



An initiative by



Romeo Dallaire, Mia Farrow, Magic Johnson and world renowned leaders join 6,000 students in movement for global change at We Day

- Access event photos at weday.com/press or watch the live webcast at weday.com –
- Connect to the We Day movement #weday, @freethechildren @craigkielburger, www.facebook.com/weday –

Waterloo Region, ON (November 16, 2011) – Today, an epic line-up of iconic social activists and inspiring entertainers will take centre stage at the Kitchener Memorial Auditorium Complex for the world's largest youth empowerment event of its kind – **We Day**. An annual initiative of international children's charity and educational partner, Free The Children, today's event will empower and show thousands of passionate youth from over 200 schools from the Waterloo Region they are not alone in their journey to make a difference and further ignite a youth-driven movement for global change. Hundreds of thousands more from around the world will join the **We Day** movement by watching the live stream of the event at www.weday.com starting at 9:15 a.m. EST.

Leading the electric crowd will be hosts television personality **Jessi Cruickshank** and MuchMusic VJ **Jesse Giddings**. To help them tackle some of the most pressing issues of today, youth and educators will have the opportunity to hear from world-renowned speakers including author of award-winning book *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda*, Lieutenant-General, the Honourable **Roméo A. Dallaire**, basketball Hall-of-Famer legend and philanthropist, **Magic Johnson**, award winning actress and activist, **Mia Farrow**, speaker, activist and daughter of Former Archbishop Desmond Tutu, **Naomi Tutu**, former international president of *Médecins Sans Frontières / Doctors Without Borders* (MSF) and Chair of Global Health at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health, **Dr. James Orbinski**, **Munro Chambers** and **Aislinn Paul** of **DEGRASSI** and **Craig** and **Marc Kielburger**, international children's rights activists and co-founders of Free The Children.

Sharing their own personal journeys of overcoming obstacles will be Me to We motivational speakers, former child soldier **Michel Chikwanine**, **Spencer West**, **Noah Kaplan** and **Robin Wiszowaty**. Pumping up the crowd with energizing performances will be Canadian rock band, **The Midway State**, Canadian pop band, **Neverest** and platinum selling, JUNO Award winning Canadian pop icon and producer, **Shawn Desman**. Shawn will also be leading this year's We Day dance and is offering students the opportunity to dance with him at We Day events across Canada through a video contest at www.AOL.ca/weday.

"Youth coming together to lead global change is the movement of our time. We Day proves to youth that a better world is possible and they are not alone in their commitment to social justice," said Craig Kielburger. "Though individual actions may seem small, if you shift your perspective you'll see that together the impact is huge. Last year alone these actions added up to 1.7 million volunteer hours logged and \$5.4 million raised for more than 500 causes locally and globally. We Day is truly a movement and a force of social change."

The Midway State's frontman Nathan Ferraro agrees. "We are so excited to be a part of We Day with all that it represents and inspires. Experiencing the powerful voices, determination and compassion of our youth being cultivated and celebrated makes us feel profoundly optimistic for the future."

Made possible by





We Day is free of charge for all students and educators to attend thanks to the generosity of sponsors, including title sponsor Research In Motion (RIM).

“We are thrilled to bring We Day and RIM’s Build A Village Awards to the Waterloo Region for the second time,” said Heidi Davidson, Senior Vice President of Corporate Communications. “We are proud that RIM is partnering with Free The Children and look forward to sharing the We Day experience with our community.”

For the second time, RIM is offering students the chance to further connect to global experiences through RIM’s Build A Village Awards Program. This program will give 50 students from the Waterloo Region and surrounding areas the opportunity to participate in a life-changing Me to We volunteer trip and visit Free The Children projects overseas. Applications for the scholarship will close January 15, 2012. Full details can be found at <http://weday.freethechildren.com/buildavillage/>.

We Day is not just an event. Motivated by powerful speakers and performers, students take the messages learned at We Day back to their peers and begin planning their year of action through a unique educational program provided by Free The Children (www.freethechildren.com/weschools). Through the program they will pledge to take one local and one global action and will be able to see the positive results of their efforts during the school year. This unparalleled educational opportunity has led to increased student engagement in schools and communities and has contributed to a greater commitment to philanthropy, stronger academic achievement and caring school cultures.

Beyond the classroom, everyone can join the **We Day** movement with one simple action. ‘Like’ We Day on Facebook (www.facebook.com/weday) and join the over half a million others who receive daily tips and ideas on how to live ‘we’ every day. Even better, for every ‘like’ sponsors will donate \$1 to Free The Children, up to \$1 million dollars.

We Day momentum continues to sweep the country stopping next at the MTS Centre in Winnipeg on November 23 and Théâtre St-Denis in Montreal on February 29 and March 1, 2012.

