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STOLEN DREAMS YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

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STOLEN DREAMS YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

REPORT

HISTORY

The idea for the Stolen Dreams Youth Leadership Conference developed first in early 1999. The education committee of the Ontario Workers Arts and Heritage Centre discussed appropriate programming to run in conjunction with two upcoming exhibits - *Stolen Dreams: Portraits of the World's Working Children* and *Children of the Wind: Art Work by Children About Their Lives*. The combination of the two exhibits provided the ideal opportunity to work with youth in the community to educate young people about child labour and encourage them to become active in their community, their country and their world.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE IDEA

Planning began in earnest in the summer of 1999 first with students from Ancaster High Secondary School's antiracist student group, ARMAC. Throughout the summer planning attempts were made to contact additional students from high schools in the area in order to gather suggestions and support.

The students made the decision to hold a roundtable after the school year began in order to develop leadership and interpersonal skills and encourage more students to become involved in the project. These students would then also be able to inform students from their own schools and coordinate involvement in the conference. With the assistance of teachers and OWAHC staff, representatives were invited from all area high schools for a workshop October 7, 1999. Twenty -four students from nine different high schools attended.

The roundtable included information about child labour, the upcoming exhibits and the proposal for a small conference that would be designed to provide participants with the information and skills necessary to combat the problems associated with child labour. Historian and OWAHC education committee chair Ken Cruikshank provided information on the history of child labour in Canada and what can be learned from experiences in the past in order to confront contemporary problems. The roundtable also involved activities, videos and presentations designed to build understanding.

A major focus was on facilitating discussion between students from the various schools. By the end of the evening numerous suggestions and plans had been made. Concrete ideas for project coordination were discussed. Several suggestions emerged for how to raise awareness about the project and about child labour more generally. Students went away from this workshop enthused about participation in the project.

The process of continually attempting to bring in additional people was not without difficulties but ultimately provided the means to involve as many students as possible in the process. It also meant that when the opportunity arose to combine the project with one being planned by the local *Free the Children* Chapter at St. Thomas More Catholic Secondary School, we were able to take advantage of it.

PLANNING: NOVEMBER 1999 TO FEBRUARY 2000

After October 7, meetings took place with students, teachers and OWAHC staff to refine the direction and outline of the project. It was then that the project expanded into a conference that would take place over two days and include the options for participants of spending the night at St. Thomas More Catholic Secondary School.

Over the three and a half months of planning an agenda for the project developed, various local NGOs were contacted to provide resources and support and the logistics of holding the conference were determined. Students identified and contacted people to provide keynote addresses. Topics for workshop sessions were also identified. Several students took on responsibility for conducting workshops. In other cases, people from the wider community were approached about providing workshops.

A conference package was also developed. It included information on the various partners involved in the project, facts about child labour and suggestions for how to find out additional information. Some of this information was produced by the students, while some was provided by NGOs such as *Free the Children* International and World Vision. The conference package also contained a T-shirt which included a logo designed especially for the conference by a student and the list of sponsors. Additional supplies required by students to participate in the conference were also included.

A flyer was developed to promote the conference and provide the necessary information outlining the conference, the various groups supporting it and how to find out more information or register. Students, teachers and the Ontario Workers Arts and Heritage Centre worked to register students for the event, contacting students and schools in person and by phone.

The process of planning the conference provided ample opportunities for students, supported by OWAHC staff and teachers, to develop new skills including learning to work effectively as a group and how to begin with an idea and take it through to completion. Twelve students took part in facilitation training provided by the United Way of Burlington, Hamilton-Wentworth.

THE CONFERENCE

The conference itself took place February 11 to 12, 2000. Fifty-nine young people from sixteen different schools took part. [For a list of conference participants see Appendix A, for a complete agenda for the conference, see Appendix B.]

Participants spend Friday evening getting to know one another and being introduced to the complex problem of child labour. Fintan Kilbride spoke about the work he has been involved with in Latin America and the Caribbean helping to set up the infrastructure necessary to provide clean water and the building of schools. Information was provided to students about how they could become involved in similar projects.

