Flag Bearer Cliff Meidl will be partnering with DigAlert at the Rose Parade 2019.

Meidl, a member of the 1996 and 2000 USA Olympic Kayaking Team, is honored to have been selected to ride in the Rose Parade 2019 DigAlert (Underground Service Alert Southern California) "Backyard Harmony" float, designed and built by Fiesta Floats.

The theme of this year's Rose Parade is "The Melody of Life," celebrating the universal language of music and the powerful way in which it is woven into every aspect of our lives. Singer, songwriter, and philanthropist Chaka Khan will serve as the parade's 2019 Grand Marshal.

For several years, Meidl has been a national safety ambassador and spokesperson for the fast-growing Contact 811 Before You Dig movement. His mission is to increase awareness about the need for contractors and property owners to contact 811 before doing any digging or excavation projects. Meidl explains that, "By contacting 811 before you dig, utility owners can send representatives out to your place of excavation to mark the locations of their underground utilities and thus avoid damage to existing underground facilities and prevent injuries."



Cliff Meidl Enterprises, LLC

Cliff Meidl's inspiring personal story contributes to his passion for working with DigAlert and their national safe digging partners. While operating a jackhammer on a construction worksite when he was just 20 years old, he made contact with three live electrical cables that sent thousands of volts of electricity through his body and nearly took his life. Thankfully, fast-acting first responders were able to resuscitate Cliff after his heart failed. Over 15% of his body was burned due to the severe electrical shock — including serious exit wounds on his back and the back of his head; but most of the damage was done to his knees. The extreme electricity burned over one-third of the bone in both of his knee compartments.

"When I finally regained consciousness in the hospital," Meidl recalls, "I realized the extent of my injuries and wondered about the quality of life ahead." Despite doctors' recommendations of amputating both legs, Cliff's parents fought and found Dr. Malcolm Lesavoy, a UCLA Reconstructive Plastic Surgeon, who saved Cliff's legs with an innovative transplant procedure that re-built his knees by grafting muscle.

After several years of intense rehabilitation, Cliff's younger brother, Norman, introduced him to Outrigger canoeing and kayak paddling. He quickly fell in love with the sport and excelled through hard work and determination. Ten years after his unfortunate accident, Cliff realized his childhood dream of becoming an Olympian. He made the USA Olympic Kayaking Team and competed in both the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games and the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games.

Cliff's story is one of resilience and strength — not only did he beat the odds, he shattered them. Competing twice in the Olympic Games was a triumph and honor for Cliff. At the Sydney Olympic Games, Cliff was bestowed one of the highest honors as an Olympian — he was chosen to be Team USA Flag Bearer and lead the entire US delegation carrying the American flag into the Opening Ceremony.

Since then, Meidl has served as a national media spokesperson in the construction Safety and Contact 811 Before You Dig industries, including DigAlert. He uses his own experience as a messenger through motivational speaking to encourage workers to uphold the highest of safety standards at all times. His mission perfectly aligns with DigAlert's goal to reduce damages and save lives by taking preventative measures whether on construction sites or at home in their communities.

"Being unfamiliar with your worksite surroundings and shortcuts often lead to danger and can result in injury or death," says Meidl. "However, if I can get the message out, an experience such as mine may inspire others to work safely and look out for their fellow employees."

What better way to keep everyone safe than to raise awareness about such an invaluable organization at an event as exciting as The Rose Parade?

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cliffmeidl.com