

PRESS RELEASE

**On April 18, @FreeTheChildren and Celebrity Ambassadors  
Take Online Action in Support of #WeAreSilent**

*Annual We are Silent campaign encourages young people to stand in silent solidarity for a billion of their peers overseas silenced by poverty and basic human rights*

TORONTO, ONTARIO – (**April 15, 2013**) – Over 100,000 youth across North America will be standing in solidarity for their peers silenced by poverty and exploitation in [Free The Children's](#) ninth annual [We are Silent campaign](#), made possible by [Second Cup](#). On April 18, coinciding with Free The Children's birthday, youth will go silent with their voice, but take action through social media, joining up with celebrity ambassadors to speak out in support of young people silenced by the denial of their basic human rights. Leading up to the day, young people will gather pledges for every hour they plan to stay silent (no speaking), up to 24 hours.

**What do Larry King, Demi Lovato and Nelly Furtado have in common?**

Past @FreeTheChildren #WeDay participants Demi Lovato (@ddlovato), Cody Simpson (@CodySimpson), Larry King (@kingsthings), Nelly Furtado (@NellyFurtado), and Lights (@Lights), participated in an online video Free The Children developed for #WeAreSilent. The YouTube video is available here - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lbow418LwuQ>.

This year, Me to We motivational speaker and anti-bullying activist [Molly Burke](#) (@MollyMetoWe) is lending her voice (online and offline) to Free The Children's annual We are Silent campaign. Molly lost her vision when she was 14 years old and consequently become a victim of bullying and cyber bullying causing deep depression. Five years later, Molly teamed up with Me to We. She now shares her story, providing hope and inspiration to tens of thousands of young people every year.

**What is We are Silent?**

We are Silent, made possible by Second Cup, is an annual fund and awareness-raising campaign. Formerly known as the Vow of Silence, it began in 2004 and is one of Free The Children's most powerful campaigns. Each year, over a hundred thousand young people collect pledges and take a vow of silence, raising awareness and standing-up for children around the world who are being silenced by poverty or exploitation. While silent, youth are encouraged to take to social media to help raise awareness and amplify the message – hashtag #WeAreSilent.

All money raised supports children's rights by funding [Free The Children's holistic and sustainable Adopt a Village model](#), providing clean water, health, education, alternative income, and food security to communities across eight countries around the world, including Kenya, India, Ecuador and China.

In 1995 the story of slain child labourer Iqbal Masih inspired 12-year-old Craig Kielburger and Free The Children was born. This year's We are Silent campaign honours Iqbal's legacy by taking a silent stand.

"Eighteen years ago I was inspired to take action by the story of Iqbal Masih, who was sold into slavery at the age of four. He spent six years chained to a carpet-weaving loom, and was killed for speaking out about children's rights. Child labour took Iqbal's voice. Through campaigns such as We are Silent, we are taking it back," said Craig Kielburger, co-founder of Free The Children.



### **We are Silent is made possible by Second Cup**

Second Cup, in Canada, is Free The Children's official We are Silent campaign sponsor, making it possible for the organization to expand the campaign and develop new materials for schools and youth. Second Cup also offers a like-minded place for individuals to connect, meet and become actively involved in giving back to their local and global communities proudly making its cafés across Canada the Social Change Headquarters. The partnership with Free the Children reflects the active positive role Second Cup plays in their café communities and further establishes the Canadian company as a "coffee company that cares" Select cafés across Canada will show their support for We are Silent by turning their music off that day, others may have a baristas stay silent for the day and all locations be selling a special edition We are Silent tumbler, with proceeds going to support the campaign.

For more information visit <http://www.freethechildren.com/wearesilent>

### **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 includes [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 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 boards and Oprah's Angel Network. For more information, visit [www.freethechildren.com](http://www.freethechildren.com).

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