

“The Journey: Denver to Darfur...and Beyond”

“Change the world. It just takes cents”™ hosted its 5th annual anti-genocide Forum in February at University of Denver. Attended by 500 students from 12 schools, the theme of the Forum was “Global Refugees”. Due to oversubscription to the February 16th Forum, a second event, hosting 250 students, was held at Hill Campus for Arts and Sciences. The objective of the annual student Forum is for students to learn that knowledge and a united voice speaking out against man's inhumanity to man, makes a difference in the life of the oppressed and victimized.

The 2011 Forum coincided with Black History Month and supported Holocaust Education modules. It provided an opportunity for students to share their knowledge, understanding and perspective of global affairs, human rights and justice, with special focus on the Darfur genocide, and the impact of history, past and present, on their world. “The Forum provides an appropriate venue for us to express our views and we do...After all we have the power to Change the world!” said twelfth grader Cooper Kaminsky, who MC-ed the event.

This annual student-led event has attracted the interest, support and participation of prominent international activists such as former Speaker of the House Andrew Romanoff, Emmy Award winning Filmmaker/Abolitionist Tamara Banks, former International Criminal Court Lawyer Prof. David Akerson and leaders of anti-genocide NGO's in the United States and the world.

Internationally renowned actor, human rights activist and Darfur advocate, Mia Farrow, recognized the power of the “Change the world. It just takes cents”™ student voice with a personal e-mail message to the students to “continue doing what you are doing”

Darfur refugee, Mohamed Adam Yahya, founder and Executive Director of “Damanga Coalition for Freedom and Democracy”, who between 1999 and 2003, worked in Cairo with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, returned for the 6th time to Colorado to mentor and motivate students into action. His passionate and impressive delivery of “you have the power”, once again, brought students to their feet.

Somali-born refugee, Jamal Ali, was a child soldier who experienced life as an orphan in some of the worst refugee camps in Kenya and Ethiopia. Since 2004 he has worked at Denver’s African Community Center as a case manager, community health outreach coordinator, and resettlement manager. With no animosity or hatred in his voice or demeanor, Jamal shared his frightful, yet liberating story, leaving students with the knowledge that each victim clings to hope and that they, Colorado’s youth, can and should be the agents of Hope, delivering their message to the world.

As such, students wrote messages of hope on picture postcards of Colorado generously donated by Mountain States Specialties Inc., which will be delivered to various refugee camps all over the world.

Student presentations of a high standard covering "global refugees" from the Holocaust, Rwanda, Darfur, and even the inner city complemented and impressed the distinguished guest speakers.

A highlight of the program was an address from Dr Meggie Navon, the U.S. Operations Director for the Tel Aviv Foundation in Israel. With her past rooted in the Holocaust and social activism, she is committed to providing care for children; originally in the medical field and later for Russian and Yugoslavian immigrant youth. In 2002, Tel Aviv Mayor, Ron Huldai recruited her to help fulfill his vision to improve the quality of life for the residents of Tel Aviv and the thousands of refugees pouring into the city.

In August 2010, Meggie Navon facilitated a collaborative venture between “Change the world. It just takes cents”™ and the City of Tel Aviv to create a day care center in southern Tel Aviv, to educate and care for 70 three to five year old children who were, at that time, being processed at the Israeli/Egyptian border. Refugee children representing 15 countries attend the center, amongst who are African refugees from Darfur, South Sudan, Eritrea, Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda.

With education for disadvantaged, oppressed and victimized children being Change the world...’s top priority, the Day Care quickly became a reality. The school provides childcare for the refugee toddlers from 7AM-4 PM, as well as education and hot meals for them. Teachers lovingly acclimate them, promising safety while their parents work to restore their lives in a strange new country.

Dr Navon and Zvi Kanor, Executive Director of the Tel Aviv Foundation, attended the “Change the world it just takes cents”™ Forum to salute Colorado’s students for their significant contribution toward changing the lives of children fleeing atrocities in their countries of origin and arriving emotionally and physically vulnerable in a strange land.

An added bonus was the Oscar award, recognizing the documentary short, “Strangers No More”, about the Bialik Rogozin School in Tel Aviv, which welcomes and integrates over 800 refugee children representing 48 countries, and for which the newly established Day Care Center will serve as a feeder school.

“Change the world. It just takes cents”™ will screen “Strangers No More”, in collaboration with Hidden Lake High School, at a special educators’ event on April 7, 2011. It is from here that the journey will continue.

"Change the world. It just takes cents"™(CTWIJTC) is an interactive experiential

student-led anti-genocide, service learning, social action, and philanthropy initiative. Through a specially designed curriculum and learning process, students realize their voice, and how, when correctly applied, they have the power to help create a better place, locally and internationally, for all, irrespective of religion, race, creed or culture.

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