

“Connecting Youth to Global Affairs”

WORLDLINK

~ Youth Newspaper ~



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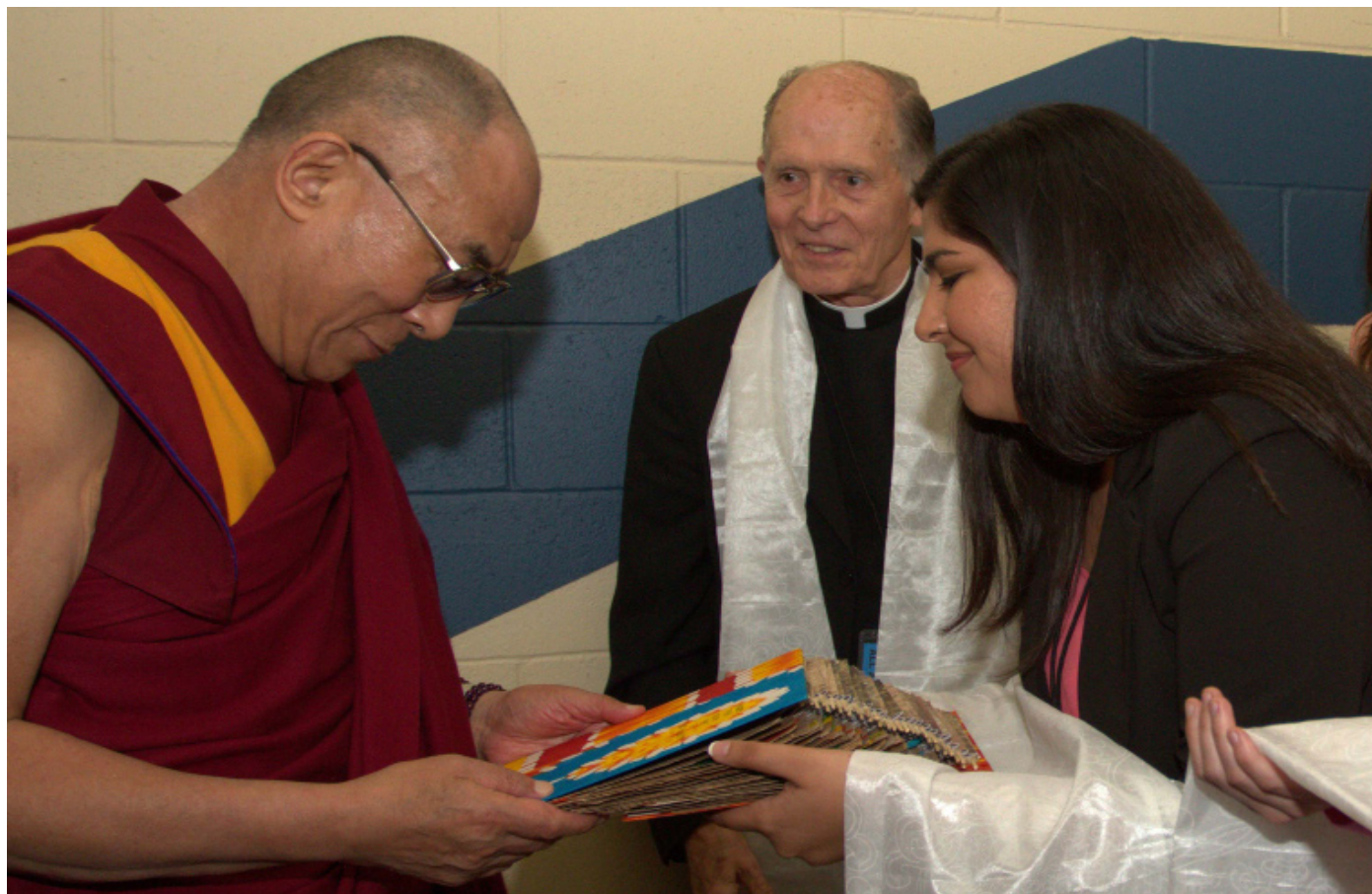
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His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama receiving a gift created by WorldLink students, presented by Fr. William Headley, Dean of the Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies, and Rishika Daryanani, WorldLink alumnae. Story on page 14.

Photo by Tim Mantoani Photography

My Life as a Refugee

By Kira Elliott, San Dieguito Academy

At first glance, the session title “Young Peacemakers: Refugee Stories from Around the World” suggests that the “young peacemakers” are probably in their twenties, here to share their experiences about how they overcame their hardships. However, once sitting down and facing the speakers, this image is shaken ever so slightly. The young speakers look just as nervous about telling their stories, as the audience is curious to finding out about them.

Student moderator Hayley Palmer introduced the first speaker, Armand Binombe. He walked over to the podium and explained that his PowerPoint presentation was not working, “I’m going to have to use,” he paused, “my mind.” There were a few giggles in the room. Binombe smiled, then launched into his story. He is sixteen years old. Originally from the war-torn Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), he and his family left their home when he was eight years old. In the Congo, he explained, education is not free. Some schools have electricity, libraries, and computers, while others may barely have chairs. For seven years, Binombe received an education in the Congo, where he was taught in French – the official language of the DRC. After turning eight, Binombe’s family decided to move to Uganda, for the area in which they lived suffered constantly from war.

In Uganda, he was taught for seven years in English. His family then sought to be relocated – not back to the DRC, but to the United States. After numerous interviews and finally being approved by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) relocated his family to San Diego, California, where their case managers helped them settle in. The flight, or rather series of flights, to

San Diego was Binombe’s first. He is now a sophomore at Crawford High School.

In the session, Myo Ti followed Binombe. Using his PowerPoint, “because my English is very broken,” he explained, “I use lots of pictures. Hope you like them.” Like Binombe, Ti is sixteen years old. He was born in Burma – a country, he explained, that is brutally controlled by the military since 1962. He is part of the ethnic minority group the Kachin people, which is made up of seven tribes and has its own language, culture and traditions. Ti explained life in Burma by saying, “The government blinds the people. They edit education systems, and there is no real information about human rights. They cut out powerful sources of education.” The government significantly censors the education of Burmese people. It controls the economy, policies and just about everything. “They repress their people,” Ti said, “and persecute the minorities like the Kachin people.”

In order to avoid this persecution, Ti fled to India when he was around ten years old, where he lived with his sister and brother-in-law. He lived in New Delhi, India, for four years as an undocumented immigrant, and tried to go to school for a couple of months. However, he faced some difficulties being the only Burmese student there. In November 2010, the Red Cross gave him the opportunity to move to the United States as a refugee. He had no passport, and like most refugees, he simply had a bag that kept all of his information. “Going into the air [in the airplane], I lost my heart. It was very scary,” describing his first flight.

According to Ti, life in San Diego has several benefits. In the United States, there is free education, but “in Burma, you have to pay.” There is hope,

freedom and a better life. He spoke about his experience at farmers markets and the availability to use food stamps to pay for his food. Ti also explained that refugees under eighteen years of age receive free medical assistance. He concluded his presentation with a picture of him on the beach, on a PowerPoint slide that read “Happy Ending.”

The final speaker was April Moo. Of the three, Moo is the oldest at nineteen. Moo’s parents left Burma during the civil war after the military burned down their village. She was born in a refugee camp in Thailand along with her two sisters and two brothers. Her family belongs to the ethnic group the Karen people, which, like the Kachin people, is a minority in Burma with its own language and culture. For example, one tradition customary to her ethnic group is that unmarried women wear white dresses. She had conference delegates pass around a beaded shirt unique to the Karen.

Moo spent most of her life in a refugee camp. In school, they were taught Thai, Burmese, Karen, and English, and some of their homework required memorizing and reciting large passages of text. Teachers were allowed to hit the students. She added, “If you forgot to do your homework, you were made to run around the school, which was embarrassing because everyone would know.” Families had to pay for education, and her parents could not afford to send her to school past the 7th grade. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) gave the camp food each month, such as rice, beans, salt, fish paste, chili peppers, oil, and flour. There was no electricity, and water came from a well. Her family applied to a relocation program.

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Briefings

WorldLink's 15th Annual Youth Town Meeting

"The Right to be Human"

Culture & Identity • Disabilities • Displacement • Responsible Business • International Justice

<p>Where Worlds Change: A Girls School in Kenya - Film Premiere Presenters: Aneasha Bhogal and Shelley Boniwell, University of San Diego Moderator: Savannah Jo Dowling (LJCDS)</p>	IPJ Theatre
<p>Young Peacemakers: Refugee Stories from Around the World Presenters: Armand Binombe, April Moo and Myo Ti, International Rescue Committee Peacemakers Moderator: Hayley Palmer (OLP)</p>	Room B
<p>Rebuilding Communities: A Refugee Network Presenters: Ayan Mohamed, chair, San Diego Refugee Forum; program manager, Somali Family Service, Timothy Slade, vice chair, San Diego Refugee Forum; acculturation team supervisor, Catholic Charities-Refugee Services Moderator: Marija Bosnjak (OLP)</p>	Room C
<p>Beyond Borders: Peacebuilding Among Refugees Presenter: Abdi Mohamoud, executive director, Horn of Africa Moderator: Tomer Mate-Solomon (BS)</p>	Room D
<p>New Americans, New Lives Presenter: Walter Lam, president and CEO, Alliance for African Assistance Moderator: Josh Clapper (BS)</p>	Room E
<p>Bringing Mental Disabilities to the Forefront Presenter: Shannon Jaccard, executive director, National Alliance on Mental Illness, San Diego Moderators: Sebastien Akarmann (CCHS) and Hayley Clark (IMAN)</p>	Room F
<p>Does the Constitution Protect Undocumented Immigrants? Presenter: Peter Schey, president and executive director, Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law Moderators: Alejandra Gavino Espinoza (IMAN) and Marcela Sotelo Bucardo (OLP)</p>	IPJ Boardroom
<p>Youth Journalism: A Global Network of Advocates for Human Rights Presenter: Mark Schulte, national education coordinator, Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting Moderator: Luz Elena Castellanos Aleman (CETYS)</p>	Room H
<p>Social Entrepreneurship: Doing Business for a Cause Presenter: Nina Church, co-founder, Nika Water Moderator: Ana Ivette Preciado (IMAN)</p>	Room I
<p>Excluded: Struggles Against Discrimination Presenter: Lisa Nunn, assistant professor of sociology, University of San Diego Moderator: Maria Jose Zepeda Flores (IMAN)</p>	Room 214
<p>Los Ninis: Mexico's Lost Generation Presenter: Dominic Bracco, freelance journalist and founding member of Prime Collective Moderator: Aric Yael Bandera (IMAN)</p>	Room 217
<p>Realities and Recoveries of Torture Survivors Presenters: Sol d'Urso, marriage and family therapist, Survivors of Torture International, Tricia Hilliard, senior mental health clinician, Survivors of Torture International Moderators: Domenica Berman (SDA) and Alejandro Palacios Chavez (FLC)</p>	Room 218
<p>Stop Impunity: Consequences for Human Rights Violators Presenter: Carlos Mauricio, executive director, Stop Impunity Project Moderators: Alexis Miranda (CETYS) and Rebecca Young (OLP)</p>	Room 219
<p>Where Futures Begin: Microfinance Presenter: Murugi Kenyatta, vice president of community development, Foundation for Women Moderators: Pablo Amabile (FLC) and Alexander Dey Bueno (CETYS)</p>	Room 220
<p>Assuring Rights in the Business of Development Presenter: Dorrett Byrd, director of program quality support, Catholic Relief Services Moderator: Isaac Hortiales (IMAN)</p>	Room 223

Speakers

Sol d'Urso



Nina Church



Dominic Bracco



Carlos Mauricio



Dorrett Byrd



Bianca Morales-Egan



Mark Schulte



Armand Binombe was born in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 1995. Due to war and insecurity in the eastern part of the Congo, he and his family fled to Uganda in 2008, where he lived as a refugee for two years. In 2010, Binombe and his family were resettled in San Diego by the International Rescue Committee (IRC). Binombe is currently the student body president of the Law Academy at Crawford High School. He also serves as a member of the City of San Diego Youth Commission.