The tour of the exhibits on Saturday morning was conducted with the guidance of a group of volunteer exhibit interpreters, a group consisting of graduate students at McMaster University and retired secondary school teachers. The artwork by children from around the world contained in *Children of the Wind* provided the opportunity for students to compare and contrast their own lives with the lives of

children around the world and also introduced the subject of children's rights as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The portraits of children working that make up the main component of the Stolen Dreams exhibit encouraged participants to think about the various types of work done by children and the many problems they may face as a result. The portrait of Iqbal Masih and information on his life and work, as well as the displays by the various local and international groups confronting the problems associated with child labour provided inspiration to the participants and insights into what they could do to help solve the problems.

Information presented by Sheena Komal of *Free the Children* included additional facts and insights about the situation for children in various parts of the world. Compelling examples of the terrible situations faced by many children made an impact on the participants. Information on what *Free the Children* is doing to address the problems, including providing health kits and school kits and raising funds to build schools in areas where they are needed, helped build a sense of empowerment in the participants.

The presentation by *Free the Children* founder, Craig Kielburger, and a third *Free the Children* representative was very well received by participants. They were inspired by Craig's experiences and what he had helped to accomplish and encouraged by the fact that young people without the profile of Craig Kielburger were doing valuable work to help children around the world. In addition to outlining his experiences and providing insights on the situation for children throughout the world, Craig answered questions posed by participants and provided his thoughts about what Canada and Canadian citizens should do, as well as the types of policies that Canada should adopt. His focus was on Canada's ability to use its influence in international areas to place children's issues on the agenda.

The first workshop series was designed to build knowledge amongst participants of the various related issues and the complexity of international problems. Five options were available and each workshop consisted of information and opportunities for discussion and reflection.

Workshop A - Child Exploitation

Conducted by Alpna Munshi of the Ontario Public Interest Research Group (OPIRG) McMaster this workshop examined what it means to say that children around the world are exploited, why it happens and what can be done about it. Case studies and discussions were used to illustrate the problems that children may face and why they end up in these situations. Work in several different industries, including the sex trade, was discussed. Reasons employers hire children and why children work were examined. The negative long term consequences for children, their families and their countries were outlined. Finally, various ways of addressing the problems, including providing basic education and laws such as the one in Canada that permits prosecution of people who engage in commercial sex with children while abroad, were suggested as examples of what can be done.

Workshop B - Children's Rights

Two high school students, Cinzia DiFranco and Chris Longtin, developed and conducted a workshop in which they gave participants information on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and its importance for improving the situation for children around the world. Participants were given the opportunity to brainstorm and demonstrate their awareness of the rights to which they are entitled. Videos and skits were used to further explain the different types of rights and how they are essential for children. Discussion took place concerning the importance of each right and the ways in which they are interconnected.

Workshop C - Sweatshops

Provided by Andrea Towler and Grace Chirico of OPIRG McMaster this workshop introduced participants to the complexity of a global economic system and its importance in explaining why people, and especially young women, are often forced to work long hours under poor conditions for low wages. This workshop provided important information on the links between young people in Canada and especially their role as consumers, and the work that many young people do in other parts of the world for multinational corporations. Importantly, this relationship was discussed in terms of what young people in Canada can do and have done to improve the situation for others around the world.

Workshop D - Confronting the Problems

Doug Blackburn from World Vision Canada used videos, discussion and role playing to examine the situations that many young people around the world face. Role playing and discussion in this workshop in particular were designed to facilitate an understanding built from the central question “what would you do if you were in a similar situation?”.

Workshop E - Canadian Issues/Foreign Policy

Lauren Woods, Shobita Ravindram and Vikram Ravindram, all high school students, conducted a workshop addressing Canadian issues and especially Canadian foreign policy. With the guidance of OWAHC staff, they introduced participants to a wide range of topics including Canada’s involvement in organizations such as the International Labour Organization and how this impacts Canada’s approach to child labour issues. Discussion involved examining proposed ideas for how foreign policy could be used to end problems associated with child labour. Suggestions included developing a system that would certify goods were not made with child labour and encouraging the development of the role of a children’s commissioner.

The second workshop session provided participants with the opportunity to increase their skills. Again five options were presented with the focus on increasing participants capabilities to address the problems they were beginning to understand.