Note to Press:

Visit the **We Day** online press room (www.weday.com/press) to:

- Access photos from today’s event as of **3:30 p.m. EST**
- Download high resolution photos of We Day speakers and performers
- Request an interview with Co-Founders of Free The Children, Craig and Marc Kielburger
- Access background information on We Day and Free The Children

Web Links:

Official We Day website: www.weday.com

We Day on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/weday.com>

Free The Children website: www.freethechildren.com

Live webcast: www.weday.com



About We Day

Youth coming together to lead global change is the movement of our time. We Day (www.weday.com) is the manifestation of this movement. Harnessing the energy and passion of this young community of change-makers, We Day brings youth together in an unparalleled setting to show them that they are not alone in their journey to make a difference. We Day is not just an event. It's a movement.

We Day is part of an unparalleled educational opportunity called the We Schools in Action program. Throughout the year-long program, young people turn their inspiration into action by committing to take one local and one global action throughout the school year. In the 2010/2011 school year alone, youth volunteered 1.7 million hours in their communities and raised more than \$5.4 million to support local and global organizations.

We Day events are completely free of charge to students and educators, thanks to the support of generous sponsors who believe in the power of youth to change the world.

We Day events will be held in Toronto, Vancouver, Waterloo Region, Winnipeg and Montreal throughout the 2011/2012 school year.

About Free The Children

Free The Children (www.freethechildren.com) is the world's largest network of children helping children through education, with more than one million youth involved in our innovative education and development programs in 45 countries. Founded in 1995 by international child rights activist Craig Kielburger, we are a **charity** and **educational partner** that believes in a world where all young people are **free to achieve their fullest potential as agents of change**. Our domestic programs **educate, engage** and **empower hundreds of thousands** of youth in North America, the UK and around the world. Our international projects have brought over **650 schools** and **school rooms** to youth and provided **clean water, health care and sanitation** to **one million** people around the world.

Free The Children has a proven track record of success. The organization has received the World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child (also known as the Children's Nobel Prize), the Human Rights Award from the World Association of Non-Governmental Organizations, and has formed successful partnerships with leading school boards and Oprah's Angel Network.

-30-

For more information or to speak with someone directly, please contact:

Lauren Stasila
Manager, PR & Publicity
416-558-9310
lauren.stasila@freethechildren.com



We Day Talking Points – Waterloo Region

We Day was formerly known as Me to We Day, please help us in ensuring the We Day name is used correctly

What is We Day – the Event

- We Day is the largest youth empowerment event of its kind put on by educational partner and international children's charity – Free The Children
- On November 16, 6,000 student leaders from over 200 schools will gather at the Kitchener Memorial Auditorium Complex
- We Day in Waterloo region is **free** for all students and educators to attend, thanks to generous support of Research In Motion™ (RIM)
- Joined by internationally acclaimed children's rights activists and co-founders of Free The Children, Craig and Marc Kielburger, an epic line-up of world-renowned social activists, and entertainers will come together to inspire and ignite the passion of young people gathered at We Day. They will celebrate the positive actions they are already taking and build their momentum to make a difference in their communities and around the world. See full list of We Day speakers and performers below
- Over 160,000 students will have attended We Day since its debut in 2007 and this school year, 62,000 youth will attend in Toronto (September 27), Vancouver (October 13), Waterloo Region (November 16), Winnipeg (November 23) and Montreal (February 29, 2012 & March 1, 2012)
- Millions more from all over the world will take part in We Day by tuning in online at 9:15 a.m. EST to watch the live webcast at www.weday.com
- The RIM Build A Village Awards program will give 50 Kitchener-Waterloo students the opportunity to participate in a life-changing Me to We volunteer trip
 - Students can apply online www.freethechildren.com/buildavillage
 - Applications close January 15, 2012
 - Winner announced March 1, 2012
- RIM is committed to building two villages through Free The Children's Adopt a Village program in India and Kenya

Through We Day, youth learn...

- About some of the most pressing social issues of today
- They are not alone in their journey to make a difference
- It's cool to care
- They can find their place within the movement to create global change

We Day is not just an Event – it's a Movement

- Youth coming together to lead global change **is the movement of our time**. We Day is the manifestation of this movement
- We Day follows in the tradition of the world's most important social movements—from small sit-ins to massive rallies and marches that brought together passionate people set on changing the world
- We Day brings forth the spirit of these movements to a generation of youth
- The end to apathy is realized as young people discover that they are all part of this movement



