That Landmine Thing: Help Save the Lives of Thousands of Children Around the World

• It is estimated that 26,000 civilians are killed or maimed every year by landmines. Approximately 6,000 to 10,000 are children—about 30 children a day.

• Landmines are designed to maim, not kill adults. Because children are smaller, projectiles meant for an adult’s legs can hit a child’s head or vital organs.

• A child who survives a mine blast is likely to be seriously injured and permanently disabled. They may lose one or both legs or arms and suffer other horrific corporal injuries. Shrapnel may cause blindness and disfigure their face.

• Child amputees often are not able to attend school because of their disability. Many are too ashamed to leave their homes or play with other children.

• Children are particularly at risk because of their curiosity—they like to pick up and play with new objects and can mistake a landmine for a toy or harmless object. In Northern Iraq for example, some children use landmines to make wheels for their go-carts.

• Some antipersonnel mines, such as airborne butterfly mines, are painted bright colors specifically designed to attract children.

• The problem isn’t just the difficulty of treating children, but the lack of any treatment at all. 85% of child victims of landmines die before they reach the hospital.—(NCEX Exec. Director Capt. Belang)

• Handicap International estimates that, on average, a child may have to wait up to 10 years before having a prosthetic limb fitted.

• A growing child’s artificial limb should be replaced every six months; adults need a new one every three to five years. Prostheses cost around $125: for a 10-year-old child with a life expectancy of another 50 years, the total cost is about $5,125. (http://www.newint.org/issue294/facts.html)

Welcome To Our
Helping Kids Issue

★ Learn how landmines affect children around the world
★ Great ideas for student fundraising
★ See how much it costs to clear a minefield and to assist survivors

GET INVOLVED! Join fellow students from around the globe in their quest to make a better world.

JOIN THAT LANDMINE THING!
E-mail: info@ThatLandmineThing.org to register your school and receive copies of this newsletter, videos and pictures. See page 4 for ideas on how to spread the word and raise money to demine and help survivors.
Cambodia

Sakream Tbong village is the most landmine and UXO affected village in Sakream Commune, Preas Balang District, Cambodia. When Vietnamese troops arrived in Cambodia in 1979, they established their bases in Sakream Tbong, and this area soon became a battlefield between the former Khmer Rouge and Vietnamese troops. To prevent their location from being attacked by the Khmer Rouge, the Vietnamese scattered thousands of landmines and other traps all around the area. After Vietnamese troops withdrew from Cambodia in 1989, this area was then governed by former State of Cambodia troops, and they planted even more landmines. Now, the 166 families (population 811) living here are struggling with the devastating aftermath of these weapons. Two-thirds of the total land area of the village is landmine and UXO contaminated. Despite this fact, villagers must still use this land to grow food, and schoolchildren must still travel down makeshift pathways through the mines to get to their classroom. The mines and UXO endanger the villagers, and they also impede agriculture, infrastructure development, and economic productivity of the village.

The students of Sakream Tbong village school: Dim Cheu pictured front row center.

A group of AAM marathon runners raised sponsorship donations to run the Marine Corps Marathon in Washington, DC, last October. AAM used the funds that were raised to clear land around the school in Sakream Tbong. The school had been in need of repair, but construction could not take place because the school was in the middle of a minefield. So as the land was being cleared, another organization followed just behind, repairing the school and building additional classrooms for the students. AAM funds were also used to assist a young survivor named Dim Cheu who had been badly injured on the site. “One day in 2001,” Cheu told us sadly, “when I was at grade 1 in Sakream Primary School, we went to clear the garbage around the building before going into the classroom as normal. At that time, I didn’t know anything about landmines. During the clearance of garage I saw a green round plastic thing. I mixed it with the garbage and broke it with a stone. When I did that, it exploded with a loud sound and I fell onto the ground unconscious.” Cheu suffered several injuries, losing several fingers on one hand, his other arm, a leg, and an eye. Cheu is now having problems with the vision in his remaining eye; AAM is helping him get the medical attention he needs to save his sight.

Jordan

Taha Ziyadeh was sixteen years old when he and two friends went to a field to collect old mining equipment near the city of Zarqa, Jordan. The boys picked up an odd looking object, not realizing it was an artillery shell, also known as unexploded ordnance (UXO). The UXO explosion killed Taha’s two friends. He was severely injured and taken to the nearest hospital. Taha’s right leg was amputated below the knee. He remained in the hospital for two months and underwent eight surgeries to repair his left leg. Regardless of his disability, Taha was determined to have a normal life. One of the ways he did this was by participating in sports.

He began playing basketball with fellow amputees at the Jordan Sports Federation (JSF), a sports club for people with disabilities. Soon after, he was invited to be part of JSF’s national team for the disabled. “Playing basketball helped me endure the pain of physical rehabilitation those first few years,” says Taha. “The support of my teammates and the strength I gained from the exercise were key to my recovery. I think all people with limb loss should participate in sports. It is empowering to be able to compete again, and it increased my self esteem enormously.” Taha has represented Jordan in many national and international tournaments as a member of the national basketball team, and also plays sitting volleyball on a team at a local sports club.

In 2001, Taha was introduced to an LSN Outreach Worker named Hani at a local market. Hani helped him develop a business plan for a small shoe store. LSN provided Taha with the seed money to start the business. His store is enormously successful, and one of the benefits of Taha’s thriving business is being able to help fellow athletes at the Jordan Sports Federation by repairing their wheelchairs for free. Says Taha, “I love being able to help other amputees, and I know that by repairing their wheelchairs, they can participate in sports and gain the strength to recover fully the way I did.”

