

## **For Immediate Release**

### **Her Royal Highness Celebrates the Spirit of “We” in Toronto** *The Countess of Wessex, joined Free The Children in honouring socially active citizens*

**TORONTO, ON June 5, 2009** – Earlier today, Her Royal Highness The Countess of Wessex, wife of Prince Edward, The Earl of Wessex, honoured exceptional Ontario student leaders actively involved in Free The Children’s youth programming, volunteerism and leadership initiatives and for living the “Me to We” philosophy. Hosted by Free The Children, the event at the Design Exchange brought together directors of education, students and educators from 13 exceptional schools from across Ontario. The most outstanding young change-makers from inner-city schools to private schools were invited to attend along with families and select corporate leaders who are passionately involved with the organization to celebrate.

The Countess of Wessex was joined by Craig Kielburger, Founder, Free The Children, in recognizing the remarkable efforts of those who have been involved with the organization and whose actions exemplify the “Me to We” philosophy of living socially conscious lives. “We continue to be inspired by the commitment of the incredible youth that are truly determined to affect positive change in the world,” said Craig Kielburger. “Their efforts are deserving of recognition and we are honoured that Her Royal Highness is here to share in their accomplishments.”

Emceed by 13 year-old Hannah Endicott-Douglas, star of the television series *Anne of Green Gables*, the event included an afternoon filled with an array of inspiring programming of the arts. Robin Wiszowaty, author of *My Maasai Life: From Suburbia to Savannah*, spoke of her experiences living with a Maasai family. Guests were also treated to musical performances by socially conscious singer-songwriter, Louise Kent. As part of the day Her Royal Highness and guests spent time viewing a special photography exhibit by renowned and celebrated Canadian photographer, Tony Hauser. Tony’s “The Majestic Maasai” exhibit was on display at the event.

The Countess of Wessex participated in the ceremony, personally applauding the impressive efforts of those being honoured and spoke to the guests about the importance of active social citizenship. Alongside The Honorable David Onley, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, she took the opportunity to meet the youth participants, and congratulated their efforts.

#### **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, 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.

*Photo available on the picture wire of The Canadian Press.*

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