Workshop F - Leadership

High school student Sean Zimmer used several techniques to encourage participants to develop their leadership potential. Drawing from his own experiences and leadership training, Sean outlined the key components of leadership and provided participants with the opportunity to discuss what it means to be leaders. Participants took part in various activities designed to build trust and encourage positive risk taking.

Workshop G - Chapter Start-up/Organization

Students Ashley Noto and Andrea Camilletti shared experiences from starting a *Free the Children* chapter at their high school and explored the general theme of how to start your own organization and insure its effectiveness. The importance of choosing and defining your organizations mandate and goals, establishing organizational structures and taking on manageable activities were discussed. While maintaining an encouraging manner, Ashley and Andrea also provided participants with information concerning the potential pitfalls they may face.

Workshop H - Media Relations and Fundraising

A volunteer from the United Way of Burlington, Hamilton-Wentworth, Lisa Mayeski, introduced participants to important information about fundraising and media relations. The keys to successful fundraising were outlined. Sources for finding money for projects and ideas for how to raise money in the community were discussed. Finally, information on dealing with the media, including how to write a press release and what can be done to help insure your event gets the attention you desire, was shared.

Workshop I - Facilitation/Holding an Effective Meeting

Mary Margaret Kachurovski, a volunteer from the United Way of Burlington, Hamilton-Wentworth, took students through the step by step process of preparing for, hosting and following up after meetings. The roles of the facilitator or chairperson was defined and discussed. Time was also taken to examine the importance of agendas and other structures designed to help you get the most out of meetings.

Workshop J - Public Speaking

Keith Burt, also a local high school student, outlined the importance of public speaking skills and the steps necessary for participants to improve their own ability to speak in public. Defining your topic and insuring that it is an appropriate fit with your purpose and audience is a critical initial step. Tips for gathering information and turning it into a coherent, organized presentation were also discussed. Finally, participants were given a chance to try their hand at speaking in front of the small group.

In the evening students then had the opportunity to come together and draw on their various learning experiences to develop their own ideas for what can be done. In small groups students were asked to come up with suggestions for (1) what they could do about child exploitation as individuals in their local community and (2) what Canada should do as a nation to combat child exploitation.

Following the small group discussion, students came together to share ideas and develop their suggestions for action. The following suggestions were made:

For what can be done by individuals in the community:

- write letters to politicians and representatives of the business community outlining your concerns and what you feel needs to be done
- work to educate others in the community through organized educational campaigns and by speaking your mind
- get together with other concerned individuals to form groups with the purpose of addressing the problem
- take on fundraising campaigns to raise money for organizations that help to provide children at risk with opportunities for education, health care services and other goods and services that address basic needs
- educate people about their role as consumers and the opportunity it creates to work for change by pressuring companies to adopt fair practices for workers
- petition governments and businesses to make addressing child labour a priority and to use their power to create positive change
- support organizations and companies that provide adequate wages and working conditions
- develop your ability to critically analyze situations and ask questions of politicians and companies about what they are doing

For what Canada can and should do:

- support ILO conventions, including the most recent Convention 138 on the Elimination of the Most Hazardous Forms of Child Labour
- use the position on the United Nations Security Council to advocate for children and work towards ending the exploitation of children
- be a strong lobbying voice at the international level for the rights of children
- educate Canadians about child labour and children's rights
- explore ways of instituting an international system that would certify that goods are not made with child labour
- explore the potential for instituting preferential trading systems and/or special taxes on imports that can not be certified free of child labour
- provide financial and other support necessary to assist countries to decrease and eventually eliminate child labour
- support the provision of universal free basic education

RESULTS

The success of the conference can be measured on several levels. It provided young people the opportunity to develop knowledge and demonstrated leadership potential. It also increased connections between young people and various local organizations and facilitated relationships that will assist the young people in making use of the various resources available within their community (for a list of all those involved see Appendix C). Of critical importance was the opportunity the project provided for young people to learn from one another and the way in which the project allowed for numerous levels of involvement by young people. Youth were involved in all aspects of the project including its organization, as presenters and of course, as participants. Evidence of the effectiveness of the event can also be measured by the positive evaluations received (see Appendix D for a summary).