An initiative by



- Everyone can join the 'We' movement. Start with one simple action. 'Like' We Day on Facebook (facebook.com/weday). The hundreds of thousands of Canadians who have already liked We Day now receive daily tips and ideas about how to live "we", every day, right on Facebook. Even better, for every 'like', sponsors will donate \$1 to Free The Children, up to \$1 million dollars. Your Facebook 'Like' for We Day is truly the first step to living We Day every day

Bringing the Spirit of We Day back to the Classroom

- We Day is the kick-off event to a year of social action for students across Canada
- Motivated by the powerful speakers and performers, students take the messages learned at We Day back to their peers and begin planning their year of action
- Students who attend We Day take part in **Free The Children's We Schools in Action program**, a year-long, unparalleled educational opportunity in which they commit to take action on at least one local and one global issue throughout the school year
- Participation in the We Schools in Action program has resulted in increased student engagement in their school and community, and contributes to:
 - Commitment to philanthropy
 - Academic achievement
 - Caring school cultures
 - Deeper connections between students and teachers
 - Giving back to their community
- For more information on how to get involved visit www.weday.com

Impact of We Day

- Young people create real and tangible change
- In the 2010/2011 school year, We Day youth:
 - Volunteered more than 1.7 million hours of their time
 - Raised \$5.4 million in donations to support local and global organizations
 - Collected more than 519,000 lbs of food to stock the shelves at food banks

We Day Waterloo Region – List of Speakers and Performers

- Co-founders of Free The Children, **Craig and Marc Kielburger**
- Hosts television personality **Jessi Cruickshank** and MuchMusic VJ **Jesse Giddings**
- Author of award-winning book *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda*, Lieutenant-General, the Honourable **Roméo A. Dallaire**
- Mississauga's of the New Credit First Nation, **Chief M. Bryan LaForme**
- Basketball Hall-of-Famer legend and philanthropist, **Magic Johnson**
- Award winning actress and activist, **Mia Farrow**
- Former international president of *Médecins Sans Frontières / Doctors Without Borders* (MSF) and Chair of Global Health at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health **Dr. James Orbinski**
- Speaker, activist and daughter of Former Archbishop Desmond Tutu, **Naomi Tutu**
- Canadian rock band, **The Midway State**
- Platinum selling, JUNO Award winning Canadian pop icon and producer, **Shawn Desman**
- Canadian pop band, **Neverest**
- **Munro Chambers** and **Aislinn Paul**, cast members from **DEGRASSI**
- Me to We motivational speakers, **Spencer West**, **Robin Wiszowaty**, **Michel Chikwanine** and **Noah Kaplan**

Made possible by





An initiative by



We Day Performer and Speaker Lineup



An actor from the hit show *DEGRASSI*, **Munro Chambers** travelled to India on a Me to We trip to build a school with Free The Children in 2010. Munro also visited Free The Children's Adopt A Village communities in Haiti in the summer of 2011. Today, Munro will speak about his first-hand experience visiting Free The Children development projects.



Michel Chikwanine is a former child soldier from the Democratic Republic of Congo and a motivational speaker with Me to We. Michel has spoken to hundreds of thousands of people and has shared the stage with speakers such as Craig and Marc Kielburger, former Prime Minister Paul Martin, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Martin Sheen and the Honourable Romeo Dallaire. Today, Michel will give a silent speech to raise awareness about Free The Children's Vow of Silence campaign.



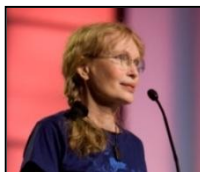
Television personality **Jessi Cruickshank** has been a long time supporter of Free The Children. Jessi recently launched the "Jessi Tee" with Me to We Style, and has travelled to Free The Children's development projects in Kenya and India. Today, Jessi will host We Day alongside MuchMusic VJ Jesse Giddings.



Lieutenant-General, the Honourable **Romeo A. Dallaire** is the author of award-winning book *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda*. Since his retirement from the military, he has worked to raise awareness about child soldiers, conflict resolution, humanitarian assistance and human rights. Today, Mr. Dallaire will speak about the importance of standing up for what you believe in.



Shawn Desman, platinum selling, JUNO Award winning Canadian pop icon and producer has chart-topping singles and videos, movie performances and numerous accolades under his belt. Shawn will also be leading this year's We Day dance and is offering students the opportunity to dance with him at We Day events across Canada through a video contest at www.AOL.ca/weday. Today, Shawn will be performing *Night Like This*, a medley of his top hits and leading the We Day dance with 6,000 youth throughout the show.



Actress and activist **Mia Farrow** is an outspoken advocate for children's rights. Mia, a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador, actively supports the cause of refugees in conflict-torn countries. She recently visited the Dadaab refugee camp with Craig Kielburger to help alleviate problems caused by the East African drought. Today, Mia will speak about East Africa and the importance of taking action.