Dominic Bracco II is a photographer, sound engineer and video journalist based in Mexico City. He specializes in documenting the effects of Mexican and North American policies on the border region where he was raised. Bracco has degrees in journalism and Spanish literature from the University of Texas at Arlington. Past clients include *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times Sunday Magazine*. Bracco is also a founding member of the photographic Prime Collective.

Dorrett Byrd is the director of the Program Quality Support Department at Catholic Relief Services (CRS), where she manages the provision of technical assistance to CRS' country programs. Prior to this position, Byrd was deputy director for Overseas Operations, where she provided support to CRS projects that addressed the prevalence of child labor in India. Byrd began her career as a research associate with the Center for Policy Research before accepting a position with Africare's country office in Niger. In this role, she designed and implemented development and relief projects, including nutrition, fisheries, water and sanitation, and health programs.

Nina Church is a co-founder of Nika Water, a unique social entrepreneurial model that donates 100 percent of its profits to poverty alleviation through clean water, education and sanitation projects around the world. Church is a senior at La Jolla Country Day School and a former WorldLink intern. She is actively involved in extracurricular clubs, such as Model United Nations, Mock Trial and Free the Children. Church spent the summer of 2011 working as a facilitator for *Me to We* trips in Kenya. She speaks nationally on behalf of Nika Water on the world water crisis, as well as on youth empowerment.

Sol d'Urso is a licensed marriage and family therapist who works with various populations including survivors of domestic violence, at-risk children and youth, and survivors of torture. As an immigrant Latina herself, d'Urso's passion has been working with individuals and families from multiple backgrounds, taking into account issues of immigration, acculturation, ethnicity, race and culture to create dialogue and alternatives to violence in the San Diego community.

Adam Finck currently serves as the mission director for Uganda and director of programs in Central Africa for the organization Invisible Children (IC). Before joining IC in San Diego, Finck spent a year and a half in Gulu in northern Uganda as the assistant country director. A graduate of UCLA with a degree in mass communications and a minor in political science, Finck has also spent time writing for *National Geographic* and working with Africare as a field correspondent.

Tricia Hilliard serves as a senior mental health clinician at Survivors of Torture International. She works with the clinical team to perform, track and document client services. Prior to joining SURVIVORS, Hilliard gained experience training and supervising Native American foster families and children; training, researching and coordinating duties for child welfare programs; managing activities for community service learning programs; and interviewing survivors of human trafficking. She is a co-author of "Globalization and Human Trafficking," an article published in *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare* in June 2007.

Aneesha Bhogal and **Shelley Boniwell** are graduate candidates at the University of San Diego's School of Leadership and Education Sciences (SOLES). In 2011, Bhogal and Boniwell received the opportunity to travel to Nanyuki, Kenya with the SOLES Global Studies Program, and helped produce the WorldLink film featuring the girls of Daraja Academy. They facilitated interviews with students, who discussed their challenges as women in a society with vast gender inequalities, poverty and opposing views on education & politics, as well as their hope for the future of their country.

Shannon Jaccard is the executive director of NAMI San Diego. After completing her MBA, she founded Compeer San Diego, a non-profit organization with the goal of providing a safe, nurturing, mentoring program for individuals with a mental health challenge. Today, she is a board member for NAMI California and the Meeting Place, Inc. She sits on the Client/Family Leadership Committee for the Oversight & Accountability Commission, and has taken on the charge to eliminate Seclusion and Restraints. Jaccard is a LEAD San Diego graduate and recipient of the Channel 10 News Leadership Award and San Diego's Magazine 50 People to Watch.

Steven Kashkett became consul general for the Department of State Consulate in Tijuana, Mexico in August 2009. Prior to this assignment, he served four years as the elected head of the American Foreign Service Association, the labor union for U.S. diplomats at the Department of State. He served as U.S. consul general in eastern Canada, based in Halifax, in 2001-2003. His previous overseas tours of duty, as a political officer, include the U.S. embassies in Lebanon, France and Haiti, and the U.S. Consulate General in Jerusalem. From 1998-2001, Kashkett was senior advisor to the State Department's Coordinator for Counterterrorism.

Murugi Kenyatta is the vice president of community development and the former executive director of the Foundation for Women in San Diego. She is responsible for overseeing organizational operations and program development. Born and raised in Kenya, Kenyatta knows firsthand the power and effectiveness of microcredit and brings her personal experience and passion to the mission. She has an extensive background in marketing and nonprofit management and ten years of experience in project management, strategic planning and public relations.

Walter Lam, born and raised in northern Uganda, is the founder of the Alliance for African Assistance. After graduating high school, he fled to Kenya because of political persecution and attended Egerston University, where he graduated with a degree in agricultural engineering. He then returned to Uganda, but was persecuted again and fled to Kenya and eventually San Diego in 1986. In 1989, Lam founded the Alliance for African Assistance with the purpose of helping fellow refugees from Africa. Over the past 20 years, the alliance has greatly expanded to serve thousands of refugees from all over the world.

Carlos Mauricio was a professor at the University of El Salvador in June 1983 when he was kidnapped from his classroom and taken to National Police headquarters, where he was tortured for two weeks. In 2002, Mauricio founded the Stop Impunity Project, which works to bring an end to the impunity granted to human rights abusers in El Salvador. Since moving to Washington, D.C. in 2010, he has been working to build a coalition of Salvadoran torture survivors and human rights activists to continue to press for justice in El Salvador, and to build bridges between Salvadoran NGOs in El Salvador and the Salvadoran community in the United States.

Ayan Mohamed is a refugee from Somalia and arrived in the United States in 1993. Since 2002, she has volunteered with various refugee organizations in San Diego, including the East African Mothers Group. Mohamed currently works with Somali Family Service as a business counselor and program manager, helping refugees start businesses in the community. She also manages Project Refuge, a transitional housing program for asylees that provides a network of supportive community services. Mohamed holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from San Diego State University.

Abdi Mohamoud is a refugee from Ethiopia and arrived in San Diego in 1982. Mohamoud has more than fifteen years of experience in leadership in the East African community through his work as one of the founders and executive director of Horn of Africa, a refugee assistance organization that combines cultural and linguistic know-how with vast professional experience in social service delivery. He obtained his M.A. in management from the University of Redlands. He also completed an advanced executive management program at Stanford University and a graduate certificate program on preventing violent conflicts at the United States Institute of Peace.

April Moo is a Karen refugee who was born and raised in the Mae La refugee camp in Thailand. The Karen people are a minority ethnic group in Burma. Moo's parents fled Burma to escape ethnic persecution by the Burmese government. Moo and her family were resettled in San Diego in 2007, when she was 15 years old. She is currently a student at City College and is very active in the Karen community. Moo is the co-founder of the Karen Youth Organization, and is also a member of the Aja Project's Youth Advisory Council.

Bianca Morales-Egan currently serves as the desk officer for Botswana, Haiti, South Africa and Malawi at Project Concern International (PCI), a San Diego-based non-profit health and humanitarian aid organization. Prior to joining PCI, she worked in the research department at the Center for Victims of Torture in Minnesota, and has coordinated a girls' youth mentoring program for the Liberian Women's Initiatives of Minnesota and served as a medical outreach coordinator for the ComCARE Alliance. Morales-Egan graduated from American University in Washington, D.C. with a master's degree in international development.

Alice Nyawira Njonjo is a 15-year-old student from Nanyuki, Kenya, who attends the Daraja Academy, a free secondary school for Kenyan girls with top academic scores and exceptional leadership skills. The academy provides shelter, food, health care and counseling services, which allows students to focus on their academic and personal potential without being hindered by the everyday barriers of poverty. Njonjo has witnessed tribal conflict, but aims to promote the recognition of human rights and the importance of girls' education in her local community and her country.

Lisa M. Nunn joined the Department of Sociology at the University of San Diego as an assistant professor in 2009. She teaches courses on inequality and disadvantage in education, social institutions and sexuality. Nunn is the director of a 2010 documentary film that chronicles the struggles of a gay bi-national couple as they face immigration limitations, due to the U.S. federal policy that excludes gay and lesbian citizens from obtaining visas to bring their foreign partners into the states.

Peter A. Schey, born in Durban, South Africa, has served as president and executive director of the Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law Foundation since 1980. The foundation's work includes technical support on constitutional rights for immigrants, refugees and children; class action litigation of issues with broad impact on indigent minority and ethnic communities; technical support and training for advocates and immigrant communities; and international human rights cases and campaigns.

Mark Schulte, national education coordinator for the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting, has taught global issues-based journalism for nearly ten years and recently founded an international online network of high school reporters, with members in more than fifty countries contributing daily to a web publication. A confirmed tech enthusiast, Schulte is interested in using innovative tools to connect students globally to their world and to each other. Schulte graduated from Oberlin College and holds a master's degree in interactive journalism from American University.

Timothy Slade is the vice chair for the San Diego Refugee Forum and currently serves as the acculturation team supervisor for the refugee services section of Catholic Charities. He holds a master's degree in international studies from North Carolina State University. His prior professional experience includes public health work in Nicaragua and Benin; educational program design in Egypt; French and Spanish instruction in secondary schools; and tutoring elementary schoolchildren through AmeriCorps-St. Louis.

Myo Ti was born in Kachin state in northern Burma in 1995. The Kachin people are a minority ethnic group in Burma. In order to escape the repressive military government, Ti moved to India in 2006, where he lived as a refugee with his sister and brother-in-law for more than four years. In 2010, he was resettled in San Diego. Ti is currently a sophomore at Crawford-MVAS, and he is the only Kachin high school student in San Diego. He serves on the planning committee for Project Concern International's Walk for Water and is a member of the International Rescue Committee (IRC) Peacemakers.

In Summary

Letter from the Editor,

The annual WorldLink Youth Town Meeting brings together youth who are interested and committed to making a change. They lead in-depth discussions with distinguished speakers, delve into world issues with their peers and learn about what is happening in the world around them. This year, the topic that brought youth together was “The Right to be Human.”

As a second year participant of the Youth Town Meeting, I had the chance to experience a day in the life of a student delegate. From waking up at the crack of dawn, to arriving, bleary-eyed, at the registration courtyard greeted by a huge breakfast buffet; from the excitement of seeing my friends from other schools, to filing into Shiley Theatre eager to hear the opening speakers and get a taste of what the rest of my day would be like; from receiving my group number, to finding (while getting completely lost) my assigned briefings, where I would hear the amazing guests speak passionately to their audience, I had the rare opportunity to ask questions and converse with leading experts and conference delegates about current world issues and solutions, how to become involved and ways to make an impact. However, most importantly, I had the chance to experience the feeling of leaving the Youth Town Meeting with my head full of statistics, opinions, ideas and the inspired will to make a difference.

When I was selected as Editor-in-Chief for the 2012 WorldLink youth newspaper, I was overjoyed. The role was a perfect opportunity to be able to reach out to youth and share the incredible dialogue and knowledge presented at the conference this year. The newspaper is an opportunity to have student journalists and photographers voice their opinions through writing and photography, while connecting with a wide range of youth, from both San Diego County and Baja Mexico. Each year that I have attended the WorldLink conference, I was amazed at the amount of students that bring their passion and curiosity and are determined to make a change in their community.

While producing the newspaper, my primary focus has been to help the reader gain an understanding of the topics covered, and make the reader feel as though they were present at the Youth Town Meeting. Through opinion pieces, briefing summaries, student photographs and translated articles, I hope that the newspaper will do just that.