In addition, follow up to the conference has included several important actions. First, students from one of the participating schools held assemblies that reached every student in their school and provided information about what they had learned about child labour and what can be done about it. Second, a letter addressed to Michael Jordan, Nike spokesperson, has been drafted. It outlines students concerns with the conditions under which many Nike products are made and encourages Mr. Jordan to take action. Finally, awareness of OWAHC and the exhibits has increased. More students have come through on school tours and the exhibits received a thoughtful review in the OSSTF District 19 newsletter, encouraging more people to come to the Ontario Workers Arts and Heritage Centre and learn about the situations faced by children around the world (see Appendix E).

Appendix A – LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

FirstName	LastName	Address	City	Prov	PC	HPhone
Teresa	Adams	70 Napoli Dr.	Hamilton	ON	L9C6X2	9053898230
Abby	Asomaning	30 Gledhill Crescent	Hamilton	ON	L9C6H4	9053884289
Taylor	Babineau	87 Ann Street	Dundas	ON	L9H5N8	9056289419
Selam	Berhane	384 Limeridge Rd. W.	Hamilton	ON	L9C2V5	9053877245
Jennie	Bartolotta	45 Atkins Dr.	Hamilton	ON	L9C6T6	9055751804
Sherwyn	Brown	90 Greencedar Dr.	Hamilton	ON	L9C6S8	9053874591
Kevin	Burt	7 Firenze Street	Hamilton	ON	L9C6T2	9053887338
Uzma	Chaudhry	4062 Hwy #99	Lynden	ON	L0R1T0	5196472175
Jennifer	Chylinski	6040 Camgreen Carole	Mississauga	ON	L5N4M8	9058263495
Andrea	Camilletti	35 Falkirk Dr.	Hamilton	ON	L9B1S3	9055755022
Elyse	Connery	11 Sovereign Ave	Dundas	ON	L9H5Z8	9055258772
Laura	Coutts	9 Larkspur Cr.	Ancaster	ON		9056488370
Laura	Cunningham	300 Main Street	Cambridge	ON	N1R1Y3	5196229708
Cinzia	DiFranco	204 Rymal Rd. W.	Hamilton	ON	L9B1B8	9053832604
Lydia	DiFranco	204 Rymal Rd. W.	Hamilton	ON	L9B1B8	9053832604
Stephanie	Frisind					9053851541
Pablo	Godoy	92 Woody Vineway	North York	ON	M2J4H6	4165028760
Christina	Halloran	144 Golfwood Dr.	Hamilton	ON	L9C6W3	9053872921
Basil	Hubbard	5 Harbourview Lane	Hamilton	ON	L9A5E7	9053836021
Justin	Hull	100 Nellida Crescent	Hamilton	ON	L9C7P9	9055743387
Maria	Ielvzzi	636 Upper Horning	Hamilton	ON	L9C7R1	9055754003
Shauna	Kamal	245-105 Mange Rd.	Scarborough	ON		4162821948
Esther	Ko	6 Caswell Dr.	Hamilton	ON	L9C7N2	9055746293
Nogah	Karrberg					
Katie	Inch	36 Watson's Lane	Dundas	ON	L9H1T3	9056789090
Alanna	Kading					
Jesse	Ketes					
Chris	Longtin	54 Miles Road	Hannon	ON	L0R1P0	9056266911
Sarah	Looyenga	171 Ayr Street	Caledonia	ON	N3W1E5	9057655267
Eileen	Lewis					
Judith	Lone	27 Vega Crescent	Stoney Creek	ON	L8E4S6	9056432872
Kasia	Masiak	210 Alderlea Ave.	Mount Hope	ON	L0R1W0	9056793873
Lina	Martinez	373 Upper Horning	Hamilton	ON		9053896831
Victoria	Marek	5 Malabar Court	Hamilton	ON	L9C2B8	9053887250
Allyshia	Mahy	76 Golden Orchard Dr.	Hamilton	ON	L9C6J5	9053875189
Teddy	Mahy	76 Golden Orchard Dr.	Hamilton	ON	L9C6J5	9053875189
Cassandra	Maschewski	16 Dana Drive	Hamilton	ON	L9A3H6	9053859353
Christine	Masi	125 Brucedale Ave. E	Hamilton	ON	L9A7N5	9053854407
Sarah	Mason	309-750 Mohawk Rd. W.	Hamilton	ON	L9C5Z5	9055754485
Erin	McDonald	88 Fiona Crescent	Hamilton	ON	L9C6P4	9053880308
Afshan	Mithani	32 Meadowlands Blvd.	Ancaster	ON		9056481985
Gloria	Montes	81 West, 3rd Street	Hamilton	ON	L9C3K2	9053885727
Ashley	Moore	15 Huntsville St.	Hamilton	ON	L9A4X1	9053842957
Emily	Nickol	93 Forfar Street W.	Caledonia	ON	N3W1J2	9057652360
Matilda	Nawakowski	317 Limeridge Rd. W. #2	Hamilton	ON	L9C7C8	9053852922
Lydia	Nyilasi	120 London St. S.	Hamilton	ON	L8K2G5	9055443470