We Day Waterloo Region host MuchMusic VJ **Jesse Giddings** first hosted We Day in the Waterloo Region in February 2011. This year, he designed and launched "The Freedom Tee" with Me to We Style to support Free The Children's campaign, Five Days for Freedom. Today, Jesse will host We Day alongside television personality Jessi Cruickshank.

Made possible by





An initiative by



Magic Johnson is a Basketball Hall-of-Fame legend and philanthropist. In 1991, the Magic Johnson Foundation began its work to support community development. Through outreach and education, the foundation has been eliminating negative cultural barriers; increasing academic achievement and raising HIV/AIDS awareness in socio-economically challenged urban communities. Today, Magic will be speaking about the importance of community.



Noah Kaplan is a Me to We motivational speaker and compassionate poet. Noah captures audiences with stories and spoken word poems, sharing thought-provoking tales of his humanitarian experiences at home and abroad. Noah has had the honour of sharing the stage with many notable figures such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Today, Noah will perform his spoken word poem *The Spark*.



International children's rights activists and co-founders of Free The Children, **Marc and Craig Kielburger**, are two of Canada's leading figures in social activism and youth empowerment. Today, they have gathered 6,000 youth to stand up and take action to change the world as part of the We Day movement.



Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation, **Chief M. Bryan LaForme** will be speaking to a crowd of 6,000 youth at We Day Waterloo Region about Aboriginal youth activism and Aboriginal education.



The Midway State is a Canadian alternative rock band. In 2009, they won MMVA's for Favorite New Artist and Best Independent Video for *Never Again*. Today, The Midway State will be performing two songs, *Atlantic* and *Never Again*.



Dr. James Orbinski is the former international president of *Médecins Sans Frontières / Doctors Without Borders* (MSF) and Chair of Global Health at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health. He is a globally recognized humanitarian practitioner and advocate, as well as a leading scholar and scientist in global health.



Aislinn Paul is an actress on the hit show *DEGRASSI!*. Aislinn travelled on volunteer trips with Me to We to Ecuador in 2008, India in 2010 and Haiti in 2011. Today, Aislinn will speak about her first-hand experience visiting Free The Children development projects.



Naomi Tutu is a speaker, activist and daughter of Former Archbishop Desmond Tutu. She founded and chaired the Tutu Foundation for Development and Relief in South Africa. Naomi is an authority on race relations and an advocate for peace and human rights. Today, Naomi will speak about embracing differences.

Made possible by





Neverest is a renowned Canadian group of artists and performers. The band writes and performs a fusion of hard rock, R&B and pop. Today, Neverest will perform *You're My Everything* and *About Us*.



Spencer West is an author and Me to We motivational speaker who lost his legs at the age of five. Spencer has spoken to millions of people around the world, sharing his story of courage. Spencer believes that no matter what your abilities are or where you come from in the world if you work hard, and laugh a lot, you can achieve anything. Spencer just launched his first book with Me to We called *Standing Tall*. Today, Spencer will speak about his *Redefine Possible* campaign.



A community development worker, author, and Me to We speaker, **Robin Wiszowaty** serves as the Kenya Program Director with Free The Children. Using her fieldwork experiences, Robin shares stories about the lives of rural Maasai community members. Today, Robin will share her insights on the East African drought crisis.



We Day: The Event

Free The Children's **We Day** (www.weday.com) is more than just one day of celebration and inspiration, it's a one-of-a-kind event and part of an innovative year-long program that celebrates the power of young people to create positive change in the world. At **We Day**, tens of thousands of youth from across North America join together to celebrate the positive actions they are taking and to build the momentum of young people making a difference in their communities and around the world. **We Day** features speeches and performances from global leaders, social activists and world-class entertainers. The end to apathy is realized as young people learn that each individual is part of a larger community of people taking action — be it local, national or international.

This year, **We Day** will reach more youth than ever before with five events across Canada and over 62,000 students in attendance.

Toronto – September 27 (18,000 youth attending)
Vancouver – October 13 (18,000 youth attending)
Waterloo Region – November 16 (6,000 youth attending)
Winnipeg – November 23 (16,000 youth attending)
Montreal – February 29 and March 1 (2,000 youth attending each event)

We Day events are completely free of charge to students and educators, thanks to the support of generous sponsors who believe in the power of youth to change the world. We Day in Waterloo Region is **free** for all students and educators to attend, thanks to Research In Motion™ (RIM). RIM is dedicated to the Kitchener-Waterloo community and is proud to be the sponsor who helps make **We Day** a reality.

Young people in the audience—attending from more than 2,000 schools total— have to earn their way into **We Day**. Each student makes a commitment to take action on at least one local and one global issue, making **We Day** a vehicle to create real change.

