



FREE THE CHILDREN

children helping children through education

I'M ONLY ONE PERSON, WHAT DIFFERENCE CAN I MAKE?

Unique event featuring a line-up of Canada's top socially conscious speakers unites thousands to kick-off a year of taking action!

Toronto, Oct. 15, 2007 – On October 19, 2007, more than 7,500 student leaders from across Ontario will unite at the Ricoh Coliseum in Toronto for National Me to We Day, an event that combines the energy and passion of Canada's top socially-conscious speakers to share the message that one person can make a world of difference. Thousands more will tune in from coast to coast via a live web-cast. The event will launch the Year of We, a year-long action-oriented initiative to encourage youth and adults to get involved in their local and global communities.

National Me to We day is an initiative led by Canadian-based NGO Free The Children. It is hosted by celebrity guest **Ben Mulroney** and features an exciting line up of Canada's top leadership and motivational speakers, including **Roméo Dallaire**, **Irshad Manji**, **Mark Tewksbury**, **Justin Trudeau**, cast members from ***Degrassi: The Next Generation*** and accomplished child rights advocates, **Craig Kielburger and Marc Kielburger**, founders of Free The Children. Musical guests include **Hanson** and the 2007 Canadian Idol winner, **Brian Melo**. There will be a special presentation from **Michel Chikwanine**, a war-affected child, who will share his first-hand experience growing up in the Democratic Republic of Congo during the Great War of Africa.

"Me to We," the name of the event, is based on a term coined by the Kielburgers. "It is a way of living that celebrates volunteerism, community building and service to others. And that is the main message of National Me to We Day," says Craig Kielburger, founder of Free The Children. "National Me to We Day will educate and empower youth to "THINK WE" and act as global citizens to create change for a better world."

The momentum of the day will continue through the Year of We, which encourages schools, homes and workplaces to take action. Here are some ways that Canadians are getting involved:

- Youth can win a volunteer trip to Africa, Latin America or Asia by getting involved and taking action through Free The Children's Adopt a Village program.
- Students will learn about volunteerism and social justice issues in the classroom through a special Me to We school kit for educators.
- Families and offices can download their own Me to We family or office kits by logging on to www.freethechildren.com/metoweday. Each kit provides tangible action ideas to help support international development work.

More than 500 schools across Ontario will attend National Me to We Day. The event is made possible at no cost to students and schools through the support of numerous companies and organizations.

"National Me to We Day is an example of the type of program that helps our kids build their own social and volunteerism priorities," says Brian Davis, executive vice-president of National Bank Financial, title sponsor of National Me to We Day. "We are proud to be a long-term corporate supporter of Free The

Children. With their help, we are engaging our own employees to bring initiatives for childhood development directly into their communities, schools and families.”

National Me to We Day begins at 9:30 a.m. and ends at 2:30 p.m. at the Ricoh Coliseum, 100 Princes' Blvd., Toronto. To attend the event and for more information, visit www.freethechildren.com/pressroom.

Free The Children is the world's largest network of children helping children through education, with more than one million youth involved in 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. Through the energy and passion of youth, Free The Children has built more than 450 schools around the world, shipped more than \$11 million US in essential medical supplies, and it provides education for 40,000 children everyday. The organization has received the World 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 more information please visit www.freethechildren.com.

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For further information, please contact Melissa Yaw, Communications Coordinator, by e-mail at melissa@freethechildren.com or by phone at 416.925.5894 ext. 248. Event day, call 416.528.9134.

Interviews with speakers are available upon request. Please contact Melissa Yaw by Wednesday, October 17.