FirstName	LastName	Address	City	Prov	PC	HPhone
Lisa	Nudham					
Sarah	O'Sullivan	59 Dovoco Drive	Hamilton	ON	L9C7E7	9053886742
Nikhil	Pai	66 Forestview Drive	Dundas	ON	L9H6M8	9056280221
Frank	Peng	502 Orton Ave.	Ancaster	ON	L9G4M8	9056482045
Deanna	Parsons	23 Fassett Ave.	Hamilton	ON	L9C4E6	9053892627
Johnny	Pimenta	45 Montcalm, Unit #36	Hamilton	ON	L9C4B2	9053853811
Jessie	Pimenta	45 Montcalm, Unit #36	Hamilton	ON	L9C4B2	9053853811
Lauren	Pipe	1149 Powerline Rd. E., RR #2	Lynden	ON	L0R1T0	9056483772
Nicole	Pocsai	62 Terrance Drive	Dundas	ON		9056283477
Steven	Pacheco	101 Cranbrook Drive	Hamilton	ON	L9C4S5	9055745639
Brynda	Austin					9053837763
Daniel	Bullook					
Jenelle	Burman					

Appendix B – AGENDA

Friday February 11

- 6:00 – 7:00 pm: Registration at St. Thomas More
- 7:00 – 10:00 pm: Welcome and Introduction
Keynote Address by Fintan Kilbride
Ice-breaking Activities
- 10:00 pm – 12:00 am: Social Time

Saturday February 12

- 8:00 am – Wake up call
- 8:30 am – Breakfast
- 9:30 am – Leave for the Ontario Workers Arts and Heritage Centre (OWAHC)

- 10:00 am – Welcome – speakers Bob Morrow, mayor and Bryce Kanbara, (OWAHC board member)
- 10:15 am – Exhibit Tours Guided by Exhibit Interpreters
- 11:15 am – Keynote Address by Sheena Komal, representative from Free the Children International
- 12:15 pm – Lunch
- 1:10 pm – Free the Children International Video and talk by Craig Kielburger
- 1:45 pm – Workshop Session I
- 3:00 pm – Break
- 3:15 pm – Workshop Session II
- 4:30 pm – Leave for St. Thomas More

- 5:30 pm – Dinner
- 6:30 pm – Action Discussion (small groups)
- 7:00 pm – Report Back (large group)
- 7:30 pm – Wrap-up
- 8:00 pm – Leave

Appendix C – SUMMARY OF EVALUATIONS

When asked, “How did you like...”

the snacks?	60% of respondents chose excellent 33% of respondents chose good 7% of respondents chose fair
the food?	80% of respondents chose excellent 20% of respondents chose good
the icebreakers?	63% of respondents chose excellent 20% of respondents chose good 7% of respondents chose fair 10% N/A
the trading game?	60% of respondents chose excellent 30% of respondents chose good 10% N/A
the overall activities?	77% of respondents chose excellent 17% of respondents chose good 7% N/A *
the committee?	97% of respondents chose excellent 3% of respondents chose good
Mr. Fintan Kilbride’s speech?	83% of respondents chose excellent 10% of respondents chose good 7% N/A
the sleeping quarters?	40% of respondents chose excellent 17% of respondents chose good 30% of respondents chose fair 13% N/A
Sheena Kamul’s speech?	93% of respondents chose excellent 3% of respondents chose good 3% of respondents chose poor
the transportation?	77% of respondents chose excellent 13% of respondents chose good 10% of respondents chose fair

