

SPEECH: DARFUR DAYS RALLY, 4/29/07, CHEESEMAN PARK,
DENVER

WE ARE THE CHILDREN.

WE ARE THE WORLD.

WE HAVE THE POWER TO SPEAK FOR THOSE WHO CANNOT
SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES.

WE HAVE THE POWER TO CHANGE THE WORLD. (Pause here)

“Change the world. It just takes cents”™ is the initiative of 23 8th grade service learning students attending Herzl RMHA at the Denver Campus.

We have embarked on a campaign not merely to raise funds for children and in support of education in Darfur, but to educate ourselves and raise awareness within our community, among students and adults, about the crisis and dire need for informed social action regarding the people of Darfur, and how to go about doing the right thing.

Jewish values require us to take action through a process of Tikkun Olam - repairing the world. Our learning experience of the Holocaust, incorporates the plight of the people of Darfur and the need for us to stand strong - even as children - and speak out - loudly and clearly - for the world to know that WE will not tolerate this injustice and persecution.

"Man shall not raise his sword against man"...”Lo Yisah Goy el goy Herev”

Our efforts have included extensive learning about Sudan and Darfur, learning about the country ...its history and geography, politics, religion, culture, values and the needs of others less fortunate than ourselves, and we have learned about the efforts of organizations such as Save Darfur, Damanga, The Committee on Conscience at the Holocaust Museum in Washington DC, Genocide Intervention Network, Jewish World Watch, STAND, Darfur Interfaith Network and our local Coalition Against Genocide.

We have met phenomenal people...

Suad Mansour - a Darfur refugee who escaped to the USA through Amnesty International because she became a target for her work with violated women. Today, although she lives outside of Sudan, she continues her work to benefit Darfur's women and she also works to ensure that Darfur's children receive an education.

Mohamed Yahya- a man who, in 1993, was told by his family NOT to return home from studying in Cairo, a man who has not seen his family since that time and who, today, heads up the Damanga organization, advocating for United Nations peacekeepers be sent to Darfur to protect those being persecuted, and to ensure that the country returns to a peaceful status. He, too, is a target of the Sudanese government and continues to take action from outside of Sudan.

Just recently, at the US-Islamic World Forum in Doha, Qatar, he condemned the assembled audience, saying that he was disgusted at the lack of action taken by other Muslims worldwide. He told the crowd, "...It is the United States and members of the Jewish community across the world who have done more to help Darfur than anyone else. This is beyond shameful- it is a crime for the leaders of the Arab nations to turn a blind eye to Darfur at such a critical time, while they claim to represent the interests of the entire Islamic World."

We have met local City and Government officials-Councilperson Peggy Lehman, Mayor Hickenlooper, Speaker of the House Romanoff, Communications secretary for the Speaker: Drew Iwanami, lobbyist Moira Cullen- in order to learn more about and understand the purpose of the Divestment Bill and the process of implementing it. We also attended the signing of the Divestment Bill by Governor Ritter, which took place just ten days ago.

We have studied, we have acted, we have written letters, we have made phone calls, we have raised funds, we have connected with students of the D-Kaire school in Korma, Darfur in Sudan. We have also connected and brought together Denver students for the first Middle School Student Forum speaking out against all genocide and particularly the one taking place right now in Darfur. We have raised our voices with juvenile court judge Karen Ashby, with Lado Jurkin: a Lost Boy of Sudan, and with Reverend Lucia Guzman, Director of the Community and Human Rights Office for the City of Denver.

The Janjaweed are Muslims – they are attacking and persecuting other Muslims. The Sudanese government is...and not so quietlysupporting the attempt to wipe out people whom they term African Muslims: a farming people whose land and source of sustenance has been taken from them, whose lives are in continual danger, whose women are being disrespected and whose children are being deprived of basic rights...

the right to have parents and a roof over their head,

the right to 3 meals a day,

the right to an education

and the right to security.

The Children are the future and thousands are dying daily.

We thank Colorado politicians for their commitment to the children and people of Darfur and for their overwhelming support of the Divestment Bill.

We thank the United States Government for what they do to protect us and the peoples of the world.

We thank YOU for being here today in a show that Colorado stands united against genocide and in support of the people and children of Darfur.

In the words of Save Darfur in Washington DC, "Instead of Mourning a Genocide- What If We Could Stop One?"

Please continue to take action.

Today, your small contribution of loose pocket change to our student representatives in the audience will help "Change the World. It just takes cents" TM in its mission. Our representatives are wearing green shirts with the "Change the world..." logo on them and the blue UN peacekeepers' berets.

100% of your contribution will be sent to the D-Kaire School in Korma, Darfur and to its students and teachers through a bona fide accredited humanitarian source.

"Change the world. It just takes cents"TM – aims to help ensure that the children of Darfur receive an education, that their teachers will get teaching materials, and that through this small action they, the next generation of Darfur, will have hope for the future.

All children- no matter what race, ethnic background or religion - represent the future.

Today, we, the students of Colorado, of Herzl/RMHA Upper School's 8th grade, of "Change the World. It just takes cents"TM are representing the voice of the children of Darfur.

Thank- you.