I would like to thank all the wonderful student writers and photographers who contributed to the newspaper. I could not have compiled this newspaper without my editorial team, who looked meticulously at each article and photo. Thank you to our wonderful donors, and thank you to our speakers who gave their day to meet with hundreds of youth. Most importantly, I would like to thank you, the reader, for taking the time to pick up this newspaper and educate yourself about the pressing issues occurring in our world today. After all, “knowledge is power” and the first step in making a change is simply through education and understanding the world around you.

The youth are the next generation, the change, presented with the challenge of making the world a better place. I challenge you to make a change – in your school, community or wherever you feel your voice and opinion should be heard. I end this letter with another incredibly cliché, yet meaningful quote that I feel sums up the message conveyed at each briefing session at this year’s Youth Town Meeting. Ghandi once said, “Be the change you wish to see in the world.” So go on and be that positive change, that influence, that voice. As you can read on page 8, Nina Church asked over 700 student delegates, “What would you do with a free afternoon?” So I borrow her question and ask you: What *will* you do with a free afternoon?

Fondly,

Katherine Guerrero

High Tech High International

2012 Editor-in-Chief



Dominic Bracco speaks to the audience during this year’s Opening Plenary.

(Photo by Brynn Gallahue)

Four Approaches to Human Rights

By Nicole Sadowsky, The Bishop’s School

The “right to be human” is a right all individuals have – right? Unfortunately, this is not the case. From Haitians who lack access to basic health care to Americans of all ages who are mentally ill, many people’s basic human rights are not observed, particularly those outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, drafted by the United Nations General Assembly in the aftermath of World War II in 1948.

“Human Rights” was the selected theme for this year’s annual WorldLink Youth Town Meeting (YTM), with the sub-topics culture and identity, disabilities, displacement, responsible business and international justice. During the Opening Plenary, students listened to Shannon Jaccard, Carlos Mauricio, Bianca Morales-Egan and Dominic Bracco II share their very different experiences while working in the field of human rights.

Shannon Jaccard, executive director of National Alliance on Mental Illness, San Diego (NAMI) explained, “Illness does not define a patient. A patient is not schizophrenic. A patient has schizophrenia.” This statement addressed the undeniable discrimination individuals with mental illnesses have and continue to face. She began with a story about the Bethlehem Hospital in England, a psychiatric hospital known in the past for its notoriously cruel treatment of patients. She explained how the hospital got into financial trouble, and as a result, began using patients as a form of entertainment. In exchange for funds, the hospital allowed wealthy aristocrats to jeer at the patients and even poke them with sticks. Although the Bethlehem Hospital incident occurred in 1770, Jaccard said that people with mental illness still face discrimination. Nevertheless, there are several resources that are available. *Resources listed on page 9.*

Carlos Mauricio is the executive director of the Stop Impunity Project, and is also a survivor of torture. Mauricio was a professor at the University of El Salvador when he was abducted in 1983. The Salvadoran National Police tortured him relentlessly. Mauricio expressed that “we [torture survivors] are wounded forever. There is no way we can heal completely.” However, he said that while he was in the “chamber of torture” he asked himself the question that started it all: “What rights cannot be taken away?” He answered it himself, “The right to be human.” Mauricio was very lucky to have survived. In 2002, he founded the Stop Impunity Project to raise awareness and to combat the exemption of human rights abusers in El Salvador.

As the desk officer for Haiti, South Africa, Botswana, and Malawi at Project Concern International (PCI), Bianca Morales-Egan acts as the main communication between the San Diego PCI office and the field officers abroad. PCI is a non-profit organization that aims to prevent disease, improve community health and promote sustainable development worldwide. Morales-Egan believes that “health is a basic human right.” Haiti, one of the countries she assists, displays some of the worst health conditions in the world. Over half the population cannot access basic health care. Morales-Egan and PCI have worked to benefit the health of 98,434 Haitians. She stresses the importance of culture and community self-determination.

Dominic Bracco II chronicles the lives of people who live in the border region of Mexico and the United States

The WorldLink Program and the Annual Youth Town Meeting



The mission of the WorldLink Program is to connect youth to global affairs by creating an environment in which young people may consider global citizenship and responsible local participation. WorldLink encourages critical thinking and understanding of the dynamics shaping international policies and global economies, as well as local cultures and concerns.

The annual Youth Town Meeting, WorldLink’s capstone event of the year, allows for discussions with leaders, experts, activists and fellow youth from around the world. It calls upon youth to engage in global affairs and contribute to a civil and responsible atmosphere in which we can build our diverse yet increasingly intertwined communities, with a vision of justice and peace.

through the use of media. Bracco challenged the student delegates with a very important question: “How can we collectively work together to tackle some of these issues we are going to hear about today?” He posed a great question, and then discussed his own creative and collaborative way of taking action.

Bracco uses his skills as a photographer, sound engineer, and video journalist to spread awareness about the effects of Mexican and North American policies on the border region. Bracco spoke about Los Ninis, who have been his focus for the last two years. Los Ninis, who got their name from “ni estudian, ni trabajan” (those who neither study nor work), are between the ages of 14 and 24 and many of them live in Ciudad Juarez – a city where over 3,100 people were killed in 2010 alone. Los Ninis are being targeted by drug cartels to become hit squads because they are young and poor. Being young and unemployed contribute to their likelihood to work for the drug cartels. Bracco has visited Ciudad Juarez multiple times to photograph the effects of the crisis. His photographs can be viewed at <http://dominicbracco.photoshelter.com/>.

WorldLink not only brings passionate speakers to the annual YTM, but also brings speakers with diverse approaches to the year’s theme. These four human rights advocates have very distinct ways in which they support their cause, from suing the Salvadoran government for torturing innocent citizens to spreading awareness of the crisis in the Mexican border region through photography. The main lesson from the panelists at Opening Plenary is clear: there are plenty of ways to help out and support the causes one is passionate about, and any action, large or small, is beneficial.



Speakers during the Opening Panel prepare for their speeches about this year’s topic, “The Right to be Human.”

(Photo by Victor Garcia)

“What rights cannot be taken away? The right to be human.”

~ Carlos Mauricio, The Stop Impunity Project

In Summary

Excluded

By Nicole Sadowsky, The Bishop's School

Imagine that the country you have grown up in does not support your decisions. Imagine that because of this, you have no other choice but to leave your friends, family and home for a life in a different country that may accept your decisions.

Tony and Thomas had to do just that. Tony, an American, and Thomas, a German, are a gay bi-national couple. In order to stay together, Thomas resided in the United States with student and tourist visas, which only lasted so long. As stated in the session "Excluded: Struggles Against Discrimination," "Heterosexual couples receive over 1,000 federal rights when they legally marry. Gay and lesbian Americans are excluded from these rights." Due to U.S. federal law, Tony and Thomas had to make an important decision: stay together or break up.

Staying together would entail leaving the United States to live in Thomas's home country, Germany, since Germany grants gay married couples the right of citizenship for the spouse. They left for Germany, but did not like their experience. They became "contemporary nomads" as they call themselves, traveling the world until the U.S. grants Tony and Thomas "the right for a foreign spouse to immigrate and live in the United States."

Lisa Nunn met Tony and Thomas when she enrolled in the University of San Diego's (USD) graduate school program of sociology. During graduate school, Nunn began filming the documentary *Excluded*, which she shared at the 2012 WorldLink Youth Town Meeting. At first, it was only a tiny film project, and she had no big vision for it. After she graduated and became part of the USD faculty, she followed up on the project and completed the film, now a 46-minute long documentary available for free at www.excludedthemovie.com. It chronicles Thomas and Tony's problems with the U.S. federal law and the unfairness of being excluded from the 1000+ rights that opposite-sex couples receive after marriage.

Before *Excluded*, Nunn was interested in promoting the rights of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community, but did not know how to take an active role. Making the documentary "allowed [her] to take a political stance [on the issue] and make [her] role as an ally meaningful." An ally is an individual who is part of the majority group, but aims to help a group that has been oppressed.

Nunn outlined various ways youth can get involved as allies to the LGBT community. Although it would be wonderful if every young individual could make a documentary, this is not a reality. Nunn discussed the significance of starting or joining a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) organization at schools. In addition, a great and easy way to stay updated on LGBT rights issues is by signing up for e-mail updates from

organizations, including Human Rights Campaign (www.hrc.org). She also spoke about the importance in combatting the use of the words "gay" and "lesbian" as synonyms for stupid. Nunn encourages each person to police one another and remind each other that using the phrase "that's so gay" is harmful and disrespectful. Nunn concluded by saying, "don't laugh at gay jokes: they are not nice" – a simple, yet meaningful statement.



Students listen as Nunn tells of her journey in making the film.

(Photo by Brynn Gallahue)

Daraja: Giving Education to Girls in Kenya

By Diego Breton, IMAN

"When one door closes, another opens. But we often look so regretfully upon the closed door that we don't see the one that has opened for us." - Alexander Graham Bell

Kenya has been the cradle of a series of ethnic conflicts for many years now. With over forty tribes, this issue has been gaining more attention due to the rising number of violent cases directly related to it. In the WorldLink documentary *Where Worlds Change: A Girls School in Kenya*, Alice Nyawira Njonjo, a fifteen year-old girl, reveals the horrors she witnessed between the different tribes. In the short film, which premiered at this year's 15th annual WorldLink Youth Town Meeting, Njonjo explains that ethnic groups are told to slay each other if they ever encounter a member of an opposing group. This problem came to the public eye in 2007 after the elections in Kenya, when Mwai Kibaki, a Kikuyu, was re-elected as president. Dissatisfied rioters of other tribes started a rebellion, which led to the death of over 1,500 civilians.

These long-standing and deeply rooted conflicts keep the country away from peace and progress. Each person is heavily affected, particularly the children, youth and women. In many parts of Kenya, women are seen as less valuable than men. Similar to several countries worldwide, many women are forced to stay in their homes to clean and take care of their children. In Kenya, women devote a great majority of their time to household chores and other tasks, such as having to travel long distances to collect water.

Jason and Jenni Doherty were well aware of this. Jason, an alumnus of the University of San Diego, knew that he wanted to return to Africa after working in Tanzania a year after graduating from college. He was devastated to see that many young and eager girls in primary school tried very hard to get good grades (many accomplishing it); yet no matter what the results were, poverty would prevent them from entering secondary school. In fact, many of them would end up resorting to prostitution to sustain a household. For Jason, it was a very sad situation, but it was one with a solution, nonetheless. This is where Daraja Academy was born.

The Daraja Academy is a free boarding school in Nanyuki, Kenya that provides a secondary education to girls with good grades, leadership skills and the drive to make a positive change in their community. Statistically, the main reason children suffer from hunger is the mother's limited level of education; and according to the Daraja Academy's website over 130 million youth worldwide are not in school and 70% of this number are girls.

The girls are supplied with lodging, food, healthcare, and other services; the lack of which would result in being a hindrance because of the economic situation. The Daraja Academy currently hosts over 100 Kenyan girls, coming from twenty-four varied tribes and four different religions. It is

funded by the Carr Educational Foundation, which was founded in 2007 by Jason and Jenni Doherty. After fundraising and forming a Board of Directors, the Daraja Academy received its first twenty-six students in 2009.

Youth Town Meeting speakers Aneesha Bhogal and Shelley Boniwell, who helped produce the WorldLink documentary, led us through their experiences volunteering at the Daraja Academy. Bhogal and Boniwell, current graduate students of USD's School of Leadership and Educational Sciences, commented that their trip was a perfect way to connect with international youth. Not only did their visit and volunteer work benefit the Kenyan school and its students, but also naturally developed a strong sense of unity. It was heart-warming to hear from people who had actually visited the Academy, and learn of the affection and passion that the young girls displayed. Smiles and hugs were plentiful.

