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# House honors St. Francis' PSALM program

## School delegation attends ceremony in Charleston

**BY DAVID BEARD**

The Dominion Post

CHARLESTON — Students from the St. Francis de Sales School's PSALM program were honored on the House of Delegates chamber floor Friday morning for their ongoing efforts to ban land mines and to help people who have fallen victim to the mines.

PSALM stands for Proud Students Against Land Mines. The children are members of the West

Virginia, United States and International Campaign to Ban Land Mines and the Cluster Bomb Munitions Coalition.

Escorted by local delegates to the front of the chamber, the students in their tie-dyed PSALM T-shirts, and their faculty leaders, heard the reading of House Resolution 30 honoring their work, and received a copy of the resolution.

The document notes that mines and cluster bombs continue to endanger civilians long after a conflict is finished and have killed or maimed more people than nuclear, chemical and biological weapons combined.

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Submitted photo

**St. Francis de Sales School** Principal John Downey (center, left) receives a resolution honoring the school's PSALM program from House Speaker Rick Thompson. Among those pictured are Delegates Charlene Marshall (left), D-Monongalia; Mike Manypenny (center, rear), D-Taylor; and Barbara Evans Fleischauer (right), D-Monongalia.

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## PSALM

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It says:

■ PSALM students have collected medical supplies for land mine victims in Nicaragua, provided a prosthetic device for a young Bosnian land mine victim, raised funds to train mine detection dogs and sponsored three water wells in land mine-affected regions of Cambodia.

■ PSALM students have joined with more than 300 nongovernmental organizations in 80 countries to launch a campaign to urge governmental support to ban cluster bombs.

■ The House extends its sincere appreciation to the committed students who unselfishly work to save civilians, families and children from the damaging effects of land mines and cluster munitions.

After the presentation, students talked about why they participate.

“We do this because there’s people out there dying and we want to save their lives,” said Melanie Bailes, 10.

Logan Cushing, 11, described how some people must cross a mine field to get water.

“There’s people that are

hurt. They’re innocent people.”

Lexi Sokos, 10, was carrying a prosthetic leg — a fitted leg with a metal support rod and a foot piece covered by a shoe. She said some of those who lose legs to mines are too poor to afford a leg like that, and must be fitted with wooden legs.

“It’s meaningful to us because we really want to ban these things [the mines],” she said.

“They’re not used for good, and if they’re not used for good we don’t want them.”

PSALM Coordinator Nora Sheets noted in a handout that while the U.S. has not signed on to the 1997 Ottawa Mine Ban Treaty, it does fund global humanitarian de-mining and land mine survivor assistance. And the students recently celebrated the signing of the international Convention on Cluster Munitions treaty banning the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of cluster bombs.

St. Francis Principal John Downey said PSALM has received a number of recognitions and honors, and the resolution will be added to a collage of those honors.