

Howard Jue

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan commends California wineries for helping clear vineyards in Croatia.

FROM MINES TO VINES: UN Secretary General lauds private sector support at California reception

The San Francisco Bay Area group, Roots of Peace, demined a 160-acre field in Dragalic, Croatia this spring and replanted it with grapevines. Another 200

acres were scheduled for demining this summer.

Roots of Peace has raised nearly US\$170,000 from California wineries to help clear vineyards in Croatia. Contributions from the US State Department, the US Embassy, Slovenia's International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance and Autodesk, a software company in San Rafael, California, have brought the total to US\$500,000.

Secretary General Annan also spoke eloquently of the need to persuade all governments who have yet to sign and ratify the treaty to do so.

Canada's Consul General in Los Angeles, Kim Campbell joined Annan to address the landmine issue among prominent Silicon Valley business and community leaders. Speaking to an audience of 130 representatives from California's information technology sector, the corporate community and the media, Campbell outlined

Canada's approach to mine action and provided an update on Canadian initiatives to universalize and fully implement the Ottawa Convention

The reception was organized by Roots of Peace which has garnered the support of 12 Napa and Sonoma Valley wineries in a program designed to clear minefields around the world and turn them into vineyards.

The event drew together key US anti-landmine organizations including the Landmine Survivors Network, the United States Campaign to Ban Landmines and the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation. The US State Department Office of Global Humanitarian Demining was also represented.

Annan thanked the many donors from the private sector who attended and challenged those not yet involved in the campaign to eradicate landmines to open their cheque books and to become active advocates on this issue. Proclamations from the Governor of California and the Mayor of the City of Palo Alto in support of mine action were presented to the Secretary-General. ●

Palo Alto, California – United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan has praised California wineries and land mine activists for turning minefields into vineyards in Croatia.

At a June 11 reception, supported by Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Secretary-General Annan congratulated Roots of Peace for turning "what used to be a killing field into a fruitful enterprise" through the organization's support for clearance operations in the mine-affected vineyards of Croatia.

"You have helped give back a livelihood to a community that had seen it taken away," the Secretary-General said. "You have turned mines into vines by replacing the seeds of death with the seeds of life. And you have shown the world that even with modest beginnings, a partnership backed by persistence can make a real difference."

Alberta students visit mine action tech centre

by Nancy Ingram, 1999-2000
Youth Mine Action Ambassador –
Alberta

As part of the Youth Mine Action Ambassador Program's outreach in Alberta, 25 Medicine Hat high school science students and their teachers were invited to spend the day at the Canadian Centre for Mine Action Technologies (CCMAT) in Suffield, Alberta.