While many students our age need to be towed off from our beds in the morning, the Daraja girls eagerly wake up every day at 5:00 a.m. to make their beds, scrub their floors and wash their uniforms. From there, they are served breakfast, and once they are done, a new school day begins. The school aims to channel the girls' intelligence in a way that once they graduate, they can return to their homes and make positive changes throughout their villages – changes they want to see. The Daraja Academy carries out various clubs and courses, like Women of Integrity, Strength, and Hope (WISH), in order to empower young women and encourage the appreciation of diversity. Molly, a thirteen year-old Daraja student, said that she was going through school just so she could change her village and family.

Although not stated, it can be thought that at the end of the day, the girls at the Daraja Academy go to bed with a huge grin drawn on their faces, ready for the sun to rise again. Their big hearts and inexorable drive should be an inspiration to everyone. They prove that your environment does not dictate who you are or will become. Even in the most dire circumstances, those who really want to succeed will find a way to do so. Daraja has given these girls hope and has rewritten their lives and futures dramatically.

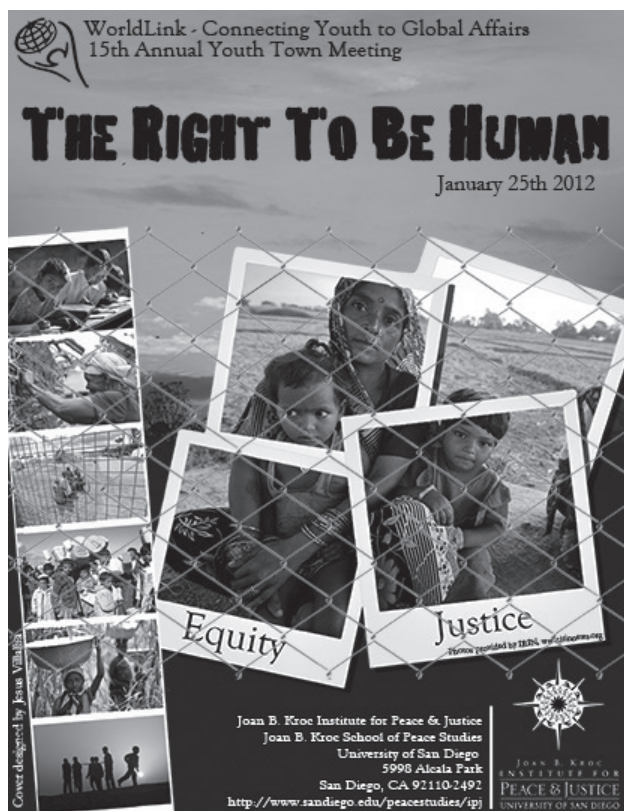
For students attending WorldLink's Youth Town Meeting, it may have been hard to relate to the ethnic conflict in Kenya. However, gang wars and poverty are terms we know very well. While education systems are different in every country, many people can have their educational path obstructed because of a lack of income that prevents them from reaching their dreams. It sure is a disappointment. However, if this briefing has given us any teachings, they are to never give up on your dreams and to always stay focused on your goal. A door apparently closed for our fellow youth in Kenya, but their efforts and fiery souls allowed them to reach the door that opened. Hold your head up high, for you never know when your very own Daraja (which means "bridge" in Swahili) will notice your efforts and reach out to you.

To watch the WorldLink documentary *Where Worlds Change: A Girls School in Kenya*, visit <http://peace.sandiego.edu>. To learn more about the Daraja Academy and become involved, visit www.daraja-academy.org. You can get a greater insight on their history and mission, and most importantly, the various options you have to support this organization that strives to make this world a better place.



Student at the Daraja Academy in Nanyuki, Kenya carrying WorldLink's 15th Youth Town Meeting tote bag.

(Photo by Peggy Hetherington)



WorldLink's 15th YTM design.

by Jesus Villalba, Chula Vista High School

"Heterosexual couples receive over 1,000 federal rights when they legally marry. Gay and lesbian Americans are excluded from these rights."

~ Lisa Nunn, USD Sociology Department

In Summary

My Life... (Continued from page 1)

By Kira Elliott, San Dieguito Academy

Moo and her family left the camp when she was fifteen, and moved to the United States in September of 2008. She described her drive to the airport, where she thought the trees were following her because she had never been in a car before. She explained how her family was given bags to keep all of their personal information in, and how her father was reluctant to leave and adapt to a new place.

Moo has had to overcome several challenges, like learning English, making new friends, learning how to live in a new country and adapting to the American culture while retaining her identity of being Karen. Today, Moo is a student at City College and plans to become a nurse so that she can help the Karen people in Burma.

Leaving the briefing session, student delegates carried with them the feeling of experiencing three lives at once. The sign reads "Young Peacemakers: Refugee Stories from Around the World." Little did they know that they would not only listen to stories of three refugees, but would also learn the importance of preserving one's culture and identity.

Pictured right:

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) Peacemakers at the 15th annual Youth Town Meeting. Pictured are the three young guest speakers, along with their fellow peacemakers.

From left: Myo Ti, April Moo, Sitey Musa, Pedro Perez, De Gray Eb, Armand Binombe, Brenda Blanco, Mitch Johnson and Hava Fallah.

(Photo by Amberley Middleton)



Abdi Mohamoud addresses his audience during his briefing, "Beyond Borders: Peacebuilding Among Refugees." (Photo by Cassia Wallach)



Stirring the Melting Pot

By Gabriela Hartman, The Bishop's School

"If we are not doing it, no one would." This mentality gives Ethiopian refugee Abdi Mohamoud the strength and resilience to continue developing and improving his non-profit organization, Horn of Africa. As founder and executive director of this San Diego-based organization, Mohamoud has provided resources to countless refugees for over fifteen years through programs, such as Refugee Case Management, the Health Access Initiative and the Childcare Training Initiative. Horn of Africa reaches over 1500 people a year with its services, and has helped establish twenty-five refugee-owned businesses.

Mohamoud, a refugee himself, fled the Fik region of Ethiopia with his neighbors and older brothers in 1997. He left during the Ogaden War to escape ethnic tensions in his country of origin. Mohamoud traveled from

refugee camp to refugee camp, after being forced to leave his mother behind who was wrongly arrested and imprisoned. In 1980, Abdi and those he traveled with were fortunate enough to be part of the 0.5% who received American refugee status and aid from President Carter's resettlement program for African refugees on humanitarian grounds.

In 1982, Mohamoud resettled in San Diego, where he eventually reconnected with his mother for the first time in six years. He had a very hard time in the American educational system after being placed in the 5th grade on arrival in San Diego. Overcoming all barriers and obstacles that came his way, he graduated from Crawford High School and the Business School at San Diego State University (SDSU). He also went on to earn his master's degree in management from Redland University. As stated at the Youth Town Meeting, "it would have been so easy to work for the government, but [realizing that his] life wouldn't have been complete if [he] hadn't spent it helping people," Mohamoud started building up Horn of Africa to help refugees like himself resettle in San Diego.

Mohamoud encourages refugees in his programs to retain some semblance of their culture while striving to become active participants in their communities in the United States. He also encourages us to aid refugees in their struggles by advocating for greater understanding of their wonderful contributions to American society.

For more information on Horn of Africa, visit www.hornofafrica.org.



Conversations with Young Peacemakers

By Kira Elliott, San Dieguito Academy

During the Question and Answer period, student delegates from San Diego County and Baja Mexico discussed a variety of topics.

Q: What were your first impressions of America?

A: [Myo Ti] It's more or less than what I expected. I had to do more than I expected, but I know that I'm not alone.

Q: What are the challenges and benefits of the American culture?

A: [Armand Binombe] Immigrants and refugees try to change their ways, try to blend in. People expect families to throw away their traditions. I stay who I am. Learning the language makes you feel more comfortable.

Q: Do you consider yourself "Americanized"?

A: [April Moo] I'm like fifteen percent "Americanized." I'm not a Thai citizen. I'm not a Burmese citizen. I consider myself Karen.

[Armand Binombe] You can try to become "Americanized," but you can't change who you are.

[Myo Ti] I have to preserve my culture and my traditions.

Q: What is a goal you have in life?

A: [April Moo] I want to help the Karen people in Burma as a nurse.

[Armand Binombe] I want to get as high of an education as possible.

"If we are not doing it, no one would."

~ Abdi Mohamoud, Horn of Africa

In Summary

Microfinance: How a Few Dollars Can Change the World

By Kira Elliott, San Dieguito Academy

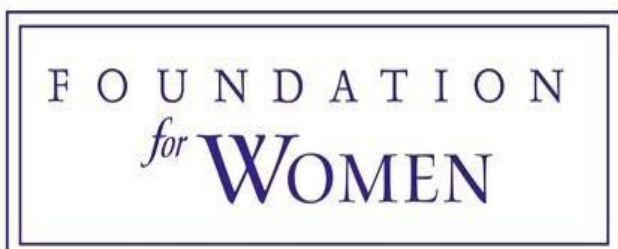
After a visit to southern India in 1997, Deborah Lindholm started the San Diego-based organization Foundation for Women (FFW). During her trip, she witnessed the power of a small loan when she saw a woman establish a barber shop with her husband after being given four dollars. This woman then did what was considered unimaginable. She raised herself out of poverty, bought a home and sent her children to school. Lindholm decided that a program focusing on small business loans could help impoverished women around the world realize their full potential.

The non-profit organization Foundation for Women oversees a program that is working towards breaking the poverty cycle by empowering women through microcredit. By giving small loans to women living at or below the poverty level, FFW initiates the "women effect." The "women effect" supports the idea: "When a woman has economic security, her family has economic security. When her family has economic security, her community has economic security. When her community has economic security, her nation has economic security. When nations have economic security, the world is secure" (<http://www.foundationforwomen.org/our-mission.html>). The "women effect" helps alleviate the cycle of poverty and creates a long-lasting, positive impact on families and local communities. Through this, there is money for education, nutrition, health care and medical services, as well as a resulting sense of economic security.

Lindholm established FFW in order to provide women access to credit and support the development of their income-generating businesses and activities. Today, the Foundation has provided microcredit loans to women in the San Diego area, as well as in Niger, Liberia, India and Zambia. The structure of the program brings groups of women together where they discuss their personal situations in confidence, support each other's loans and create a feeling of community. The only collateral used for microcredit is trust. Each individual must have trust in their group members and in oneself to pay back the loan at their weekly meetings. Loans begin at 100 or 250 dollars. Then, if the borrower has paid the original loan back in full, the loan increases to 500 dollars, and then finally to 1,000 dollars. After building their credit history, a borrower can apply to the Foundation's funding partner ACCION San Diego for a larger business loan. In addition, FFW helps women establish and build personal savings accounts, and also provides financial literacy and business skills training.

The FFW San Diego pilot program has helped over 1,200 women and their families improve their lives. Women in San Diego have a chance to promote their businesses and products through local farmers markets, swap meets, on-line stores, special events and outside retailers, all of which are accessed through the Foundation. The organization has been very successful with an average loan repayment rate of 98%.

Microfinance may seem like a small step, but the impact of that step is huge. A small investment in one woman can result in national economic security, and then perhaps international security. The benefits are endless.



... eliminating global poverty through microcredit

Inspiring World Change

By Gabriela Hartman, The Bishop's School



Speaker Dorret Byrd animatedly speaks about her work with Catholic Relief Services. (Photo by Cassia Wallach)

As director of the Program Quality Support Department at Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Dorret Byrd has provided technical aid to CRS's many programs. A native of Kingston, Jamaica, she has particular expertise concerning African issues. Byrd has designed and managed many programs with various foundations and centers, including the African Development Foundation and the International Division of the National Council of Negro Women, to help alleviate social and economic issues in Africa.

