



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nelly Furtado teams up with Free The Children to invest in the power of girls

Toronto, Ont. – We Day – September 27, 2011 – Juno and Grammy award winner, and international icon Nelly Furtado has graciously donated \$1 million to international charity and educational partner, [Free The Children](#). The donation will fund two new Free The Children programs supporting girls in need throughout the Maasai Mara region of Kenya and in the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA), two regions in need of support in different ways – with the current drought in East Africa and with the transitional changes in North Africa.

The announcement was made on stage by Nelly Furtado to more than 18,000 youth following her performance at Free The Children’s [We Day](#) event in Toronto, the world’s largest youth empowerment event of its kind. Her decision was foreshadowed following a recent twitter post made by the Canadian performer announcing her decision to donate money she received for agreeing to perform at a private concert.

The commitment of support followed her recent visit to Free The Children’s development projects in Kenya, where she witnessed firsthand the power that education plays in helping people to break a cycle of poverty, hunger, and hand-outs, to be empowered to transform their own lives and those of their families. Her visit was chronicled by CTV, Canada’s largest private broadcaster, in a documentary titled **NELLY FURTADO: THE ROAD TO KISARUNI**, and is available to watch in North America on www.ctv.ca/kisaruni.

“My charitable mission is to empower girls around the world to realize their full potential,” said Nelly Furtado. “I left a piece of my heart in Kenya earlier this year and I can’t wait to get started on helping girls like the ones I met build a brighter future for themselves, their families and communities.”

“On behalf of the Free The Children family, I would like to thank and applaud Nelly for making such a significant investment in the future of girls,” said Craig Kielburger, co-founder of Free The Children. “When I had the opportunity to host Nelly in Kenya this year, I was amazed by the way she was embraced by the women and the young girls she met in the community and the lasting effect these relationships had on her and the girls she inspired. Her generous gift will go a long way towards inspiring girls to achieve their full potential and become a generation of strong mentors and leaders in their communities.”

A portion of the donated money will fund a new all-girls boarding secondary school in the Maasai Mara region of Kenya, making secondary education accessible for the many hardworking girls in the surrounding communities—girls who otherwise would not have the opportunity to continue their education beyond grade eight.



Nelly is also encouraging people to get involved in the cause. Part of Nelly Furtado's donation will be a challenge grant for youth around the world. For every dollar donated, through a challenge grant of up to \$500,000, Nelly will match it. More information about the challenge grant is available at www.freethechildren.com/nelly.

The other portion of the donation will support The Girls for Change Program, a new Free The Children initiative providing middle and high school-aged girls with the necessary leadership and girls' empowerment training, civil society engagement, and technological literacy to ensure that they prosper and become exceptional young leaders within the MENA region (specifically in Libya, Egypt, Tunisia and Gaza Strip). Over two years, the goal is to implement the program in more than 35 schools and youth groups across the MENA region, empowering thousands of youth.

[Click to Tweet](#): Nelly Furtado donates \$1million to @FreeTheChildren during youth empowerment event #WeDay <http://bit.ly/q2I363>

Related

- [More about Nelly's partnership with Free The Children](#)
- [Watch the Nelly Furtado/Free The Children press conference](#)
- [Photos of Nelly Furtado at We Day Toronto](#) (available after 3:30 p.m. EST)
- [Video of Nelly Furtado at We Day Toronto](#) (available after 3:30 p.m. EST)

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About Free The Children

Free The Children 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. For additional information, please visit www.freethechildren.com.