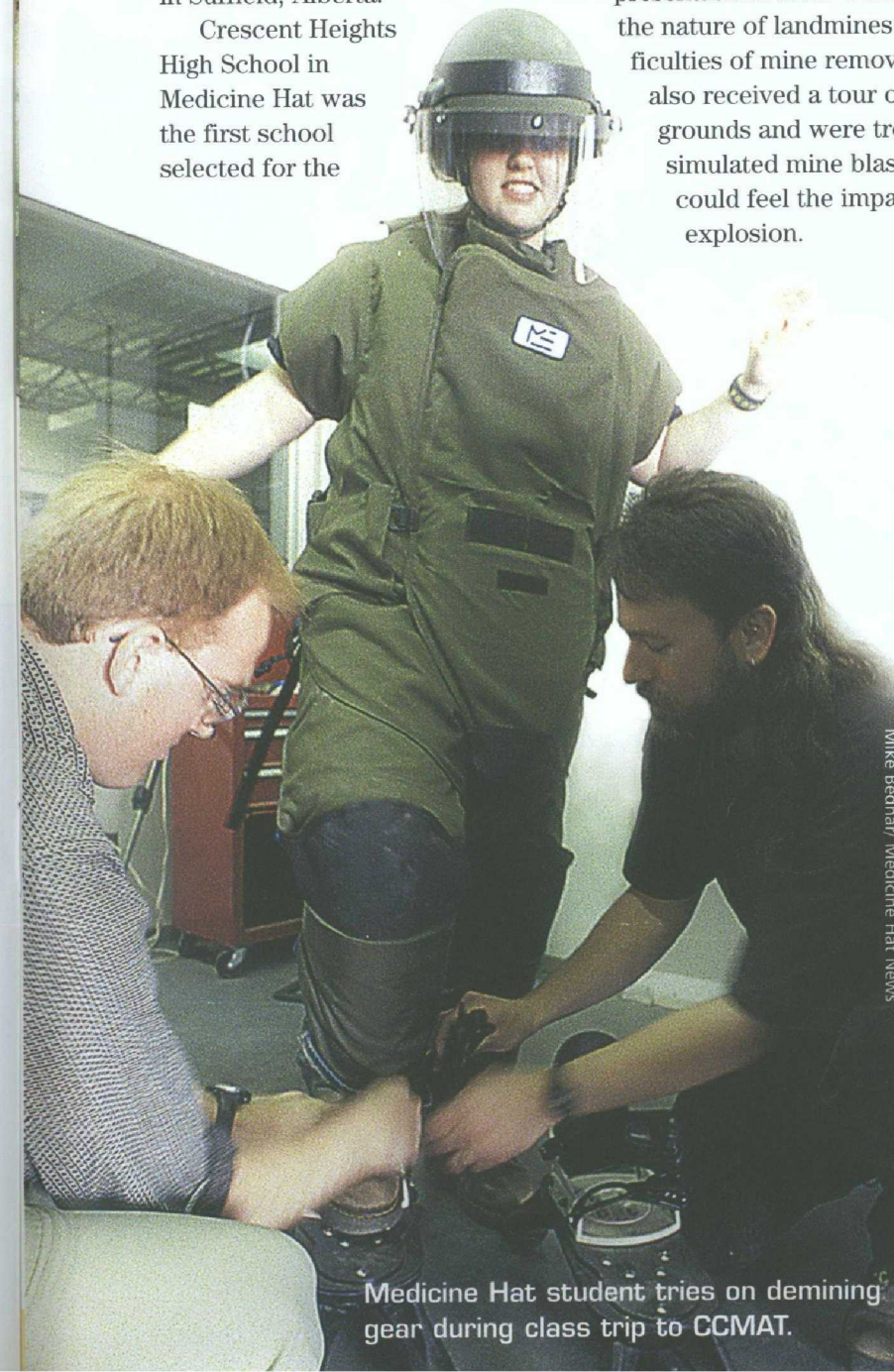
Crescent Heights High School in Medicine Hat was the first school selected for the

tour. In order to qualify for the field trip, each student had to develop a project proposal on how he or she would incorporate the experience into a learning tool for other students. Projects were varied and dynamic, including multi-media presentations, a documentary of the trip, short plays and science experiments.

The May 9 excursion included presentations from CCMAT staff on the nature of landmines and the difficulties of mine removal. Students also received a tour of the testing grounds and were treated to a simulated mine blast so they could feel the impact of an explosion.

After these activities, students had lunch "soldier-style" in the field with official army-issue box lunches. Lunch was followed by more demonstrations of demining techniques and the different types of demining protective equipment CCMAT was testing. Students were invited to try on the protective equipment so they could experience the difficulties of designing gear that is safe yet user-friendly.

According to Crescent Heights teacher David Gue, "this is a whole new side to science and scientific research for the kids. They have no experience with this and, in most cases, haven't even dreamed that this is part of the business." ●



Mike Bednar/ Medicine Hat News

Medicine Hat student tries on demining gear during class trip to CCMAT.

Edmonton high school fundraises for mine detection dog

by Nancy Ingram – 1999-2000 Youth Mine Action
Ambassador – Alberta

Students at Holy Trinity High School in Edmonton have raised more than \$6,000 for the purchase and training of a mine-detection dog.

After a landmine awareness day held at the school in November 1999, students decided to earmark their annual fundraising project to support mine action.

They decided they would try to raise money for the purchase and training of a mine-detection dog, the cost of which ranges from \$5,000-10,000. Students worked tirelessly throughout the year raising funds through loonie drives, special promotion days, as well as canvassing churches and soliciting corporate sponsorship.

On June 20, students presented a cheque for \$6,520 to David Horton, Executive Director of the Canadian International Demining Centre.

The dog, which will be named Trinity after the school, will be purchased in Germany and trained in Bosnia. The school gave Trinity an embossed vest bearing the school's logo. Trinity will go through a six-month training program before it is certified as a mine-detection dog. ●