Throughout her briefing session at WorldLink's Youth Town Meeting, Byrd concentrated on irresponsible business and the impact it has on child labor, trafficking, slavery and environmental issues. According to Byrd, responsible businesses are crucial to a country's development. Employers must be socially conscious and help prevent or eliminate chances of workers being negatively or adversely affected by their company. Oftentimes, however, businesses do not keep their employees' working conditions and environment in mind. Sadly, child labor has become a miserable reality for many children. Alleviating the prevalence of child labor around the world has been an important, if almost impossible, goal for Byrd. Through projects like the "My Rights Matter Project," she hopes the world will be rid of child labor and children will no longer work in exploitative conditions to support their families or through force.

Acts of slavery and human trafficking have become far too prevalent for our generation. In her speech, Byrd noted that there are more slaves in the world today than any other time in history to date. Victims of slavery are subjected daily to gross human rights violations. However, several countries have begun to address and fight the issue of slavery, as well as aid survivors of human trafficking. According to Byrd, due to the fact that many Brazilian plantations and cattle ranches have about 25,000-40,000 slave laborers, Brazil introduced a pact to ultimately eradicate slave labor.

Irresponsible businesses also perpetuate environmental offenses with no thought to the impact their company has on the natural world. Byrd gave an example of a company's lack of thought to the environment. She explained the destruction of a mangrove system with both fresh and salt-water swamps in the Delta of Niger. Careless dam construction and petroleum enterprises contaminated both the soil and ground water, negatively impacting the health of local residents.

Byrd emphasized that each individual has a social responsibility to help the world. By supporting the passage of laws and enforcing regulations, child labor, trafficking, slavery and environmental offenses can be reduced. Education and advocacy efforts can enlighten others about these issues. By supporting fair trade companies and checking supply chains, youth can help eradicate the world of these unfair and wrong business practices that negatively impact humanity. The human race should always support integral human development because "every citizen has the right to live their full lives to their full development."

Ten Ways to Make a Difference

By Nicole Sadowsky, The Bishop's School

Start an International Rescue Committee (IRC) club at your school

Become a WorldLink Intern

Participate in a National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Walk

Send a letter to your representative urging him/her to co-sponsor H.R.2024, the Torture Victims Relief Reauthorization Act of 2011, which would provide funds to torture rehabilitation programs, such as Survivors of Torture International

Stay updated with Project Concern International (PCI) email reports

Start a WorldLink club at your high school

Plan a "Day of Action" at your school with Gay Straight Alliance to celebrate LGBT History Month in October

Run a "Basics Drive" for Alliance for African Assistance

Donate used toys to Horn of Africa, for the graduates of the Childcare Training Program

Become a Campus Representative for Nika Water at your high school



Students excitedly point towards the IPJ, where the YTM briefings took place.

(Photo by Alexandra Cheney)

Interested in the WorldLink Program?

Apply to be an intern, or start a WorldLink club at your school!

For more information,

visit <http://peace.sandiego.edu/worldlink>, or



find us on Facebook!

"When a woman has economic security, her family has economic security. When her family has economic security, her community has economic security. When her community has economic security, her nation has economic security. When nations have economic security, the world is secure."

~ The Women Effect

In Summary

Responsible Business: A Gateway to Providing Services to Those in Need

By Eric Nicolas, Canyon Crest Academy

One of the biggest challenges in the developing world is the ongoing water crisis. Currently, over 1/6 of the world's population lives without access to clean water, and over 4,500 people die each day as a result of water related illness. In fact, "Water related diseases kill more people each year than all forms of violence combined," explains Nina Church, a high school senior and co-founder of Nika Water. Though these statistics might seem alarming, there is still hope. In her presentation titled "Catching the Wave of Social Change," Church outlined the key points of responsible business, and made it clear that the alleviation of water problems is well within our reach.

In 2007, Church and her family visited East Africa, and what they saw inspired them to make a difference. On their trip, the Church family witnessed entire communities living in absolute poverty. Water, something many of us take for granted, was scarce in these communities and hard to come by. Together, the Church family decided to found Nika Water with the intent of providing clean water, a fundamental human right, to some of the poorest places on earth.

The idea behind Nika Water is simple: create a business model that unites commercial enterprise with philanthropic goals. Ever since its creation in 2009, Nika Water has been doing exactly that. Nika is a responsible business that operates with the "triple bottom line" in mind. This means that it works to promote social good and ecological preservation while maintaining economic profitability.

Unlike several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other humanitarian efforts, Nika is self-sustaining and operates like a for-profit business. However, instead of going to shareholders and company managers, all profits from sales go directly to humanitarian efforts around the world. Through its efforts, Nika has funded the construction of wells, schools, and community projects in five different countries, including Nicaragua, Kenya, Uganda, Sri Lanka and Tanzania.

Church emphasizes the power of youth, and asserts that the younger generation can be advocates of change. Her advice to students is to find one's passion. "It doesn't matter how old you are, what matters is that you are passionate about what you do." As a society, we have the resources to change the world, but we need the willpower to match it.

Along with providing clean water to those that need it, Nika Water aims to raise awareness about important issues around the world. After all, education is the first step along the road to making a difference. As Church expressed, anyone can change the world, though it requires a conscious choice and the "courage to place your dreams above your fears."

Water is at the root of humanity, and it is the lack of water that is at the root of many of the world's problems. By uniting the goals of business and social work, it is possible to make a tangible difference in the world we live in.

"What Would You Do With a Free Afternoon?"

Speech by Nina Church, Nika Water

Transcribed by Morgan Chen, The Bishop's School

"What would you do with a free afternoon? While this may make many of my fellow seniors in here writhe in pain with memories of responding to this very common, often very frustrating college essay prompt, I ask everyone to seriously take a second and think about it.

What would you do? Would you watch TV, hang out with your friends, your family, cook, go play a sport? It could be anything. And that's the beauty of it. Because every single one of us in this room has the freedom to choose what we will do, and the fortune of opportunities to choose from.

But millions of people all over the world don't have that same freedom. People our age, people older, people younger, chained by issues of culture and injustice, discriminated against because of disabilities, confined by displacement, repressed by irresponsible business practices. These people can only dream of the millions of things you can do with a free afternoon.

Four years ago, I sat where you're sitting now. And I asked, "so what?" I was tired, I was hungry, battling to keep my eyes open, and awkwardly scoping out the girl's shoes in front of me and the hot guy across the aisle. (As I'm sure many of you are right now). But most of all, I was disturbed. I was moved, I was disgusted at the state our world was in. And I was scared. What could I do? How could I make a difference?

I looked to my left, and I looked to my right. And I looked all around me, and I realized that I was

not alone. That we are seven hundred plus strong in this room. Seven hundred plus people who are going to make a difference in our world. Because we care. Because we're here.

And so, four years ago, as I sat where you're sitting, I went home with my family, and I was inspired. And my family created, and choose to channel that inspiration into something called Nika Water. Nika is a social entrepreneurship which means that we donate one-hundred percent of our profits towards poverty alleviation projects around the world. So every bottle of water that we sell, all that money goes to building schools, drilling wells, putting in water catchment systems, all around the developing world in order to provide people that basic right to education, health care, sanitation, and the freedom of an afternoon, and the lifetime free of having to walk for water.

Over four years later, Nika has now donated seven thousand people's worth of clean water in the developing world. Seven thousand people, just like every one of us. That's ten times the amount of people in this room, and all because people like all of us decided to make a change, to be inspired, decided to switch from drinking Smart Water to Nika Water, decided to be socially responsible and smart consumers, and that's it.

It's ordinary people who do extraordinary things. Ordinary people like every single person in this room. It's always the same story. It's people like my brothers, my sister, my parents, my family, my friends, the amazing WorldLink staff and interns, and people like Ghandi, Martin Luther King Jr., Mother Teresa. They all started somewhere. They all started by taking the first step, the first step to seek, to understand our world issues, our basic human rights, and the injustice done to them. And then, they worked to annihilate them.

Each day, we make progress towards a happier, healthier, stronger tomorrow. All because every single person in this room chooses to care. I know that it's scary to take action. Believe me, I've been there, I've stood up in front of rooms of people, and tried to convince them why they should care about something as abstract as the world water crisis. Why they should trust and invest in a five-foot-two, high school freshman's dream. But I took the first step, and so have all of you, you've taken it today. So give yourselves a round of applause, it's exciting!

And even though the successes are only achieved after many, many defeats, hours of jittery nerves, and hours and hours of caffeine upon passion-powered research, you will do it! You can do it! And I'll let you in on the best-kept, Youth Town Meeting secret: you've already done it. You've already taken that first scary step. You've spent a day learning, opening, or in some cases, perhaps, widening your outlook on the world, the issues we face, the solutions out there. And the solution's waiting to be discovered by you.

So when you leave here, I challenge you. I challenge every single one of us, not to let the passion go, not to let what you've learned today go. Find your passion, cultivate it, live by it. Whether that means you start your own business, whether that means you put on a fundraiser, combine your talents with something you care about, your cause, or even something as simple as shopping smarter with keeping in mind where your profits are going. Or even living more empathetically, being kinder to the people around you. You can do it!

This is our world. It's our community, every single one of us in here, every single person outside of this room, it's our world, and it's our time to start taking ownership for it. And we start today. And so, this afternoon, all of you guys have dedicated one of your free afternoons to making our world a better place. I challenge each of you to dedicate a few more, so that one day, every person will have the right to a free afternoon met.

Thank you.



Closing speaker Nina Church, co-founder of Nika Water, talks about her hopes for the future, and changes possible through the involvement of youth in global issues.

(Photo by Alexandra Cheney)

"It doesn't matter how old you are, what matters is that you are passionate about what you do."

~ Nina Church, Nika Water

In Summary

Shannon's Story (NAMI San Diego)

By Emily Wolfe, San Diego School of Creative and Performing Arts

On the morning of the Youth Town Meeting (YTM), walking alone through the empty hallways of the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice was the least of my concerns. A much larger issue was going through my mind: mental disability. I could not help but overthink and worry about what I could be doing to help, and hoped that I would get a few ideas by attending this year's conference.

The YTM had not yet started. Thus, as I walked down the hallway to the room of the briefing session, "Bringing Mental Disabilities to the Forefront," my thoughts wandered. There, a woman and her student moderator would be waiting for me. This woman, Shannon Jaccard of the National Alliance on Mental Illness San Diego (NAMI), is inspiring. I quietly opened the heavy door to the room where she awaited. I was surprised to find that Jaccard was not an intimidating person, as I envisioned her to be. Rather, she was calm and approachable.

I sat down and began to ask a few questions to ease my curiosity. I learned that she is a well-known speaker for NAMI, and organizes conferences in various locations to discuss disability. Most importantly, I discovered that her inspiration is her brother, Jeff. Being enthralled by her words and experiences, I became distracted from my surroundings. Before I knew it, it was time for the Opening Plenary. Our discussion ended on the topic of her brother.

Once the opening session was complete, I joined Jaccard in her first briefing. I paid close attention and jotted down every little detail, silently hoping that she would talk about her brother. Jaccard shared that she is against over-medicating, seclusion and restraints as treatment, and explained that NAMI has a hotline for individuals in need of someone to talk to about issues concerning suicide, depression and other concerns. Her empowering words left me in thought, and my countless pages of notes left my hand quivering. In her second session, Jaccard discussed the media and its ability to portray mental disability in a negative way. NAMI, however, involves family members and peers, who walk a patient through recovery.

Ultimately, it was time for lunch, and I finally had the opportunity to have one-on-one time with her. I was



A student speaks to Shannon Jaccard after her briefing.

(Photo by Amanda Schroeder)

hesitant to talk with her about her brother Jeff, so I asked about other topics initially. Jaccard expressed her appreciation for her husband and described him as a great source of support for the work she does. She spoke briefly about a traumatic experience she had when having her baby, which impacted her greatly and triggered a dislike for certain medical clinics and the way they run.

