



**FREE THE CHILDREN**  
children helping children through education

**WE SCHOOLS IN ACTION**

# **IMPACT REPORT**

# **2010/2011**

# **ACADEMIC YEAR**

**WE ARE REVOLUTION**  
**THE REVOLUTION FOR THE RESOLUTION**



# WE SCHOOLS IN ACTION PROGRAM

## OUR IMPACT

Through the We Schools in Action program, school communities are transformed by positive changes in student behaviour, heightened student engagement and the belief that it's cool to care.

The We Schools in Action program increases student engagement in their school and community, and contributes to:

- lifelong commitment to philanthropy
- academic achievement
- caring school cultures
- deeper connections between students and teachers
- character education objectives
- giving back to the community

The program achieves these outcomes through its innovative approach to education and social issues. We Schools in Action is:

- educational
- youth-oriented
- cool
- tangible, providing hands-on, student-led campaigns

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Marilyn Carroll, an educator from St. Anthony Elementary School, Lester B. Pearson School Board reflects:

“We Schools in Action has changed how my students view themselves and their lives. They naturally think of ways in which they can help others to live a better life. Our school is a better place for having committed to helping others locally and in Sierra Leone. When you walk in our school, our walls are covered in activities and posters that make our students think of others. So often, a student or group of students does something on their own initiative to help. It has been inspiring for everyone. I think the way that everyone views themselves is the best part. At first the students didn't believe they could bring about much change in the world. ‘What can I do about it? I'm just a kid.’ was a common phrase we heard. That is never mentioned in our school anymore.”

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# WHY WE SCHOOLS IN ACTION?

We Schools in Action inspires a generation to care about social justice and provides the practical tools to turn that inspiration into action. Carrying out the energy and message of We Day, We Schools puts students at the forefront of active global citizenship by educating them on social issues and action planning, developing leadership skills and engaging them in world-changing action.

Throughout the year, Free The Children supports We Schools to take action—one local and one global action during the school year—by providing a professional development session to teachers and students, classroom and extracurricular resources, motivational speeches, ongoing mentorship and support from dedicated program coordinators, and of course, the energy and message of We Day. The program inspires learning and action that supports student citizenship and creates tangible change in our local communities and around the world.



## SPOTLIGHT

### Victoria Cross Public School, Wellington Heights Secondary School and St. Mary's Catholic School

These schools brought their community together for a variety of events including art auctions and grilled cheese days. Thinking *we* took them out of their neighbourhood to help reopen a Cree Nation Reserve School after being inspired by Free The Children's Local Spotlight: Aboriginal Education campaign, and then even further as they travelled to the community in Kenya they had raised \$25,650.60 for.



**88%** of We Schools educators reported that their students see themselves as part of a broader community.



# HOW IT WORKS

## 1. COMMIT

Attending We Day and participating in the We Schools program is free of charge and open to any school who wants to be part of the experience!

The only admission: changing the world!

Each school must commit to:

- Use the inspiration from We Day to create tangible change in their communities through one local and one global action.
- Submit progress reports about their positive actions.

In return, Free The Children provides ongoing support from our youth coordination team, training for students and educators, curricular resources and dynamic student-led campaigns.

### WE SCHOOLS 2010/2011 AT A GLANCE

**2,000** schools committed to the We Schools in Action program

**113** school boards and school districts participated in the We Schools in Action program

## SPOTLIGHT



### École St. Jean, Granby (Québec)

In addition to attending We Day with her students, educator Carole Clermont used streaming video (such as Spencer West's speeches) to educate and inspire them. They went on to fundraise for school-building in Sierra Leone, as well as supporting local organizations.

**\$13,000** raised through the dedication of these committed youth.



## 2. GET INSPIRED

Every year, motivational speakers take to the stage at We Day, inspiring youth through messages of hope and a call to action. Students bring those messages back to their schools and mobilize their peers to take action on the issues they learned about.

**43,000** students attended We Day events in Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal and Waterloo.

**124,000** youth were mobilized by the message of change brought back by their peers.

**5 MILLION** viewers watched the two-hour CTV special presentation.





### 3. GET INFORMED

As part of each school's involvement in the program, in 2010/2011, each was provided a free workshop day for one teacher and three students from every school. At the professional development sessions:

- **KEYNOTE ADDRESS:** Re-ignited the group and brought them back to the energy of We Day.
- **TEACHERS:** Explored Free The Children's youth engagement and empowerment model, had a workshop on the concept of the 21st century learner and networked with each other on the pedagogy of social justice.
- **STUDENTS:** Participated in high-energy workshops where they learned how to create action plans, interacted with students from other schools and took part in leadership activities.

