

A Mine Free World
26 September, 2012 AT 10:32AM

I attended.. and emceed a very moving lunch at the Women's Leadership Exchange (WLX) yesterday.



Local change maker Maria Almudevar-van Santen was the guest speaker.

570's Morning News Anchor Lisa Drew shares her blog about life

She's the force behind A Mine Free World Assistance Programs, and author of Vanna's Dance -a book illustrated by students right here in Waterloo Region! The book is about a little girl from Cambodia who loses her leg to a landmine.

Maria's background is in marketing, and has world travels and years at the United Nations on her resume too.

She wanted to do more after learning about landmine survivors..and that little girl Vanna.

Here are just some of the stats I jotted down from her presentation:

- There are up to 80 million landmines left in the ground.. most of them in poorer countries.
- 85% of the landmine victims are civilians.. and 40% of them kids, mostly boys who are naturally curious. Some of these landmines look like butterflies.. or sprinklers.
- It costs 3-10 dollars to build a landmine, but up to a \$1000 dollars to remove one.
- It costs more to rehabilitate a person than to bury them. Children can go through up to 3 artificial limbs a year as they keep growing.
- Canada is leading the way on banning landmines. 160 countries have now signed a treaty born back in 1996 - interestingly...the US is not part of this.

As Maria said: "When soldiers leave.. landmines stay behind"

Her non-profit is making a difference right now in Cambodia, supplying things like bicycles and setting up programs to get survivors back into their communities, running businesses, going to school and paying it forward too.

For more info

www.aminerefreeworld.org

As printed: http://www.570news.com/inside/blogs/lisa_drew