I finally worked up the courage to ask her about Jeff. She smiled at the thought of him, which greatly touched my heart. Jaccard told me of his personality, and explained how great he was with kids, even claimed that her child resembles him sometimes. I enjoyed hearing past stories about his antics and his advice to her. As the conversation progressed, Jaccard began to share about his disability and explained that he had been diagnosed with schizophrenia.

There were many times he had to go to the hospital, and also take medicine often. This made both her and Jeff unhappy. Eventually, her brother was killed by his treatment while Jaccard was away in Brazil. She described how hard it has been without Jeff. He was her rock. I was struggling to hold back tears while we spoke. Jaccard was incredibly close to her brother and could always talk to him about anything. He gave good advice. I could not help but smile at the thought of her and her brother together.

After hearing about Jeff and her experiences with mental illness, I finally understood where all of her drive came from. She is fighting for him and for others who are in similar situations. Shannon Jaccard is an inspiration, and so is her brother. I cannot say for sure what happened to me that day, but something changed for me. I felt all of her inspiration flow through me, and told myself that some day, I will change the world just as Shannon is doing now.



Speaker Shannon Jaccard speaks passionately about her experience as Executive Director of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, San Diego (NAMI).

(Photo by Amanda Schroeder)

DISABILITY REPORT

By Eric Nicolas, Canyon Crest Academy

The World Health Organization's World Report on Disability (2011) states that one billion people worldwide have disabilities. According to the United Nations Development Program, eighty percent of these individuals live in developing countries. For those who are living in poverty, disability has several challenges. The source www.disabled-world.com describes the link between poverty and disability and states, "Poor people are more at risk of acquiring a disability because of lack of access to good nutrition, health care, sanitation, as well as safe living and working conditions. Once this occurs, people face barriers to the education, employment, and public services that can help them escape poverty."

Armed conflict and violence are also significant factors that have an effect on disabilities. According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), for every child killed in warfare, three are injured and permanently disabled. The World Health Organization reports that in some countries, up to a quarter of disabilities result from injuries and violence.

In the United States, the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Service and the Council for Disability Awareness Report that over 36 million Americans are classified as disabled, which equals 12% of the total population. Other statistics include:

- Almost 1/3 of American families have a member with a disability.
- Approximately 95% of disabilities are caused by illnesses rather than accidents.
- Just over 1 in 4 of today's 20 year-olds will become disabled before they retire.
- One in eight workers will be disabled for five years or more during their working careers.
- 64% of persons with disabilities aged 21-64 are unemployed.
- 26% of persons with disabilities are living below the poverty line.

The UNCRPD, passed in 2006, is a global declaration to protect the rights of people with disabilities. The convention states that societies should "recognize that all people must be provided with the opportunities to live life to their fullest potential" and encourages countries to pass laws to secure rights for those with disabilities. To date, 153 countries have signed the Convention, and 112 countries have ratified it. The United States signed the Convention in 2009, but has yet to ratify it.

Several organizations, including the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), have taken action to change the stereotypes associated with disability by advocating for services and treatments, as well as increasing awareness on disability.

Important Numbers

NAMI SD Family & Peer Support Line - 1(800) 523-5933
Optum Health Access & Crisis Line - (888) 724-7240
National Suicide Hotline - 1(800) SUICIDE
National Depression Hotline - 1(800) 273-TALK

California Youth Crisis Line - 1(800) 843-5200
Peer2Peer Youth Talkline - 1(877) 450-LINE
Peer2Peer Family Supportline - 1(877) 470-LINE
Children and Adults with Attention Deficit/
Hyperactivity Disorder - 1(800) 233-4050

**"Illness does not define a patient. A patient is not schizophrenic. A patient has schizophrenia."
~ Shannon Jaccard, National Alliance on Mental Illness, San Diego**

In Summary

Spreading Awareness through Photography

By Morgan Chen, The Bishop's School

For many people, inspiration comes from celebrities, friends or family members. For Dominic Bracco, it was the photography project: "We are Animals in a World Nobody Knows." Shot by photographer Bill Eppridge, the project documents a heroin-addicted couple. "It's a beautiful love story," Bracco described. After seeing the project, he realized that he wanted to show things "through photography in a way people could relate to."

Bracco, who is a photographer, video journalist and co-founder of Prime Collective, has worked with The Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting and was one of the twenty-two distinguished speakers at WorldLink's Youth Town Meeting (YTM). The topic, "The Right to be Human," was covered in fifteen unique briefing sessions. Bracco featured Los Ninis – Mexico's lost generation. Los Ninis are impoverished children that *ni estudian, ni trabajan* ("neither study, nor work"). In Mexico, they have become easy victims of the local drug cartels. Many of these children find themselves in the midst of drug wars. Bracco lived with some of these children for a period of time, documenting their daily experiences.

In his session, Bracco presented a slideshow of photos he captured while in Mexico, specifically in Ciudad Juarez. What I saw was expected: photos of the violence broadcasted on the news. There were snapshots of blood on a front door, a couple murdered in a car and a young girl standing next to her mother's coffin. However, I also saw photos of how the Ninis were young teenagers just like me. The only difference was that they had been born into a life of fear and violence. As Bracco stated during the YTM Opening Plenary, "These people are similar to ourselves. These are real people." Despite the dismal environment, I saw that life went on in Ciudad Juarez.



Dominic Bracco answers a question from Aric Yael Bandera, student moderator, regarding crimes in Ciudad Juarez.

(Photo by Natasha Thomson)

Bracco spoke of teens he had worked with whose lives took a turn for the worse. "It's hard, often, to take a photo of people in a tragic situation," he says. However, he hopes that people will see his photographs and take away ideas or messages from them that he might not have realized himself. He shared a story of a woman who began to cry upon the sight of one of his photos. The picture was of convicts in a Mexican prison, who were all in uniform and lined up. She explained that she was crying for the men's wives and families – a reaction he never had or thought of when looking at the photo. "Everyone has different feelings of photography," Bracco said, "and these are real people. They represent everything I need to say."

Nevertheless, Bracco has encountered youth who have challenged the stereotypes associated to Los Ninis. For instance, in the short film *The Clarinetist*, Bracco documented Esteban Ruiseco, a fifteen-year old from Juarez, who found a new life through music. The young man states, "Many people here do not have much to live for." Ruiseco escaped the pain he once endured by practicing with the youth orchestra. Now, instead of choosing to resort to drugs and gang violence, like other children his age, he practices the clarinet.



Boris Gordillo, student delegate from CETYS Universidad, Tijuana, asks a question in response to Dominic Bracco's presentation.

(Photo by Natasha Thomson)

Never, Never

By Morgan Chen, The Bishop's School

Carlos Mauricio has "never, never" given up. His eyes are bright and alert as he recounts his horrific story to the classroom of eager listeners at the 2012 WorldLink Youth Town Meeting.

Mauricio was a professor at the University of El Salvador before his whole world changed. One day, he was on his way to teach his class when a man approached him. This man asked Mauricio to move his car, since he claimed it was "blocking his." He hesitated; not wishing to be late to his class, but eventually obliged and walked out to the parking lot. "I sensed something odd," he said, when he noticed that his car was not in the way of any other car at all. It was then that the same man attacked Mauricio. He desperately tried to run back to the university, but was blocked by a group of men. Mauricio then realized that the notorious Salvadoran "death squads" were kidnapping him. However, he would not go without a fight. Mauricio held tightly to the bumper of a car, until he was kicked in the stomach and dragged away.

He was blindfolded, taken into a van and pushed down onto the floor, face-up. The blindfold served a special role, because "you lose sense of space and time." However, through the small crack of space between the cloth and his face, Mauricio was able to see a sliver of the window. He watched as the light eventually darkened, as day became night. He listened for clues to locate where he was. He knew he was still in San Salvador, the capital of El Salvador, because of the "noises of the engines and merchants on the street." His heart sank as he began to realize that he would be taken to the outskirts of the city, where most of the kidnapped were killed.

Carlos Mauricio sharing his experience as a survivor of torture.

(Photo by Victoria Acosta)



Yet, they did not kill him, and instead took him into a torture chamber. He "smelled death" inside the chamber as he sat blindfolded in the dark. Mauricio listened to the sounds of other people being tortured, raped, beaten and shocked. "I was next," he said.

And indeed, they showed no mercy to him, continually torturing him for five days until he confessed that he took an illegal trip to Cuba – something he never did. "The information was useless," says Mauricio with vehemence, "I confessed something I didn't do in order to stop torture." Therefore, he says, torture is useless.

Fortunately, the Red Cross found him and demanded his release from the prison. It was then he left for the United States "to heal." "I tried to begin a new life," he says, "It was so difficult to talk about what happened to me." In the U.S., Mauricio slowly began to tell others his experience. "It left a big, big mark on me," he says, and indeed it had. It empowered

Mauricio to become a human rights activist while looking for other torture survivors to share their own stories.

On July 23, 2002, Mauricio, along with two other torture survivors, filed a lawsuit and rightly served justice upon two former Salvadoran defense ministers, Jose Guillermo Garcia and Carlos Eugenio Vides Casanova, who were responsible for his kidnap and torture. He was lucky, he says, because the U.S. allowed him to come out and tell his story.

However, Mauricio is still on the search for other survivors of torture from El Salvador in order to raise awareness of what took place and continues to take place around the world. "I feel responsible for telling a story that is mine, but also others," he shares. In 2002, Mauricio founded the Stop Impunity Project, aiming to end the impunity granted to violators of human rights in El Salvador. Today, he also leads a summer intensive program in Modern Salvadoran History and Human Rights, in collaboration with the University of El Salvador and the Office of the Ombudsman for the Protection of Human Rights. For Mauricio, it is vital to continue to share his story – a story of courage, a story of truth.

Possibilities Help Produce Change

By Iselle Guerrero González, CETYS Universidad

"What right do I have in the torture chamber?" asked Carlos Mauricio, a survivor of torture and executive director of the Stop Impunity Project. Mauricio spoke of his experience in El Salvador when he was kidnapped and tortured by the national police in June of 1983. He was tortured in order to extract information about the guerrillas, since his girlfriend at the time was a guerrilla chief.

Mauricio not only shared his story but also relayed a positive message to his audience. He informed teenagers to gather together and understand that the lifestyle people have in some areas are completely different from ours. In some places, people are violated and their freedom is limited. His messages gave an opportunity to see the world in a different light and to hear and realize that there are people in the world trying to make a change.

After Mauricio shared his personal story, he mentioned that it took eleven years before he could speak of what he endured. At the Youth Town Meeting, he said, "I came to tell my story because I am not afraid anymore." He is not afraid to share his experience unlike many others that were kidnapped along with him. Mauricio explained that all imprisonments are traumatic enough to motivate most people into choosing to forget the ordeal and never talk about it – to live on as if it never happened.

Mauricio decided to speak about his experience, raise his voice and continue with his life in the United States. Mauricio stated, "After a miracle, I left prison and came to the U.S. and got the healing and help I needed." He expressed his gratitude towards Amnesty International, a global organization with over 3 million members and activists all dedicated to the defense of human rights. After arriving in the U.S., he found a job as a salsa teacher in Washington D.C., and established a life with his wife and children.

However, words alone are not enough to take action against these atrocities. After several decades, Mauricio, along with Neris González and Dr. Juan Romagoza, who were also survivors of torture, faced two former Salvadoran generals in a Florida courtroom. In 2002, Jose Guillermo Garcia and Carlos Eugenio Vides Casanova were found responsible of the crimes committed. This verdict heralds a major victory in the global fight against impunity for human rights violations.

According to Mauricio, family members of Salvadorans who were murdered and tortured wanted revenge. However, as Mauricio explained, "That would be sinking to their level. It is good that they were exposed for what they did. At least now the world knows we were not lying. What is important is that the truth is out there."