### WE SCHOOLS RESOURCES

- 22** professional development sessions in regions across Canada
- 85** unique lesson plans made available to educators

Vivian Tsioros, an educator from Tecumseh Public School, Thames Valley District School Board notes:

“You offer strong support with issues and links teachers can use to raise topics and offer opportunities to young people to state their opinions and ideas of how to help others.”



#### 4. TAKE ACTION!

When students are educated and informed, they become committed to use their skills to drive action. Students take the inspiration from We Day and harness it into tangible action that creates real change in the community and engages them in important issues.

#### IN THE 2010/2011 SCHOOL YEAR:



# 1.6 MILLION

hours were spent volunteering in the community.



# \$2 MILLION

was raised by students for local organizations across Canada.



# \$3.4 MILLION

was raised by students for global action projects.



# 609,229

pounds of food were collected by students during the Halloween for Hunger campaign.



# 102,493

students took the Vow of Silence to raise awareness about children around the world who are being silenced by poverty and exploitation.

84% of We Schools educators found their students are now more passionate about social justice. These youth work hard to benefit the organizations and issues they care about. The top organizations that benefitted from the We Schools in Action program include:

- Free The Children
- Food banks
- Terry Fox
- Homeless shelters
- Red Cross
- Salvation Army
- Women's shelters
- Japan Relief
- United Way
- Cancer-related organizations

#### SPOTLIGHT

### NEW CENTRAL PUBLIC SCHOOL

Students from New Central Public School in Oakville, Ontario have many talents and used them all to create change in Japan, Haiti and Kenya.

# \$12,000

was raised through school dances, car washes, the Vow of Silence, spirit days, holiday cards, candy grams, spaghetti dinners, raffles, bake sales and yoga sessions.



## 5. SHARE IT

Every fall and spring, groups set goals and report on their accomplishments as the final step to the program.

The information collected from Reports 1 and 2 enables Free The Children to:

- Measure tangible outcomes of the We Schools program
- Tailor the support We Schools receive from youth programming coordinators
- Celebrate and honour the work of students
- Quantify the impact of each school in large-scale change

Principal Gary Lankowski, St. Gregory, WCDSB

“Working on the We Schools in Action program has been very rewarding for the teachers to witness the passion and enthusiasm that our students are demonstrating. We have gotten to know many students through this program that we might not have known as well. Our students have become more aware of the issues in our community and in the world around us. They have expressed interest and enthusiasm to be part of a positive change. It was exciting to see all of our students working cooperatively together for a greater cause.”



## SPOTLIGHT

### LANGLEY SECONDARY SCHOOL

Thirty-five youth organized a week-long awareness campaign in their school on the issue of clean water, hosting a Walk for Water and selling reusable water bottles. They are also fundraising for a well in India.

# 92%

of We Schools educators say their students now believe they can make a difference.





# EDUCATIONAL PARTNER RECOGNITION

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. Free The Children thanks all of our Educational Partners:

 Bluewater District School Board	 Burnaby School District 41	 Central Okanagan School District 23	 Chilwick School District 33	 Coquitlam School District 43
 Delta School District 37	 Durham Catholic District School Board	 Greater Victoria School District 61	 Halton Catholic District School Board	 Halton District School Board
 Kamloops/Thompson School District 73	 Langley School District 35	 Lester B. Pearson School Board	 Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows School District 42	 Mission School District 75
 Nanaimo-Ladysmith School District 68	 New Westminster School District 40	 North Okanagan-Shuswap School District 83	 Northern Lights School Division 69	 Ottawa-Carleton District School Board
 Peace River North School District 60	 Peace River South School District 59	 Peel District School Board	 Quesnel School District 28	 Richmond School District 38
 Surrey School District 36	 Toronto Catholic District School Board	 Toronto District School Board	 Trillium Lakelands District School Board	 Upper Grand District School Board
 Vancouver School District 39	 Waterloo Region District School Board	 Waterloo Catholic District School Board	 Wellington Catholic District School Board	 West Vancouver School District 45

The We Schools in Action program would not be possible without the dedicated support, time and collaboration of incredible school districts and supporters. We are deeply grateful for their help in providing young people with the understanding and inspiration to create better communities and a better world.



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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. The primary goals of the organization are to free children from poverty and exploitation and free young people from the notion that they are powerless to effect positive change in the world.