We Day: The Movement

We Day is not just an event. It's a movement.

Youth coming together to lead global change **is the movement of our time**. **We Day** is the manifestation of this movement. **We Day** follows in the tradition of the world's most important social movements—from small sit-ins to massive rallies and marches that brought together impassioned people set on changing the world. **We Day** brings forth the spirit of these movements to a generation of youth.

Everyone can join the 'We' movement. Start with one simple action. 'Like' **We Day** on Facebook (www.facebook.com/weday). The hundreds of thousands of Canadians who have already liked **We Day** now receive daily tips and ideas about how to live "we" every day, right on Facebook. Even better, for every 'like', sponsors will donate \$1 to Free The Children, up to \$1 million dollars. Your Facebook 'Like' for **We Day** is truly the first step to living **We Day** every day.

People from all over the world can also tune and take part in We Day as the event will be streamed live online at www.weday.com.



We Day: The year-long program

We Day is not just a one day event, it's part of a year-long unparalleled educational opportunity called the We Schools in Action program (www.freethechildren.com/weschools). Through participation in this program, young people turn their inspiration into tangible results by engaging in both local and global actions throughout the school year. Meanwhile, teachers receive dynamic resources to help mentor their students and embed social justice lessons in their classroom.

We Day: The Results

Youth who participated in the **We Schools in Action** program during the 2010/2011 school year took the lessons learned at **We Day** back to their peers, rallying them to take action and resulting in:

- **1.7 million** hours of logged volunteering
- **\$2 million** raised to support local initiatives
- **\$3.4 million** raised to support global causes
- Over **519,463 lbs** of food collected through Halloween for Hunger (www.freethechildren.com/halloweenforhunger)
- **102,493** participants in **57** countries went silent for 24 hours for Free The Children's Vow of Silence campaign (www.freethechildren.com/vowofsilence) to raise awareness about children who are silenced by denial of their basic human rights
- Over **350** school groups representing **8,900** students raised awareness about Aboriginal education through Free The Children's Local Spotlight campaign (www.freethechildren.com/aboriginaleducation)

Through We Day, youth learn...

- About some of the most pressing social issues of today
- They are not alone in their journey to make a difference
- It is cool to care
- They can find their place within the movement to create global change

Participation in the **We Schools in Action** program has resulted in increased student engagement in their school and community and contributed to:

- Commitment to philanthropy
- Academic achievement
- Caring school cultures
- Deeper connections between students and teachers
- Giving back to the community

RIM and Free The Children

Research In Motion cares about connecting young people to social issues, and has recently partnered with Free The Children to bring the **We Day** movement to Kitchener-Waterloo.

- The RIM Build A Village Awards program will give 50 Kitchener-Waterloo students the opportunity to participate in a life-changing Me to We volunteer trip



- Students can apply online www.freethechildren.com/buildavillage
- Applications close on January 15, 2012
- Winners will be announced on March 1, 2012
- RIM is also committed to supporting two villages through Free The Children's Adopt a Village program in India and Kenya

For additional information on **We Day** visit our online press room to access any of the following:

- High res photos and bios of speakers and performers
- B-roll and photos from **We Day** 2010 and 2011
- Background information on **We Day** and Free The Children
- To request more information or an interview with Free The Children Co-Founders, Craig or Marc Kielburger

To speak with someone directly, contact:

Lauren Stasila
Manager PR & Publicity
T: 416-558-9310
lauren.stasila@freethechildren.com



FAQs

How many youth will be in attendance this year?

This year, 62,000 students in total will attend **We Day** events across Canada in Toronto, Vancouver, Waterloo Region, Winnipeg and Montreal.

How much does it cost to attend We Day?

We Day events are completely free of charge for students and educators, thanks to the support of generous sponsors who believe in the power of youth to change the world.

How are schools selected to attend We Day?

All schools are encouraged to apply for tickets to **We Day**. However, seats for **We Day** are limited and schools registered in the **We Schools in Action** program will receive priority. Schools and students who are unable to attend the event can still participate by watching the live stream of **We Day** at www.weday.com.

What happens after We Day?

After **We Day**, students and educators take the messages they learned at **We Day** back to their classrooms and peers and start their action planning for the year. **We Day** encourages all schools to register for the **We Schools in Action** program, which means schools make a commitment to take action on at least one local and one global issue throughout the school year.

Free The Children also offers various campaigns to keep schools and students engaged. The following are Free The Children's signature campaigns for the school year:

- Halloween for Hunger: October 31st (www.freethechildren.com/halloweenforhunger)
- Vow of Silence: November 30th (www.freethechildren.com/vowofsilence)
- Local Spotlight: Aboriginal Education: February 2012 (www.freethechildren.com/aboriginaleducation)
- Five Days for Freedom: April 2012 (www.freethechildren.com/fivedaysforfreedom)

What kind of local and global causes and issues do youth support?

