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That Landmine Thing: Students Take on the Landmine Crisis

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That Landmine Thing: Students Take on the Landmine Crisis

Adopt-A-Minefield and Landmine Survivors Network developed a program called “That Landmine Thing” to raise money to help solve the worldwide landmine problem. Middle and high school students from all over the world have raised more than $180,000 (US) for the cause.

by Zach Hudson [Adopt-A-Minefield] and Karla Fuentes [Landmine Survivors Network]

Adopt-A-Minefield® and Landmine Survivors Network have joined forces to create That Landmine Thing, a student campaign involving thousands of young people from across North America interested in mine action. That Landmine Thing is an international fundraising campaign created for and by students to help clear minefields, assist survivors and raise awareness about the landmine problem. Since its inception, the campaign has been incredibly successful, involving nearly 1,000 schools and raising over $180,000—clearing four minefields in Cambodia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, as well as providing survivors with appropriate medical care and the means to establish a livelihood. The collaborative venture of AAM and LSN was born out of the crossover between the philosophies and missions of the two organizations. Adopt-A-Minefield clears minefields so, with due effort, land can once again be farmed and refugees can return safely home. Landmine Survivors Network assists survivors and raises awareness about the landmine problem. Since its inception, the campaign has been incredibly successful, involving nearly 1,000 schools and raising over $180,000—clearing four minefields in Cambodia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, as well as providing survivors with appropriate medical care and the means to establish a livelihood.

The two organizations have demonstrated that the landmine issue is a natural draw for students. By participating in a fundraising campaign for mine action, students are developing critical thinking and leadership skills, tapping into their creativity, and learning about community, teamwork and service. By studying the impact of landmines around the world and doing something to solve the problem, students become true global citizens. Many have written to tell us how they feel empowered by making a difference in the world at such a young age. One student even wrote to say that her involvement with the campaign gained her access to every college on her wish list. Teachers have reported that they love the campaign as well because they are able to incorporate campaign materials into academic subjects such as geography, social studies, cultural studies and political science. Each year, students across North America think of new, imaginative ways to raise money for global landmine clearance and victim assistance programs conducted by schools across North America in the past four years to support Adopt-A-Minefield and Landmine Survivors Network. With each school event, support for the issue grows, and more importantly, awareness for this worldwide crisis builds. In just a short time, That Landmine Thing students have become models for how we can work together to educate our communities and make a difference.

That Landmine Thing is now in its fourth year of working with the IB and is expanding to other schools. Its newsletter—as well as its annual student campaign—gives students the opportunity to participate in eliminating one of the world’s most pressing humanitarian challenges before even graduating from high school—the global landmine problem.

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Zach Hudson is the outreach and communications coordinator for Adopt-A-Minefield. In this capacity, he is the main contact for all of the ongoing national grassroots AAM campaigns. Zach also heads the AAM student campaign, a network of schools working together across the world to raise funds to clear landmines and assist survivors. Additionally, Zach manages the AAM communications, including the AAM newsletter, the Summer Solstice.

Karla Fuentes heads the AAM institutional relations, including the AAM newsletter, the Survivor Report.
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