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AMERICAN & SYRIAN YOUTHS CREATE NEW DISABLED SUPERHERO – THE SILVER SCORPION

*~ At Crucial Historical Moment, Young Diplomats Unveil a Comic Book Hero That
Transcends Political, Cultural and Religious Differences ~*

NEW YORK, NY— May 6, 2011 – Liquid Comics and the Open Hands Initiative, a U.S.-based nonprofit dedicated to public diplomacy efforts, announced today the launch of a new comic book that will introduce children around the world to the *Silver Scorpion*, an Arab teenager who loses his legs in a tragic accident, but whose powers- his creators hope- include the ability to help build bridges between the youth of America and the Arab world, starting with Syria.

The first issue of the Silver Scorpion will be given away free across comic book retailers in the United States this Saturday May 7th as part of "[Free Comic Book Day](#)". In addition, a digital edition of Silver Scorpion is also now available for free on the home page of [Scribd.com](#) where it can be read online and through iPad devices, as well as shared with friends through Facebook and Twitter. A larger, magazine-sized collector version of the first issue is also available for order via [HP's Magcloud](#) print on demand service.

Silver Scorpion is more than just a new superhero; it represents a unique breakthrough in U.S. public diplomacy efforts at a crucial juncture in the relationship between America and the Arab world. As President Bill Clinton highlighted at the 2010 Clinton Global Initiative, the Silver Scorpion "*will help to establish trust and understanding between cultures, to empower young people with disabilities.*"

"As the Arab world is undergoing historic and transformative changes, the American people can, and should, play an important role in strengthening and deepening the relationships between the people of our two cultures," said Jay T Snyder, American businessman and Co-Founder and Chairman of the Open Hands Initiative. *"This comic book is an act of public diplomacy, a gift from the young people of America and Syria to the world."*

"Disability is an issue that connects all people, no matter their race or religion or country," said Dr. Valerie Karr, a Contributing Editor to the Comic and a specialist on disability. *"A dedication to the rights of people with disabilities is the most fundamental expression of shared values one can find. The Silver Scorpion is the embodiment of those values."*

In August 2010, Liquid Comics joined the [Open Hands Initiative](#) to take a group of American youths with disabilities to Damascus, where they met with a group of young Syrian counterparts at the first-ever international "[Youth Ability Summit](#)". In workshops led by Liquid Comics and disability experts from the Victor Pineda Foundation, the children were asked to work together to create an original superhero that reflected their cross-cultural values and ideals as well as the challenges of living with a disability. By the end of the summit, the wheelchair-bound character of the Silver Scorpion was born.

The Silver Scorpion tells the story of an Arabic teenager, Bashir Bari, who loses his legs in a tragic accident. Consumed with anger and grief, Bashir retreats into a world of isolation, resentful of the pitiful looks and whispers of strangers. When he accidentally witnesses the

murder of Tarek, a mysterious local metalsmith, Bashir is unwittingly chosen as the new guardian of an ancient power that has remained hidden for centuries. With new abilities allowing him to manipulate the metal around him, Bashir must rise above his personal grief and use this newfound gift to protect the world, while learning firsthand to embrace the values of tolerance and cooperation to achieve great heights. Liquid Comics worked with leading comic book talents Ron Marz and Mukesh Singh to help take the ideas of the youth participants and turn them into an exciting comic book story.

Liquid Comics Co-Founder & CEO Sharad Devarajan says the Silver Scorpion's superpowers go even further. *"Our hope is that the Silver Scorpion will also be a positive role model to increase a dialogue and tear down some of the divisive political and social rhetoric between the West and the Arab region. Great superheroes have always been allegories to larger societal issues in the world. The bigger story of our generation is the story of globalization and our ability to overcome our regional and cultural differences to find our common humanity. While I hope people enjoy the adventures of Bashir and his transformation into the Silver Scorpion, for me, the more exciting story is how this comic book was created- from the minds of two very different groups of extraordinary youths who speak to the very best of globalization in the years ahead."*

Snyder added, *"What is truly amazing about this comic book is not just that it features a disabled superhero as the main character, but that it was inspired by youths who came from the United States and Syria. They had never met before. They spoke different languages. They had different cultures and backgrounds. Yet still, they found common ground through their creativity, and have given the world a character that transcends their differences."*

The ten American children who participated in the Youth Ability Summit that led to the creation of the "Silver Scorpion" say Bashir is the character they'd longed to see on the pages of a comic book. *"The Silver Scorpion illustrates that no matter if you are in Damascus or Des Moines, at the end of the day, we all share the same hopes and dreams,"* said Sarah Funes, a teenager from South San Francisco, California. *"Creating this comic has united our small group from two different worlds forever as part of a unique community, and we cannot wait to share our experiences and creation with the world."*

Syrian students who took part in the summit said that the collaboration with American children was life-changing. *"It made me feel that I have to improve my life,"* said Abdulrahman Hussein, who wants to learn English so he can meet more people and better communicate with his new American friends.

"We hope the character also teaches children with disabilities to overcome the perception of their disability as a weakness, and instead find empowerment and pride in who they are, regardless of their differences," added Devarajan.

In addition to the US release, 50,000 copies of the Silver Scorpion in Arabic will also be distributed for free to schools and youth centers within Syria, as well as in various countries throughout the region. The comic series will feature additional issues and superheroes in the coming months, including female and western heroes, who will interact and engage with the Silver Scorpion as he seeks to defeat a mysterious evil.

Please visit www.FreeComicBookDay.com for more information on how to locate a comic book retailer near you to get a free copy of Silver Scorpion. Digital editions of Silver Scorpion are available to read for free online at www.Scribd.com/LiquidComics and people can also order a "Print-on-Demand" collector's edition of Silver Scorpion to be mailed to them at <http://www.magcloud.com/browse/Issue/178024>

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

To access a free digital version of the Silver Scorpion comic, please visit:

<http://www.Scribd.com/LiquidComics>

To request a hard-copy version, or for general media inquiries, please contact:

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ABOUT LIQUID COMICS:

Liquid Comics is a digital entertainment company focused on creating cinematic and mythic graphic novel stories with filmmakers, creators and storytellers. The company was founded by entrepreneurs, *Gotham Chopra, Sharad Devarajan and Suresh Seetharaman* and uses the medium of digital graphic novel publishing to develop properties for theatrical live-action films, animation and video games.

www.LiquidComics.com

ABOUT THE OPEN HANDS INITIATIVE

The Open Hands Initiative is a US-based non-profit organization by Jay. T and Tracy Snyder, dedicated to improving people-to-people understanding and friendship throughout the world through exchanges and other projects that emphasize our basic shared values and common humanity. It specializes in diplomacy that is by and for ordinary people, emphasizing dialogue and mutual respect between the people of the United States and the rest of the world.

www.openhandsinitiative.org