Students choose to support various local and global causes throughout the school year. Some of the most common local causes supported in the last year include homelessness, bullying, hunger in priority neighbourhoods and supporting community centres. Global causes and issues included disaster relief for Japan, Haiti and the East African drought and supporting communities through Free The Children's Adopt A Village holistic development model.

What actions do youth take to raise awareness and funds throughout the year?

Students working to raise awareness and funds about issues they are passionate about can take many different creative forms. Some of the most popular events and actions students have taken over the past year include bake sales, coin drives, themed events and parties, walks or runs and even mini **We Day** events.



Free The Children 2011/2012 Campaigns

In 2011, over 60,000 students will attend We Day events in various cities across Canada with hundreds of thousands more interacting online. To carry on the We Day movement year-round, Free The Children provides various campaigns to keep students educated and engaged on social issues. The following is a snapshot of some of the upcoming local and global initiatives for 2011/2012:

Vow of Silence – November 30, 2011

We are a generation that won't stand by while children are subjected to exploitation, poverty and the denial of their basic human rights. Every day, millions of children are silenced by these abuses. But we can take a stand for children everywhere.

In 2010, over 100,000 young people from 820 schools took Free The Children's Vow of Silence and remained silent for a combined total of 932,164 hours, equivalent to 82 years.

This year's Free The Children's Vow of Silence campaign begins on Wednesday, November 30 at 3:00 p.m. and runs for a 24 hour period ending Thursday December 1, at 3:00 p.m. Students, corporations and the general public across North America and the UK will gather pledges to stay silent for 24 hours, standing up for youth around the world who don't have a voice.

Donations support children's rights by funding Free The Children's holistic and sustainable Adopt a Village model, providing education, alternative income projects, health care and clean water and sanitation systems in rural communities around the world. The Vow of Silence campaign also includes elementary and secondary school lesson plans to help educators address children's rights and related issues with their students.

To learn more visit:

<http://www.freethechildren.com/vow>

Local Spotlight: Aboriginal Education – February 2012

Free The Children's Local Spotlight is an annual campaign that raises awareness and inspires action on pressing issues in our own communities. The central purpose of the Local Spotlight campaign is to raise awareness of important topics facing communities in North America, calling on youth to learn more about the issue and to take action to address it.

For the second year in a row, in partnership with the Martin Aboriginal Education Initiative and with the support of the Assembly of First Nations, Local Spotlight shines the light on Aboriginal education as a whole.

Local Spotlight: Aboriginal Education is divided into two parts:

- **Educate yourself:** The first step to taking action is to learn more. Participants sign up to receive the Daily Facts and learn more about the challenges and possibilities surrounding education for Aboriginal youth.
- **Educate others:** Participants share what they are learning with the people around them, in school, their community and online, to help make Aboriginal education a priority in Canada.

In 2011, 357 groups signed up for Local Spotlight representing close to 9,000 students directly involved, with another 178,500 groups and individuals indirectly involved by learning through peer-to-peer sharing of daily facts.

To learn more visit:

<http://www.freethechildren.com/aboriginaleducation>



An initiative by



Five Days for Freedom – April 16, 2012 – April 20, 2012

True freedom means being free from poverty, exploitation, disease and thirst. The pursuit of these four freedoms is the foundation of Free The Children's Adopt a Village development model. They are also the basis of the dream that continues to fuel us today.

Five Days for Freedom is Free The Children's signature spring campaign that encourages youth to commit to a variety of awareness and fundraising efforts over the course of five days, to take action for their peers in developing communities.

From April 16 – 20, youth from across North America and the UK come together and exercise their freedom to act, by fundraising, over a period of five days, for Free The Children's Adopt a Village projects. Youth wrap up their fundraising efforts at the end of the week by hosting their own 'Freedom Fest' to celebrate their hard work and all they've accomplished.

In 2011, 405 school groups participated with 13,350 student leaders coordinating activities in their schools and educating 267,000 of their peers on the issue. Just under \$250,000 was raised for Free The Children's Adopt a Village projects.

To learn more visit:

<http://www.freethechildren.com/fivedaysforfreedom>

Halloween for Hunger – October 31, 2012

In March 2010, 867,948 Canadians turned to their local food bank for a meal—the highest level of food bank use on record.

Halloween for Hunger is an annual campaign with the goal to alleviate local hunger, while raising awareness of global poverty. Started by Professor Jonathan White from Bridgewater State University, and first adopted by Free The Children in October 2000, Halloween for Hunger challenges communities to think globally and act locally. School groups and youth from across the country participate each year with thousands upon thousands of pounds of food collected.

