

For Immediate Release

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THE link



**The Link Announces Gala Honoring Jim Marshall,
presented by The Armory Foundation, Entourage
Events Group, Allied Productions**

*April 18 fundraiser will uplift youth voices and support
The Link's programs amid rising community need*

MINNEAPOLIS, MN (March 24, 2026) -The Link announced that we will be holding our 10th [Annual Gala](#) – An Evening Honoring our late Co-Founder and Vikings Legend, Jim Marshall on Saturday, April 18th at the Armory. We are incredibly grateful to our presenting partners– the Armory Foundation, Entourage



Events Group and Allied Productions for their generous support for the Gala. The host for the evening will be Amelia Santaniello from WCCO.

As part of the celebration, the gala will honor former Minnesota Vikings great Jim Marshall, co-founder of The Link. Marshall, who passed away on June 3, 2025, is considered one of the best players in franchise history. Marshall a member of the renowned “Purple People Eaters” held the record for most consecutive starts in NFL history with 270, a record later broken by Hall of Famer Brett Favre. Up until his last game of his career, Marshall had appeared in every Vikings game since the team began playing in 1961. In that final game Marshall capped his career with two sacks and was awarded the first game ball in franchise history from Coach Bud Grant.

For more than three decades The Link has provided crisis support and

critical services to youth during their journey to stability. The Link continues to operate within Jim and Oscar’s vision of “doing whatever it takes” to help youth who have been involved in crime, have been victims of sex trafficking or who are struggling with poverty and homelessness. With more than 250 units of housing for youth experiencing homelessness and/or sex trafficking, The Link is the largest provider of youth housing in the state of Minnesota. Even with this growth, The Link remains rooted in the North Minneapolis community and vision of our co-founders, Jim Marshall and Oscar Reed.

As a part of their mission to serve the community, the Armory Foundation is not only a key partner in the event but also a presenting sponsor alongside Allied Productions and Entourage Events Group.

“We are honored to celebrate the wonderful things The Link is doing to help others in our community,” said Rich Richardson of the Armory Foundation. “We are looking forward to a great evening of honoring the memory of a great individual in Jim Marshall who did so much more than being an all-pro football player.”

The gala will include a silent auction, dinner and entertainment. Several VIPs, Sports Celebrities and State and Local government officials are scheduled to attend. In addition, numerous staff and youth of The Link will be honored for their service to the nonprofit. There will also be an After Party presented by Apple Autos.

The Link's CEO, Beth Holger, says that support from the greater community is crucial to the growth of the organization's mission.

"Jim means more to all of us than I can put into words – we wanted to uplift and honor his legacy in the best possible way which is why we are holding a larger Gala this year," said Holger. "We are very grateful that The Armory Foundation is such a great partner to help us reach our goals as the need for our services increases."

Marshall and teammate Oscar Reed started The Link after they retired from football. From humble beginnings, the organization is now thriving as a resource for members of the community who need support.

"Jim and Oscar were hands-on leaders and helped mentor us and have taught us so much," said Holger. "We are thrilled to honor Jim's legacy with an award for his legendary impact off the field."

Marshall's wife, Sue Marshall, who will accept the award at the gala said that her husband will be remembered for being so much more than elite football player, thanks to his commitment to the community.

"Jim is a beloved member of the Minnesota Vikings and will be remembered by so many fans as The Captain and leader of those great teams of the 60s and 70s. But what is less known is that he brought that leadership and enthusiasm into the community, volunteering, working and making a difference for decades," said Marshall. "His ultimate community endeavor became The Link, joining with Oscar Reed over 35 years ago who was already teaching self-resilience to kids in the projects on the Northside. The Gala is a great opportunity for folks to learn more about that work and to support the continuation of that legacy."

For the Armory Foundation, recognizing the legacy of both The Link and Jim Marshall is a testament to what the nonprofit has done for more than 35 years.

"As part of the Minneapolis landscape it is important we support the extraordinary work of the people at The Link," added Richardson of the Armory Foundation. "We are humbled to put our resources into a celebration of a great man and his tremendous legacy for helping others."

Sue Marshall said she knows her late husband would be proud to be honored at the gala.

"As Bud Grant would often say, Jim was special. He had an unwavering ability to persevere no matter how hard things got or how many setbacks occurred in a game or in his life. He stayed hopeful, positive, and focused," said Marshall. "As his wife, I have seen the incredible impact Jim could have on a person through his attention, his joy, his smile, his words of encouragement or counsel. I am deeply proud of him for how he treated people and how he tried to make a difference in people's lives."

For more information, to donate, or to purchase tickets to the gala please <https://thelinkmn.org/>

The Link's Gala At A-Glance:

What: The Link's 10th Annual Gala, An Evening Honoring Jim Marshall, presented by The Armory Foundation

Where: The Armory, 500 South 6th St, Minneapolis, MN 55415

When: Saturday, April 18 beginning at 5 p.m. with a silent auction followed by dinner and entertainment at 7 p.m.

Why: Gala Benefit to support The Link; largest nonprofit provider of juvenile justice alternative programs, emergency shelter and housing for homeless and sex trafficked youth in MN.

Who: 100 percent of the funds raised at Gala will be donated to The Link. [Home](#)

About the Armory Foundation:

Established in 2018, the Armory Foundation was created to find unique ways to use the historic Armory to support local communities in the Twin Cities and the surrounding area. The Foundation's philanthropic focus is cultural programs and initiatives that contribute to the vitality of the community as a whole. Specific areas of interest include arts and culture, community development and critical social services. For more information, please visit <https://armorymn.com/information/armory-foundation/>

About The Link:

The Link is a youth and adult led non-profit that provides crisis support, emergency shelter and housing to over 2,000 youth and young families in the Twin Cities each year. The Link offers a safety net for youth often left behind, providing programs designed to meet the needs of BIPOC youth, LGBTQ youth, young parents, and more. The Link was founded in 1991 by two Black community leaders and former Minnesota Vikings, Jim Marshall and Oscar Reed. They recognized the need that at-risk and homeless youth had on the North side of Minneapolis. The Link has grown to serve youth throughout the entire metro area. For more information, please visit <https://thelinkmn.org/>

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