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One Child At A Time

My essay is based on Craig Kielburger. I chose to write about him because when he was twelve he started a charity. This charity was to send poor kids to school in different countries around the world. When I became a member of the O ambassadors last year I learnt about him and his honorable work to free children from child labor and other hazards that children face due to adults actions.

Craig Kielburger was born in 1982 December 17th and now he is twenty-eight years old. He helped over one million children and young people living in poverty throughout the world and he built over 500 schools in different countries. These schools educate about 50,000 children every day. Craig Kielburger delivered 207,500 school and health kits and he raised 15,000,000 million worth of medical supplies to forty different countries. Craig Kielburger also provided milking animals and farmland equipment to thousands of families so they can raise enough money to send their children to school. He inspired a lot of children including me to help make a change in the world.

The reason Craig started helping children was because when he was twelve he saw an article in the newspaper called "**Battle Child Labor, boy, twelve, murdered.**" It was about a twelve year old boy named Iqbal Masih who lived in Pakistan. He was taken away from his family at the age of four and Iqbal forced to make carpets. He would work for twelve hours and only get a rupee a day, which is only three cents. When Iqbal was ten years old he escaped from the carpet factory with the help of some friends. Iqbal was now able to go to school. A lot of people stopped buying carpets after they heard Iqbal's story. One day when Iqbal was riding on his bicycle he was shot dead in December, 1995. A lot of people suspected it was the carpet factory owner but there was no proof.

After Craig read the shocking article he told his class all about it. Eleven people in his grade seven class wanted to help children like Iqbal. They named themselves Twelve-

Twelve-Year-olds. They raised money by holding car washes, lemonade stands and bake sales. One day he was invited to South Asia by an organization that tries to stop child labor. He met a lot of children there that were constantly at work. Like a little girl named Muniannal who was taking apart needles. It was her job to separate the pieces so they could be cleaned and resold. She wasn't even wearing gloves to protect her little hands. Then they stopped in Sivakasi, India. They went into a fireworks factory. They saw many kids doing dangerous work, in case of a fire they only had two buckets of water to put the fire out and they may empty. These are very sad examples of typical child labor.

After visiting many children at work he knew child labor must be stopped. The prime minister of Canada was also traveling around South Asia and many reporters were bringing news of his travels. Craig invited all these reporters to meet with him first. Craig told everyone about child labor and how it must be stopped. This was really amazing to me because he was only 12 at the time. Craig wanted to meet the prime minister of Canada because Craig knew that he could use his power and influence to help children around the world. The prime minister listened to Craig's biddings and promised to do everything in his power to help eliminate child labor.

The last thing Craig did in India was he went to visit mother Teresa who was a famous nun and Peace Nobel prize winner. She sacrificed her life to help homeless, ill and poor people. He explained to mother Teresa that he was there to put an end to child labor. She shared some words that he would never forget, she said "We can do no great things, only small thing with great love." It was a big idea put into simple words. Craig found out that more than 218 million children are involved in child labor and half of those children are engaged in dangerous work which can harm their health and life. In addition 73 million of these children are under the age of ten and the highest numbers of working children are in the Asia-pacific regions. Every year 22,000 children die in work related accidents.

One of the "Free The Children" projects has been the O ambassadors. It is a joint project with Oprah Winfrey's Angel network. It is a project that inspired over a million children to raise money to help children overseas that are too poor to go to school. I have worked for the O ambassadors in my school, St Andrew's Elementary in St. John's, Newfoundland. To raise money we had bake sales, auctions, and dinners. Our most successful fund raiser was our multicultural dinner in which we earned more than two thousand dollars.

Craig has been recognized by millions of people for his work and awards. He has been awarded many national and international awards such as the Nelson Mandela Human Rights award, The Reebok Human Rights award, the Roosevelt Freedom Medal, The 2006 World's Children's prize for the Right's of the child, The State of the World Forum award and many more. He is one of the youngest recipients of the Order of Canada.

Craig wrote many books about child labor and how to stop it. His book Free the children is the story about how he started Free The Children and how he helped children in need. This book has been translated into eight different languages and won the Christopher award. One of his books, "It takes a child" is a gentle way of explaining child labor to young kids and opening their minds to think of ways to help those poor children in need. This book and his website Free The Children is where I found out a lot of information.

In my opinion I see Craig Kielburger as a hero and a great role model in our generation. I was inspired after I listened to his speech about Free The Children Organization he gave when he came to St John's. I want to help stop child labor and help those children escape from their sufferings. I may not be able to do a lot of big things but I hope the small things I do can make big changes.