

Kids on a Mission

By Claire Serant

Tenaflly students take aim at land mines

Katie Rodriguez has never traveled to Afghanistan, but the Tenaflly Middle School student knows that the war-torn country is loaded with dangerous land mines that have maimed or killed innocent victims.

"Every time someone [in Afghanistan] steps outside their house they could be stepping on a land mine," says

Rodriguez, who is entering seventh grade. "I'd like to raise enough money to de-mine a town."

Rodriguez hopes several Garden State schools will participate in a Youth Land Mine Conference, planned for September, to raise awareness about dangerous areas of Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia, Croatia and Vietnam that are rife with deadly land mines and growing numbers of bomb survivors.

Rodriguez belongs to the Tenaflly Middle School Land Mine Awareness Club. The club is a vital part of Global Care Unlimited, a four-year-old group that aims to collect \$10,500 in donations this year from middle and high school students, says Mark Hyman, its founder and president and a teacher at the middle school. This year, the group has raised at least \$9,000 for Cambodia's land mine troubles.

Global Care will send donations to Clear Path International, a Vermont-based organization that assists land mine and bomb accident survivors. "We want to raise \$100 for each of the Cambodian land mine survivors in Clear Path's program," says Hyman.

Typically, Global Care Unlimited participants attend after-school sessions, then pen letters about the club's goals. The letters are sent to the student's family, friends, and local civic and religious institutions. "Our long-term vision," says Hyman, "is to

form a New Jersey coalition as a model that shows how young people can embrace a global humanitarian mission." 🍷



HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS & GUESTS discuss the impact of land mines.