Mozambique

One remarkable group of students from two schools in Colorado raised a total of $14,840 this year to clear a minefield in Mozambique. Congrats to Lincoln Junior and Hinkley High School for their outstanding work. These students joined forces and embarked on a number of simple fundraising endeavors to accomplish this goal. From such events as collecting donations as sponsorship for marches through their town, to holding traditional African dinners for their community, to staging a minefield awareness event at school where students gave up the use of a limb for the day, they were able to clear an entire minefield all on their own. These students in Colorado are now connected to the students of Resnano Garcia, Mozambique, in a truly special way. Who says students can’t make a real difference?

Landmine Activists Unite!

Join UNA-USA’s Student Alliance, a nationwide network of motivated young adults who stand poised to collectively sound their voices and make their opinions heard amongst their peers, in their communities and around the world on issues of global concern.

This is a great way to communicate with other students. Organize campaigns with other schools. Talk with each other about landmines. And not only do Student Alliance members advocate for landmine clearance and survivor assistance; they also mobilize students on a wide range of other international issues including HIV/AIDS, poverty and human rights. Students Alliance offers many benefits including:

- Networking and coalition building with other student activist groups
- Opportunity to apply for mini-grants to assist a young survivor
- Invitations to UN-sponsored international youth conferences
- Promotion of local Student Alliance events via various media channels

Become a member of UNA-USA’s Student Alliance: www.unausa.org/StudentAlliance
all of the funds raised from the 2003/2004 That Landmine Thing campaign were used by Adopt-A-Minefield (AAM) to clear minefield BH-058 in Bosnia, a parcel of mined land in the village of Mostar that previously was home to over 1,200 people. The mined areas were part of a residential area and included land affecting the Mostar-Sarajevo railroad. Transportation routes will be re-established, a road will be built, and residents who lived in the area during the war will be able to return and cultivate the land near their homes.

The funds raised from last year’s campaign will be used to clear an additional minefield in Bosnia this coming year. We will notify you of which project has received these funds in our mid-year update.

The 2005/2006 campaign will focus on Afghanistan. To welcome Farah as the new Youth Ambassador, AAM recently launched a special appeal to raise funds to clear minefields and support survivor assistance programs in Afghanistan in Farah’s name. Since the late 1980s, there have been 14,000 reported landmine casualties in Afghanistan and since the fall of the Taliban, the mass return of internally displaced persons and refugees has led housing to become a vital need in this region. Half of the funds raised from this year’s That Landmine Thing campaign will be used to help fund an Afghan demining team that will clear nearly 150,000 square meters of land that can then be used for home reconstruction.

In many developing countries, children with disabilities are often not allowed to go to school or participate in sports because of shame and fear of rejection. To alter this attitude and integrate child landmine survivors and amputees back into their communities, Landmine Survivors Network (LSN) has established social clubs exclusively for kids.

PEER SUPPORT for kids

In Ethiopia, three such clubs have been organized throughout the capital, Addis Ababa. These groups offer kids an opportunity to play games, learn new skills and encourage one another while discussing common challenges in a secure and compassionate environment. The clubs meet once a month, and members enjoy playing sports (such as soccer and swimming), reading and writing poetry, and just having fun.

One of the greatest benefits resulting from the social clubs is the increase in the number of young amputees enrolling in school. Fewer than 35 percent of eligible children in Ethiopia are now enrolled in primary schools. Some 5-6 million children still have no access to basic schooling. In addition, there are over 1.5 million disabled children, of whom only an insignificant number get the opportunity for even rudimentary education. Since the beginning of the youth group program in Ethiopia, many club participants have begun attending their local schools, some for the first time.

Funds raised from That Landmine Thing will help us be able to remove signs like these in Bosnia.

Founded by two American landmine survivors, Landmine Survivors Network links landmine survivors to healthcare and rehabilitation services, peer support, social and economic reintegration programs, and works to ban landmines around the world. LSN works with survivors to help them recover physically, emotionally, socially, and financially. Our focus on health, economic opportunity, and human rights is tailored to the special needs of each survivor. Over the past year, LSN has helped thousands of families affected by landmines, war and civil strife, provided more than 60,000 home and hospital peer visits, and helped launch hundreds of survivor-owned businesses. LSN is also a leader in the campaign to draft a U.N. Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. LSN works in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Colombia, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Jordan, Mozambique, and Vietnam.

www.lsn.org
spread the word and raise money
to demine and help survivors

Your donation will help mines be cleared and survivors to heal.

Demining is a dangerous and expensive business. After the ground is safe to walk on again, landmine-affected communities still need help. Adopt-A-Minefield and Landmine Survivors Network make sure that minefields are cleared, and survivors have the support they need to recover.

AAM clears mines so that roads can be rebuilt, land can once again be farmed, and refugees can return safely home. LSM assists survivors in obtaining appropriate medical care and rehabilitation, including prostheses, crutches and wheelchairs, and helps survivors obtain jobs and fight for their human rights.

Funds raised through That Landmine Thing will clear minefields, purchase demining equipment, obtain livestock and seeds, and provide medical care and start-up funds for small businesses.

Below is a sample of some of the support That Landmine Thing is able to provide through the generous contributions of students like you.

## FUN AND FUNDRAISING IDEAS

- Benefit music concerts
- Plays and talent shows
- Car washes
- Coin drives
- Dress down days (for schools with uniforms)
- Landmine awareness weeks
- Invite a landmine activist guest speaker
- Peace garden “plant a flower, not a mine”
- Raffles
- Sale of cookbooks
- Garden stones, refreshments, gift cards, and candy
- Silent auctions
- Sleep-over events
- Talent shows
- Walk-a-thons
- Donut sales

The award-winning play “Raising Our Voices” is available for production in your school or community. Contact: info@ThatLandmineThing.org for more information.