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Martin Sheen, Shawn Desman, Kardinal Offishall inspire 4,000 students to get involved in social action at National We Day in Ottawa-Gatineau Region

--Watch the live webcast at www.weday.com starting at 9 a.m.--

--Event photos available by 3 p.m. Email stephanie@freethechildren.com--

GATINEAU, QC (April 29, 2013) – Today, for the first time in the Ottawa-Gatineau region, National **We Day** kicks off with a star-studded lineup of speakers and performers, including **Martin Sheen, Shawn Desman** and **Kardinal Offishall**, taking the stage to inspire 4,000 young people at the Robert Guertin Centre. An initiative of international charity and educational partner [Free The Children](#), We Day is the world's largest youth empowerment event of its kind, created to ignite students' passion to be active global citizens. We Day is free of charge to the thousands of students and educators in attendance thanks to the generous support of National Co-Title sponsors [RBC](#) and [TELUS](#).

Television personality and recording artist, **Jesse Giddings**, will host the event and lead the energetic crowd alongside international activists and co-founders of Free The Children, [Craig and Marc Kielburger](#). Students and educators will also hear messages of support and encouragement from **Hélène Campbell**, double lung transplant recipient whose story was recently featured on The Ellen DeGeneres Show, **Sydney Brouillard-Coyle**, a 13-year-old youth speaker who shares her aspirations to become the Prime Minister of Canada in 40 years, **Spencer West**, Free The Children ambassador who lost his legs at age five and climbed Mount Kilimanjaro on his hands in June 2012, and many [others](#).

"Empowering young people to change the world is the most important way we can invest our time and energy to ensure we leave this world in a better place than we received it," said Martin Sheen who will speak today about his involvement in activism. "We Day is one of the most powerful programs for getting youth involved in social action and I'm so honoured to be a part of it."

"I've been involved in We Day events over the past two years and every time we come to a new city the energy and passion the students bring to the event is unbelievable," said Shawn Desman, who will perform one of his hit songs to energize the crowd. "It's amazing to be able to contribute to a much deserved celebration for these thousands of kids who have worked so hard all year to earn their way into this incredible event."

Students can't buy a ticket to We Day; they earn it through service by making a commitment to take one local and one global action throughout the year as part of the We Act program. We Act supports students and educators with *free* educational resources, student-led campaigns and support materials to help turn the event's inspiration into sustainable change. Together, We Day and We Act provide a blueprint for raising a generation of active global citizens.

"National We Day marks some important milestones for We Day – not only is this our first time in the Ottawa-Gatineau region, but it is also our 25th We Day since 2007 and the final event of this school year – a year which has seen the most We Day events to date, thanks largely in part to our co-title sponsors RBC and TELUS," said Craig Kielburger, co-founder of Free The Children. "We are proud of the impact We Day's had over the past five years with over \$26 million raised for 900 local and global causes, 5.1 million hours volunteered and 2.8 million pounds of food collected for local food banks. I can't wait to see how youth in the Ottawa-Gatineau region will take this impact even further."

Young people in Ottawa-Gatineau have been working all year to earn their way to National We Day by taking action in their local and global communities. St. Leonard School in Ottawa held a food drive and collected enough non-perishable items to help feed over 20 families in their community. Castlefrank Elementary has been selling handmade Kenyan art and bricks to raise money to support the construction of a new school in a community in Kenya.



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In partnership with EF Educational Tours (@eftourscanada), National We Day will bring students and educators to the Ottawa-Gatineau region from across Canada as part of an educational school trip to engage students in leadership training and expand their classroom, enabling them to “learn it by living it.”

We Day has taken the world by storm with 3.3 million fans, making it one of the world’s largest causes on [Facebook](#). In Canada, We Day touches every major city coast to coast, bringing together hundreds of thousands of young people in their commitment to take action for a better world. The first U.S. We Day event was held on March 27 in Seattle. We Day will make its second U.S. stop on October 8 in Minnesota at the Xcel Energy Center.

[Click to tweet](#): #National #WeDay today w/ @darealSD @KardinalO @KARLWOLFs – watch live at www.weday.com/webcast.

Connect with We Day:

Facebook: www.facebook.com/weday

Twitter: @craigkielburger @freethechildren #WeDay

About Free The Children

Free The Children is an international charity and educational partner that has more than 1.7 million young people involved in its programs. Founded in 1995 by international activist Craig Kielburger, Free The Children believes in a world where all young people are free to achieve their fullest potential as agents of change, 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 (www.weday.com), Free The Children’s signature youth empowerment event, and We Act—educate, engage and empower hundreds of thousands of youth in 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 one 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 districts, school boards and Oprah's Angel Network. For more information, visit www.freethechildren.com.

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For more information on We Day and We Act or to request an interview with Craig/Marc Kielburger or with a representative from We Day Co-Title sponsors RBC and TELUS, please contact:

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