Every year, on October 31, youth from across North America and the UK participate by going door-to-door to collect non-perishable food items. Instead of asking for candy on Halloween, youth come together and trick-or-treat for non-perishable food items to strengthen the capacity of local food banks.

In 2010, more than 180,000 youth from 893 schools participated in Halloween for Hunger. As a result, over 519,000 pounds of food was donated to local food banks; enough to feed 119 families for one year.

In addition to a how-to guide, the support of a Free The Children team member, and access to printable cards for distribution in schools and neighbourhoods, the Halloween for Hunger campaign includes elementary and secondary school lesson plans to help educators address the issue of local hunger in their classrooms.

Made possible by



ABOUT FREE THE CHILDREN

Free The Children believes in a world where all young people are free to achieve their fullest potential as agents of change. We are a charity and educational partner that empowers youth to remove barriers that prevent them from being active local and global citizens. Our domestic programs educate, engage and empower hundreds of thousands of youth in North America and the UK. Our international projects, led by our holistic and sustainable Adopt a Village model, have brought over 650 schools and school rooms to youth and provided clean water, health care and sanitation to one million people around the world, freeing children and their families from the cycle of poverty.

Our primary goals are to free children from poverty and exploitation and free young people from the notion that they are powerless to affect positive change in the world. Through domestic empowerment programs and leadership training, Free The Children inspires young people to develop as socially conscious global citizens and become agents of change.

Founded in 1995 by international children's rights activist Craig Kielburger, the organization has grown into the world's largest network of children helping children through education, with more than one million young people involved in our innovative education and development programs in 45 countries.

DOMESTIC PROGRAMMING

Free The Children's domestic programming is focused on youth engagement and inspiring young leaders to pursue positive change at home and abroad. We know that sparking change at a domestic level is just as important as the work we do overseas.

Our local projects include We Day, motivational speaking tours, awareness and fundraising campaigns, curriculum and educational resources, initiatives targeting underserved communities, programs aimed at building awareness about Aboriginal education and much more.

We Day, Free The Children's signature, annual social justice event, is more than just one day of celebration and inspiration. It's a one-of-a-kind event and part of an innovative year-long program created to celebrate the power of young people to create positive change in the world. The event kicks off a year-long program of action, called We Schools in Action. We Day is free of charge and open to any school that wants to be part of the experience. In exchange, each school group that attends is asked to make a commitment to follow the We Schools in Action program, which includes taking local and global action throughout the year. Over 80,000 students participate in We Day itself in various cities across Canada including; Toronto, Vancouver, Waterloo Region, Winnipeg and Montreal. For more information on We Day visit www.weday.com.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In seven countries, we work alongside the men, women and children who every day strive to free themselves from poverty, exploitation, disease and thirst. This effort is not charity, it is sustainability. It is freedom in action. It is Free The Children's Adopt a Village development model. The Adopt a Village model is implemented in rural communities in Haiti, Kenya, rural China, India, Sierra Leone, Ecuador and Nicaragua.

Designed to meet the basic needs of developing communities and eliminate the obstacles preventing children from accessing education, Adopt a Village is made up of four pillars crucial to sustainable community development: education, health care, clean water and sanitation and alternative income.

TO DATE, FREE THE CHILDREN HAS:

- Built more than 650 schools and school rooms in communities in Asia, Africa and Latin America, providing education to more than 55,000 children every day.
- Shipped \$16 million US in essential medical supplies to 40 countries.
- Provided health care centres and community funding, helping 512,500 people.
- Helped more than 30,000 women become economically self-sufficient with loans and alternative forms of income.
- Supported more than 3,500 Youth in Action groups throughout North America and across the world.

FAQs

1. What makes Free The Children so unique?

Free The Children is unique among charities in that it operates both locally and internationally. We seek to empower young leaders at home to foster positive local and global change. Internationally, the organization pursues a variety of development projects with a particular focus on education, health care, alternative income and clean water. Simply put, we work to achieve a world where all young people are free to achieve their fullest potential as agents of change.

Although ambitious, this dual focus allows Free The Children to better meet its core objective: to create systemic positive change. By working at home and abroad we can both inspire youth to effect change and help young people realize the benefits of change. In our experience, the greatest momentum is created when we engage youth to become involved global citizens, helping to make a difference locally and internationally.

2. What are Free The Children's local projects?

Free The Children is committed to domestic programming because we believe that young people will change the world once they're free from the notion that they're powerless to make a difference. We know that sparking change at a domestic level is just as important as the work we do overseas.

Our programming in North America—which is focused primarily on youth with a strong emphasis on educators, families and the corporate world—is built on three guiding principles: educate, engage, empower. Each of our programs and initiatives work to educate, engage and empower youth and adults alike in unique ways.