Mauricio's case is one among thousands. Although injustice and impunity seem stronger and threaten to overcome us, we must stay strong and fight for our rights to be human. In the words of Carlos Mauricio: "My rights cannot be taken from me no matter what." The change is in our hands and we, as the future, have the choice to either be part of the action or just be silent witnesses of crime.

"I feel responsible for telling a story that is mine, but also others."

~ Carlos Mauricio, *The Stop Impunity Project*

In Summary

New Americans, New Lives

By Ruth Natalia Nevarez Zambada, IMAN

Walter Lam, founder of the Alliance for African Assistance, is a refugee from Northern Uganda who wanted to make a difference by helping others. During his briefing, he explained all the purposes of his organization. The Alliance focuses on the persecution of refugees, which takes form exponentially in places such as Afghanistan, Colombia, Sudan, Somalia and Iraq.

There are about 50 million refugees and internally displaced persons worldwide, with 2 million having been uprooted by war. Lam emphasized that life living in refugee camps is not safe. The camps are overcrowded, have limited medical care and have a high incidence of abduction and abuse. Because of his own experience fleeing his country due to political persecution, Lam has dedicated his life to assist other refugees, such as Emmanuel Otoo - a young Ugandan boy born without hands, forearms, calves and feet. Emmanuel's mother gave birth to him in a Kenyan refugee camp. After meeting them at this camp, Lam obtained authorization from the U.S. State Department to have Emmanuel and his family move to San Diego.

Each year, thousands of individuals come to the United States to begin a new life, which can be very difficult, in particular for those in plight. For those who are forced to leave their home country, finding work and a place to live are significant obstacles, especially if there is a language barrier. Often, refugees do not have family members who can support them. The Alliance aims to provide alternatives, such as assisting refugees in finding homes. Because of organizations like the Alliance for African Assistance, refugees can establish new lives. The Alliance not only provides job training and other resources, but a feeling of hope and faith.

Realities and Recoveries of Torture Survivors

By Ruth Natalia Nevarez Zambada, IMAN

Tricia Hilliard, Senior Mental Health Clinician, and Sol d'Urso, Marriage and Family Therapist, of Survivors of Torture, International (SURVIVORS) captivated the audience when speaking of the amazing individuals they work with. They each are dedicated to their job, despite all of the difficulties associated to their positions.

When Hilliard and d'Urso first meet survivors of torture, there are a few standard steps they follow. They each spend some time with their clients in order to understand their individual experiences. There are some survivors of torture who avoid talking about what they endured until they are ready to share their feelings, while others may choose to confront the situation head on. It can take as long as eleven years or as soon as four months for survivors to open up. The time one takes to recover depends on how they face their fears, guilt, shame and flashbacks.

Along with their colleagues at SURVIVORS, Hilliard and d'Urso assist people by making them feel safer, giving them primary care and more. They meet with survivors and their families, since torture affects a person on a very deep level and can change their life forever. This effect is not by accident. The purpose of torture is to break the soul and the spirit of a person, and to make them feel as though they are without rights, without feelings and without life. Torture is an attempt to take away one's humanity and dignity.

For survivors of torture, it is difficult to move on, since many experience post traumatic stress disorder in the aftermath. It may be one of the hardest experiences to overcome for human beings. Currently, there are over 500,000 torture survivors living in the United States, 1,500 of which are living in San Diego.

Although it is hard for survivors of torture to speak out, there are several who do. One survivor who chose to stay anonymous said, "I didn't realize I was sick. I didn't know I could be cured. I had no hope. There was nothing else in the world except what had happened to me. I held a Master's Degree from the London School of Economics and Political

Science. I forgot that."

Torture takes away hope, humanity, happiness and family. The significance of the effects of torture has to be recognized. Torture takes a toll on human lives and completely violates human rights. In order to make progress, we have to face torture and its repercussions head on, as Tricia Hilliard and Sol d'Urso regularly do. These two amazing women are an incredible example of what it means to address human rights violations, and directly reverse the effects through the work they do.



Closing Plenary panelist, Adam Finck of Invisible Children, shares a list of children kidnapped from one village in Central Africa. He closed by talking about his hopes for the future, and changes possible through the involvement of youth in global issues.

(Photo by Natasha Thomson)

The Protection of Human Rights

By Diego Breton and Eric Nicolas, IMAN and Canyon Crest Academy

"Ghandi, Martin Luther King Jr., Mother Teresa - They all started somewhere. They all started by taking the first step - the first step to seek to understand our world's issues, our basic human rights and the injustice done to them. And then... they work to annihilate them."

Such was the statement articulated by Nina Church during the YTM Closing Plenary, "The Protection of Human Rights." Over 700 student delegates anxiously waited to hear from Steven Kashkett, Adam Finck and Nina Church. These closing speakers, although referring to different issues and coming from very different backgrounds, delivered a great message and highlighted the idea that all people can have positive and long-lasting impacts on society, at both the local and international levels. Despite the diversity of backgrounds, beliefs, and nationalities, the attendees shared one fundamental similarity - the desire to produce change.

The first panelist, Steven Kashkett, is the U.S. Consul General in Tijuana and has over twenty-eight years of diplomatic experience. He began his address by outlining some of the most important aspects of human rights: liberty, security and dignity. Drawing on his experience in the United States Foreign Service, Kashkett went on to illustrate the dangers of intolerance and the importance of human dignity as the foundation for other rights.

Thus, when he said that human rights were an important issue to discuss, it was something to believe. He addressed a variety of global concerns, from Tijuana's human trafficking problems to the arbitrary arrests and forms of torture in Haiti. Kashkett went on to present the tools that could be used to vent off such crimes and abuse, such as bilateral diplomacy, multilateral engagement, supplying foreign aid, making the issue public and, in the case of the United States, applying economic sanctions to violators.

During his short talk, he presented the theme of human rights from a very methodical point of view, and gave examples of human rights that should be observed, including the prevention of slavery and torture, freedom of expression and movement and basic human dignity, among many others. Kashkett emphasized the power of youth to change the thinking and consciousness of society, stressing that youth involvement is key to promoting meaningful change.

The microphone was then handed to Adam Finck, who led the audience into a brusque silence with a simple question, "Does anyone know who Joseph Kony is?" One would think that this Ugandan guerrilla leader, who happens to be on the *Forbes List of the World's 10 Most Wanted*, would be more popular. However, the general absence of sound betrayed us.

Adam Finck shared his perspective as mission director for Uganda and director of programs in Central Africa for Invisible Children - an organization focusing on ending the use of child soldiers in Central Africa through film and social activism.

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Our Rights Migrate with Us

By Stephanie Manterola, IMAN

Peter Schey left a lasting impression on his audience when he voiced his opinion on human rights, saying, "What I think the world needs the most is better education. People have rights, they just don't know them."

This is not a problem that is just amongst immigrants. Today, many people do not have an understanding of their constitutional rights. Governments and even fellow citizens take advantage of the naivety of a large portion of our population and their rights. However, there are some individuals who take the risk and fight for justice, individuals who are considered to be heroes.

Peter Schey is a lawyer who has made a tremendous impact on the lives of immigrants. Schey, born in Durban, South Africa, is just an ordinary man doing extraordinary things. Defending and protecting the rights of immigrants is not an easy job, but he has done it well. Recently, he became involved in a delicate case involving the American government. A large group of undocumented children were at risk of being denied access to public education in Texas.

Schey was curious as to why state officials wanted these children to leave their schools. The explanation given to him was, "We don't have enough classrooms and schools." However, this answer was unacceptable. Schey explained, "I went on to investigate, and I found empty classrooms." This realization was shocking and it made him recognize that this form of selfishness was taking humanity away from children. He became lead counsel in *Doe v. Plyler* - a statewide class action case where he defended the rights of these undocumented children. As a result, the U.S. Supreme Court found it unconstitutional to deny public education to these students.

Our nation is fortunate to have people like Peter Schey - a person who fights for justice. This hero has helped many children and adolescents continue their education in school. It is important to remember that it does not matter where one comes from. Each person should still be treated as a human. The U.S. Constitution does protect the rights of immigrants. A person's humanity and basic rights cannot be taken away from them.

The great disregard of human rights and freedom all around the world is unbelievable. It seems that the observance of human rights is not a large concern in the eyes of many. Fortunately, there are still incredible people, like Peter Schey, who are making a difference. As an ordinary man, he proved that anybody can make a positive change. In this particular case, he affected the lives of many children, whose right to education was being threatened to be taken away. Due to his courageous efforts, these children continue to receive education and have new opportunities to continue towards higher education. Schey has proved that through passion and dedication, justice and equality are possible in our world today.



(Photo by Cassia Wallach)

"What I think the world needs is better education. People have rights, they just don't know them."
~ Peter Schey, Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law

Daraja: Dar Educación a las Mujeres Jóvenes de Kenia

Por Diego Breton, IMAN

Traducido por Nicole Sadowsky, The Bishop's School

“Cuando una puerta se cierra, otra se abre. Sin embargo, a menudo miramos con mucho pesar a la puerta cerrada y no vemos la puerta que se ha abierto para nosotros.”

---Alexander Graham Bell

Kenia ha sido la cuna de una serie de conflictos étnicos desde hace muchos años. Con más de cuarenta tribus, esta problemática ha estado atrayendo más atención debido al incremento en el número de casos violentos relacionados con ella. En el documental de WorldLink *Donde Hay Cambio del Mundo: Una Escuela de Mujeres Jóvenes en Kenia*, Alice Nyawira Njonjo, una niña de quince años de edad, revela los horrores que presenció entre las diferentes tribus.

En el cortometraje, que se estrenó este año en la 15ª reunión local de jóvenes, llamada “Youth Town Meeting,” Njonjo explica que a los grupos étnicos se les ha sido indicado que se deben matar los unos con los otros, si en algún momento se encuentran con un miembro de un grupo adversario. El problema se hizo público en el 2007 después de las elecciones en Kenia, cuando Mwai Kibaki, un Kikuyu, fue reelegido como presidente. Los rebeldes insatisfechos de las otras tribus comenzaron una rebelión, que condujo a la muerte de más de 1,500 habitantes.

Estos viejos conflictos que están profundamente arraigados son los que mantienen al país lejos de la paz y del progreso. Cada persona es afectada enormemente, especialmente los niños, la juventud y las mujeres. En muchas partes de Kenia, las mujeres se han visto como menos valiosas que los hombres. Al igual que varios países a nivel mundial, muchas mujeres han sido forzadas a estarse en la casa para limpiar y cuidar a sus niños. En Kenia, las mujeres dedican la gran mayoría de su tiempo a los quehaceres de la casa y otras actividades, como viajar largas distancias para recoger agua.

Jason y Jenni Doherty tenían conocimiento sobre esto. Jason, un graduado de la Universidad de San Diego y ex alumno del programa WorldLink, sabía que quería regresar a África después de trabajar en Tanzania, un año después de graduarse de la universidad. Él estaba destrozado al ver que muchas mujeres jóvenes y entusiastas de la escuela primaria se esforzaban mucho para conseguir buenas calificaciones (muchas lo lograban); aun así, sin importar sus resultados, la pobreza les prevenía ingresar a la escuela secundaria. De hecho, muchas de ellas terminaban recurriendo a la prostitución para sostener el hogar. Para Jason, esto era una situación muy triste; sin embargo, esto podría tener una solución. Así fue como la Academia Daraja nació.

La Academia Daraja es un internado gratuito en Nanyuki, Kenia que les proporciona un nivel de educación secundaria, habilidades de liderazgo y la guía para hacer un cambio positivo en su comunidad a las jóvenes con buenas calificaciones. Estadísticamente, la razón principal de que los niños sufren de hambre se debe al nivel de educación limitado de la madre; y de acuerdo con la página de Web de la Academia Daraja, existen cerca de 130 millones de jóvenes a nivel mundial que no están en el colegio y un 70% de ellos son niñas.

