



## Free The Children Launches Year of Education With Support From Joe Jonas, Nina Dobrev and Star-studded Line-up at We Day Toronto

--Free The Children embarks on year-long fundraising initiative to build 200 new schools in communities around the world--

--New Free The Children/RBC We Create Change coin drive to support fundraising drive--

**WE DAY - TORONTO, ONTARIO (September 20, 2013)** – Today, at Free The Children's [We Day Toronto](#), made possible by National Co-Title Sponsors RBC and TELUS, 20,000 students and educators kicked off the *Year of Education*, a year-long fundraising commitment to build 200 new schools in Free The Children's overseas communities. We Day Toronto featured special performances and inspiring words from Demi Lovato, The Jonas Brothers, Col. Chris Hadfield, Martin Luther King III and more.

Students, schools, families and individual Canadians can support the *Year of Education*, launched today by **Craig** and **Marc Kielburger**, co-founders of Free The Children, a number of different ways - from a [coin drive](#) and [cross-Canada road tour](#), to an [online celebrity challenge](#) and the [ABC Education Rafiki Friend Chain](#). A donation of \$20 provides one brick, which becomes the cornerstone of a new school, empowering new generations of learners. When donations add up to \$10,000 a new school or school room will be built, helping to bring education to marginalized communities around the world.

"Every pillar of our holistic development model is designed to remove the barriers to education by providing communities with clean water, health care, food and economic empowerment," said **Craig Kielburger**, in announcing the year-long-initiative. "Education can also change a young person's life, whether it's building self-confidence, empowering them to be leaders in their communities, or creating and opening doors for opportunities never imagined. Education has the power to change the world and we can't wait to see all the change youth are going to make this year to make education more accessible to their peers overseas."

More information about Free The Children's *Year of Education* is available at [www.freethechildren.com/schools](http://www.freethechildren.com/schools).

### Second Annual We Create Change campaign to get coins rolling

In support of the *Year of Education*, Free The Children and RBC launched the second annual [We Create Change](#) campaign, calling on Canadians to participate in an "all coins" drive. We Create Change-branded schoolhouse coin boxes and coin rollers are being made available to students and schools across the country. All coin denominations collected for this campaign will be accepted at all RBC branches in Canada. Coin by coin, Canadians can help build a school that will transform the lives of hundreds of children and empower new generations of learners and leaders. When a schoolhouse coin box is filled, participants can use their coin rollers to roll their coins and then drop them off at their nearest RBC branch. Across Canada, RBC branches will be accepting rolled coins throughout the 2013/2014 academic school year.

"We Create Change is a powerful tool for creating opportunities for education in developing communities, and teaching financial literacy and philanthropy to students here at home," said Dave McKay, Group Head, Personal & Commercial Banking, RBC. "Last year, we received an overwhelming response to our joint We Create Change penny drive in support of clean water and we are looking forward to working with Canadians to help build schools this year."

As part of this year's campaign, double amputee [Spencer West](#) will be hitting the road on the [We Create Change Tour](#), made possible by RBC. Throughout the tour, the Me to We speaker and Free The Children ambassador will be visiting schools to see what Canadians have accomplished through We Create Change. The tour is slated to begin in Spring 2014. By pledging to raise \$10,000 to build a school, students have a chance to put their town on the map of Spencer West's cross-country road trip.



Spencer West, who lost his legs at the age of five, has climbed Mount Kilimanjaro and walked from Edmonton to Calgary on his hands and in his wheelchair to fundraise for Free The Children. A motivational speaker, published author and world traveller, he shares inspirational stories about the power of education to build sustainable communities, at home and overseas. As he travels on his We Create Change Tour, Spencer will be joined by special guests and old friends.

Last year, the Free The Children/RBC We Create Change penny drive raised 140 million pennies (\$1.4 million), making it the largest youth-driven penny drive in Canada. This year's coin collection campaign, which will accept all Canadian coins – not just pennies – hopes to become the largest youth-led coin drive in Canada. We Create Change also includes tools and resources focused on financial literacy for teachers in Canada to use to help their students gain a stronger understanding of money matters.

For more information, visit [www.freethechildren.com/wecreatechange](http://www.freethechildren.com/wecreatechange) and [www.freethechildren.com/wecreatechangetour](http://www.freethechildren.com/wecreatechangetour).

### **Celebrities Ask Fans to Support *Year of Education***

**Joe Jonas**, from the Grammy® nominated, multi-platinum band The Jonas Brothers, announced a challenge on the We Day Toronto stage, calling on his fans to help him build two schools to support the *Year of Education*.

“My first trip, ever, to Africa was this summer as part of a Me to We trip to Kenya, where I volunteered and learned more about Free The Children’s international development communities,” said **Joe Jonas**. “After witnessing first-hand the impact of Free The Children’s schools, and interacting with the hundreds of kids that go there each day, I knew I wanted to get involved. That is why I am challenging my fans to help me raise \$20,000 to build two new schools in Kenya.”

In addition to Joe Jonas, several other celebrities have committed to raise money to support Free The Children’s *Year of Education*, including Nina Dobrev, Kardinal, Shawn Desman, Victoria Duffield, Kay, The Tenors, Tyler Shaw, and more. Fans can visit [www.freethechildren.com/schools](http://www.freethechildren.com/schools), choose their favourite celebrity to support, and donate online.

### **Me to We ABC Education Rafiki Friend Chain**

Individuals can also support Free The Children’s *Year of Education* by purchasing an ABC Education Rafiki Friend Chain. Each \$10 chain, handmade by Me to We Artisans in Kenya, equips a child overseas with school supplies for one year. Each purchase also empowers a Maasai mama who earns a fair wage to send her children to school, and helps consumers make socially conscious fashion statements.

The *Year of Education* is Free The Children’s second year-long campaign. Last year, the Water Initiative surpassed its goal of providing 100,000 people in Free The Children communities with a permanent source of clean water.

### **About Free The Children**

Free The Children is an international charity and educational partner. Founded in 1995 by international activist Craig Kielburger, Free The Children believes in a world where young people are free to achieve their fullest potential, and empowers youth to remove barriers that prevent them from being active local and global citizens. The organization’s domestic programs – which include We Day, Free The Children’s signature youth empowerment event – educate, engage and empower 1.7 million young people across North America, the UK and around the world to become engaged global citizens. Its international projects have brought more than 650 schools and school rooms to youth and provided clean water and sanitation, health care and food security to 1 million people around the world, freeing children and their families from the cycle of poverty.

The organization has received the World’s Children’s Prize for the Rights of the Child, 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, visit [www.freethechildren.com](http://www.freethechildren.com).



### **About RBC and Youth**

RBC supports a diverse range of youth-focused initiatives across Canada, through sponsorships, donations and employee volunteer activities. Through long-term commitments with Free The Children, RBC is supporting We Day events across Canada, the We Act program and We Create Change and is the exclusive financial services sponsor of all Free The Children initiatives in Canada. In the 2013/2014 academic year, RBC and Free The Children are launching *It All Adds Up* – a new elementary and secondary school curriculum resource, centred on the topic of financial literacy. Through this resource and by offering free financial advice and tools to students through the RBC Advice Centre and the RBC Financial Advice for Students website, RBC seeks to provide young people with the financial understanding and foundation to achieve secure financial futures. For more information, visit [www.rbcadvicecentre.com](http://www.rbcadvicecentre.com).

### **For additional information, please contact:**

Julia Thomas, PR Manager

Free The Children

[julia.thomas@freethechildren.com](mailto:julia.thomas@freethechildren.com)

T: (416) 738-8702