* errors due to rounding

the knowledge workshop?	87% of respondents chose excellent 3% of respondents chose good 7% of respondents chose fair 3% N/A
the skills workshop?	90% of respondents chose excellent 3% of respondents chose good 3% of respondents chose fair 3% N/A
the discussion groups?	67% of respondents chose excellent 27% of respondents chose good 7% N/A
the final discussion?	67% of respondents chose excellent 17% of respondents chose good 7% of respondents chose fair 10% N/A

Comments:

I really like the fact we are helping FTC. I hope we continue this and solve the problems. I think we should have a monthly get-together. Thanks.

I found that everyone was very tired (which is theirs and my fault). I really enjoyed this conference and I hope that in the future I may be invited to more conferences and still be involved (when I am in university).

I really had fun. We can do whatever we put our hearts into. Free the Children is a really good organization.

Craig's speech larger than life. went very well. You should consider doing this again. RESPECT!

Really great! I learned a lot today.

Went better than expected. Can try for more people next time.

Judging by the number of 'excellents' you can tell I thought it was great. Good job to all the organizers and planners!

It was great. It helped me and friends set up our own group called Children of the Light. It gave us all the points we needed to form our little society of youth members of ages 12 and 13 fighting child labour.

I think this was a big hit and what all of you people are doing for the children are terrific!

It was excellent. I had a ton of fun.

I really had fun and the ideas were great.

Very cool, very funky. Hope you come again (Mr. K). Food was good. I'll be back for the next meeting.

It was fun.

I had fun.

Great conference. The planning was a little crazy though.

This conference was amazing and I was proud to be a part of it! I am definitely coming next year and to any more conference in the future.

A very well planned conference. The planning committee should be congratulated. It was very fun and educational. It had a great balance. Can't wait for next year's conference. Sean's conveyor belt icebreaker/trust game was great. The McDonald's drink was really good. The logo and T-shirts were well designed.

The overall thing was great! The people were great. I would really like to do it again!

There is always room for improvement, but everything went great. Also, if you are planning on coming to a conference, people should stay for the whole thing. LESS FOOD!

I had tons of fun!

Sheena didn't actually "say" much. If it wasn't for Craig and Laura coming and doing their talk, I would have been very disappointed with just Sheena.

I really like that it is a learning resource for younger kids too. I love this learning resource. Thank you very much.

It was awesome. Go team green!

Thank you for all you have done. This was an excellent conference and it was very organized. I had lots of fun. The floor in the girls sleeping quarters was very dusty.

Appendix D – **LIST OF THOSE WHO PROVIDED FINANCIAL OR OTHER SUPPORT**

Anti-Racism and Multicultural Awareness Committee (ARMAC) - Ancaster High
Arnold, Falzone, Fyshe
Bell World - Limeridge Mall
Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development
CEP Local 914 Charitable Fund
Ester Ko
Fintan Kilbride
Fortino's Supermarkets - Ancaster
Fortino's Supermarkets - Upper James
Free The Children International
Hamilton Community Foundation
Hamilton and District Labour Council
Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board
John Holmes Fund
Laidlaw Transit Ltd.
McDonald's Restaurant - Upper James and Rymal
Montana's Cookhouse Saloon
Ontario Public Interest Research Group (OPIRG) McMaster
Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSFT)
Ontario Trillium Foundation
Ontario Workers Arts and Heritage Centre
Sack, Globlatt, Mitchell
St. Thomas More Catholic Secondary School
St. Thomas More's Free the Children Chapter
St. Thomas More Student Council
Sobey's - Meadowlands
Sweet Paradise - Stone Church
Tim Horton's - Upper James
Ultra Mart Food and Drug - Upper James
United Way of Burlington, Hamilton-Wentworth
World Vision
Young Canada Works
Zarky's Fine Foods