Specifically, our local projects include motivational speaking tours, awareness building around poverty and international development, initiatives targeting underserved communities and programs aimed at raising awareness about Aboriginal education.

Free The Children conducts teacher workshops across North America and the UK for dozens of school boards, bringing social justice programming to the classroom. We also offer ministry friendly issue-based educational resources to support educators as they bring social justice education into their classroom. The educational resources are created by our in-house Curriculum Development

team, which also works in collaboration with external educator consultants. Our resources cover a range of local and global issues, including elementary and secondary level curriculum, resource guides, lesson plans, activities and other teaching tools.

In addition, the organization runs programs like Global Voices, in which students explore a recent social justice issue covered in Craig and Marc Kielburger's weekly column in newspapers across Canada including the *Toronto Star* and the *Vancouver Sun*. Program participants also have access to corresponding lesson plans. More than 5,000 educators participate in this program every week.

3. What are Free The Children's international projects?

Free The Children's international projects, carried out through our holistic development model, Adopt a Village, operate in seven countries: India, Nicaragua, rural China, Sierra Leone, Ecuador, Kenya and Haiti.

Adopt a Village consists of four pillars and aims to help break the cycle of poverty. These include (i) education, (ii) water and sanitation, (iii) health care and (iv) alternative income. As with any international development organization, Free The Children has dedicated staff in Canada who help to manage and implement these projects as well as experts, working directly on the ground. These experts provide services such as medical programs and financial literacy training workshops and help implement small and large-scale construction projects for schools and water systems.

4. What percentage of donations is used for administrative cost and how much reaches children directly?

Free The Children works hard to ensure that donations are used effectively and efficiently. We are very proud of our low administrative rate of 10 per cent, which means that, on average, approximately 90 percent of funds donated go directly to Free The Children's domestic and international programming.

When making a donation, donors can specify where they want the funds they've raised directed. When youth or school groups make a donation towards international projects, the funds are used to support Free The Children's Adopt a Village development model.

5. How does Free The Children keep its administration costs lower than industry standard?

Free The Children is able to keep its administrative rate low through a number of carefully planned and deliberate undertakings. This includes the fact that Free The Children does not employ third-party fundraising organizations to solicit money, employ direct mail campaigns to solicit donors, hire mall or street intercept fundraisers or use telemarketers or costly fundraising consultants. The organization also works hard to establish privileged partnerships that allow it to avoid the costs of advertising, producing commercials or buying media to air programming.

6. What is Me to We and how does it work with Free The Children?

An innovative social enterprise, Me to We provides people with better choices for a better world, including socially conscious and environmentally friendly clothes and accessories, as well as life-changing international volunteer trips, leadership training programs and materials, and books which address issues of positive social change. In addition, half of Me to We's net profit is donated to Free The Children and the other half is reinvested to grow the enterprise.

To learn more about Me to We, please visit www.metowe.com.

7. What is We Day?

We Day is an annual social justice event which is provided free of cost to students and schools. It is held in Toronto, Vancouver, Waterloo, Winnipeg and Montreal. Over 80,000 students have participated in We Day live and over five million Canadians watch the day's highlights broadcasted on CTV. Past speakers include Dr. Jane Goodall, Elie Wiesel, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, former prime minister Paul Martin, Vice President and Nobel Laureate Al Gore, Nobel Laureate Betty Williams, Rev. Jesse Jackson, Mike "Pinball" Clemons, the Assembly of First Nations National Chief Shawn Atleo, as well as performers like Justin Bieber, Jason Mraz, Hedley, Barenaked Ladies and the Jonas Brothers.

The event kicks off a year-long series of actions whereby students and schools choose a local and international issue on which they want to become involved and create positive change. Ongoing support and educational materials pertaining to social justice are provided to educators at no cost.



For more information please visit:
www.freethechildren.com

Social Networking Channels

Free The Children uses a number of social networking sites to raise awareness and keep youth and stakeholders engaged in our ongoing activities. We encourage you to stay connected and follow us on:



[Youtube Channel](https://www.youtube.com/freethechildrenintl)
[youtube.com/freethechildrenintl](https://www.youtube.com/freethechildrenintl)



[Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/freethechildren)
[facebook.com/freethechildren](https://www.facebook.com/freethechildren)
[facebook.com/craigkielburger](https://www.facebook.com/craigkielburger)
[facebook.com/weday](https://www.facebook.com/weday)



[Twitter](https://twitter.com/freethechildren)
twitter.com/freethechildren
twitter.com/craigkielburger

For media inquiries please contact:

Lauren Stasila, Manager, PR & Publicity
647.259.3468 • lauren.stasila@freethechildren.com