A las jóvenes se les da hospedaje, comida, cuidado de salud, y otros servicios; cuya falta podrían ser un impedimento debido a la situación económica. La Academia Daraja actualmente patrocina a más de 100 jovencitas de Kenia, procedentes de veinticuatro tribus y de cuatro religiones. Esta academia fue financiada por la Fundación Educativa Carr (“Carr Educational Foundation”), la cual fue fundada en el 2007 por Jason y Jenni Doherty. Después de la recaudación de fondos y de la conformación de la junta de directores, la Academia Daraja recibió sus primeras veintiséis estudiantes en el 2009.

Las oradoras de “Youth Town Meeting,” Aneesha Bhogal y Shelley Boniwell, quienes ayudaron en la producción del documental de WorldLink, nos relataron sus experiencias como voluntarias en la Academia Daraja. Bhogal y Boniwell,



Estudiantes escuchan a Aneesha Bhogal y Shelley Boniwell hablar sobre Daraja Academy en Kenia.

(Fotografía por Frances Chen)

actuales estudiantes de postgrado de la Escuela de Liderazgo y de Ciencias Educativas de la Universidad de San Diego, comentaron que su viaje fue la perfecta forma de conectarse con la juventud internacional. No sólo su visita y su trabajo voluntario beneficiaron a la escuela de Kenia y a sus estudiantes, sino que también se desarrolló un fuerte sentido de unidad. Fue muy reconfortante escuchar a las personas que habían visitado a la academia, y aprender del cariño y la pasión que esas jóvenes demostraban. Habían muchas sonrisas y abrazos.

Mientras que muchos estudiantes de nuestra época necesitan ser sacados forzosamente de la cama cada mañana, las jóvenes del Daraja se despiertan entusiasmadas a las 5:00 a.m. todos los días para organizar sus camas, restregar el piso y lavar su uniforme. A partir de ahí, se les sirve el desayuno, y una vez que terminan, un nuevo día en el colegio empieza. La escuela pretende canalizar la inteligencia de las jóvenes de tal forma de que, una vez se gradúen, ellas puedan regresar a sus hogares y hagan un cambio positivo en sus comunidades – los cambios que las jóvenes quieren ver. La Academia Daraja lleva a cabo varios clubes y cursos, como “Mujeres de Integridad, Fortaleza, y Esperanza” (WISH), con el fin de fortalecer a las mujeres jóvenes y fomentar el reconocimiento de la diversidad. Molly, una estudiante de Daraja de trece años, dijo que iba a asistir a la escuela para que así pudiera cambiar su comunidad y a su familia.

Aunque no se indique, se puede pensar que al final del día, las chicas de la Academia Daraja van a la cama con una enorme sonrisa dibujada en sus caras, listas para que el sol salga de nuevo. Sus inmensos corazones y determinación debe ser una inspiración para todos. Ellas demuestran que tu entorno no dicta quien eres y en que te convertirás. Incluso en las circunstancias más terribles, aquellos que realmente deseen salir adelante encontrarán la manera de hacerlo. Daraja les ha dado esperanza a estas jóvenes y les ha permitido volver a escribir sus vidas y sus futuros dramáticamente.

Para los estudiantes que asisten el “Youth Town Meeting,” es posible que haya sido difícil referirse al conflicto étnico de Kenia. No obstante, las guerras de pandillas y la pobreza son términos que conocemos muy bien. Mientras que los sistemas de educación son diferentes en cada país, muchas personas pueden tener su trayectoria educativa obstruida debido a la falta de ingresos que les impide alcanzar sus sueños. Seguro que es una decepción. Sin embargo, si esta sesión informativa nos has brindado muchas enseñanzas, nos enseñan a que nunca debemos renunciar a cumplir nuestros sueños y a que siempre nos mantengamos firme en nuestras metas. Al parecer una puerta se cerró para nuestros colegas jóvenes en Kenia, pero sus esfuerzos y sus corazones le permitieron

alcanzar la puerta que se abrió. Mantén tu cabeza lo más alto, para que nunca se sepa cuando tu propia Daraja (que significa “puente” en Swahili) pueda notar tus esfuerzos y pueda llegar a ti.

Para ver el documental de WorldLink llamado *Donde Hay Cambio del Mundo: Una Escuela de Mujeres Jóvenes en Kenia*, visita a la página Web <http://peace.sandiego.edu>. Para aprender más sobre la Academia Daraja, visita a la página Web www.daraja-academy.org. Puedes tener un mayor conocimiento acerca de su historia y misión, y lo más importante, las diversas opciones que tú tienes para apoyar esta organización que se esfuerza por hacer de este mundo un lugar mejor.

Nuevos Americanos, Nuevas Vidas

Por Ruth Natalia Nevarez Zambada, IMAN

Desde el comienzo de la sesión “Nuevos Americanos, Nuevas Vidas,” todos en la audiencia lograron percatarse de la importancia del tópico. Walter Lam condujo el tema con gran motivación y de manera muy inspiradora. Lam es el fundador de la Alianza de Asistencia Africana (“Alliance for African Assistance”) donde mediante su experiencia de refugiado nos describe el propósito claro de esta organización.

En principio, durante su juventud, él experimentaba de manera variada decadencias que nadie como ser humano debe pasar. Formaba parte de una comunidad donde la vida no era segura en lo absoluto y las personas sobreabundaban, es por ello que carecían de medicamentos, doctores, además de existir un tremendo número de abusos y secuestros.

La vida de un refugiado yace a partir de una catástrofe o guerra. Viviendo en esas condiciones llevan consigo problemas internos, separación de familias, y profundas heridas que marcan la vida de millones de personas en todo el mundo. Las heridas después de una guerra son difíciles de superar o de sobrellevar.

Es por eso que Walter Lam, poco a poco, realizó esta organización por la cual ayuda a personas como algún día él fue ayudado, teniendo estas personas así, una ayuda, un soporte para empezar una nueva vida. La mayoría de las ocasiones, solo unas pocas personas se salvan de salir de esta situación. Pero si algunas personas se salvan, hay esperanza en ayudar a quienes no han podido ser salvados. Hay 50 millones de refugiados en países como Afganistán, Colombia, Sudan, Somalia, e Iraq y aproximadamente 2 millones de personas víctimas de la guerra. Aun hay esperanza si hay gente que se preste a ayudar a quienes son menos afortunados que nosotros.

“Existen cerca de 130 millones de jóvenes a nivel mundial que no están en el colegio y un 70% de ellos son niñas.”

~ La Academia Daraja

En Español



Los delegados entran en el Joan B. Kroc Instituto para la Paz y la Justicia para la primera sesión.

(Fotografía por Frances Chen)

Conocimiento del Internet

Por Iselle Guerrero González, CETYS Universidad

Hoy día el internet se ha convertido en un arma de doble filo para el mundo. Hace 40 años el internet no era una herramienta utilizada por la sociedad como lo es para las personas de los 1990s, y qué decir del año 2000 para acá. El internet se ha convertido en una necesidad y forma de comunicación muy importante.

En la 15ª conferencia anual para jóvenes de WorldLink, Mark Schulte, Coordinador Nacional de Educación para el Centro Pulitzer, dió una presentación sobre la crisis en la que se encuentra el periodismo hoy en día. Lamentablemente muchas compañías de periódicos están intentado mantenerse con mucha dificultad porque ahora la sociedad pasa la mayoría del tiempo consultando las noticias por internet. El 2009 fue un año terrible para el periodismo.

Schulte comenta sobre la eficacia de mantenernos informados acerca de lo que sucede en el mundo y nos invita a conocer más sobre las distintas situaciones con respecto a los derechos humanos. Mostró fotografías tomadas por jóvenes que se han involucrado en los problemas globales y decidieron dedicar su trabajo y vida a exponer las violaciones a los derechos y ayudar de cualquier manera posible.

Una de las fotografías que enseñó trataba de una niña de no más de 12 años sentada a un lado de un hombre de 40. La imagen lo decía todo. La niña y el hombre habían celebrado su boda. La reportera que escribió acerca del tema de las bodas de niñas "Child Brides" tuvo contacto directo con las niñas en India y por medio de la Web pudo compartir la historia y fotografías con el mundo.

Schulte propuso a todos los estudiantes a ser indagadores y emprendedores ya que cada vez que utilizamos "Facebook" o "Twitter" estamos reportando miles de cosas que suceden a nuestro alrededor. Schulte comenta "puedes utilizar el tiempo que estas en 'Facebook' y 'Twitter' para hacer un cambio;" comenzar con cosas pequeñas, en nuestro barrio, localidad, ciudad, etc. Y para acelerar y compartir información rápidamente existe www.pulitzercenter.org, donde jóvenes pueden compartir su preocupación o información todos los días de la semana a toda hora.

Toda situación que Schulte menciona es polémica en el mundo. Nos invita a ser parte del cambio a expresar lo que muchos no dicen por miedo. El mundo está entrando en una nueva era. Una era regida por el avance tecnológico. Una era donde la sociedad no puede subsistir sin estar en contacto con la tecnología. El internet le permite realizar esto. Es una herramienta que apenas está en pañales, y que continuará evolucionando y sorprendiéndonos en el futuro.

Inspirar Cambios en el Mundo

Por Gabriela Hartman, The Bishop's School

Traducido por Nicole Sadowsky, The Bishop's School

Como directora del Departamento del Programa de Apoyo de Calidad del Servicios de Socorro Católico (CRS), Dorrett Byrd ha brindado ayuda técnica a muchos programas del CRS. Byrd, nacida en Kingston, Jamaica, tiene una experiencia particular en asuntos relacionados con los africanos. Byrd ha diseñado y administrado muchos programas con varias fundaciones y centros, incluyendo la Fundación Africana para el Desarrollo, con el fin de ayudar a aliviar los problemas sociales y económicos en África.

Durante su sesión informativa, Byrd se enfatizó en las empresas irresponsables y el impacto que tienen sobre los problemas de trabajo infantil, tráfico de personas, esclavitud y daños ambientales. De acuerdo con Byrd, tener empresas responsables es crucial en el desarrollo de un país. Los empleadores deben ser conscientes socialmente y ayudar a prevenir o a eliminar las posibilidades de que los trabajadores sean afectados negativamente o perjudicados por sus compañías.

Sin embargo, muchas veces las empresas no piensan en las condiciones ambientales y de trabajo de sus trabajadores. Desafortunadamente, el trabajo infantil se ha convertido en una realidad lamentable para muchos niños. Reducir el predominio del trabajo infantil en el mundo ha sido el principal objetivo para Byrd. Por medio de proyectos tales como "Mis Derechos Tienen Importancia," ella confía que el mundo acabará con el trabajo infantil. Así, los niños no tendrán que trabajar en condiciones injustas ni a la fuerza para poder mantener a sus familias.

Actos de esclavitud y de tráfico de personas han prevalecido por causa de nuestra generación. En su discurso, Byrd señala que hay más esclavos en el mundo actualmente que en cualquier otro momento de la historia, hasta ahora. Las víctimas de la esclavitud son sometidas a graves violaciones de derechos humanos diariamente. No obstante, varios países han empezado a enfrentar y a combatir el problema de esclavitud, así como también han ayudado a los sobrevivientes del tráfico de personas. Por ejemplo, según Byrd, debido a que existen plantaciones y ranchos brasileños con 25,000 - 40,000 esclavos, Brasil decidió presentar un pacto para abolir la esclavitud.

Las empresas irresponsables también han provocado muchos daños contra el medio ambiente sin pensar en el impacto que la compañía tiene sobre la naturaleza. Byrd dió un ejemplo acerca de la falta de consciencia que tenía una empresa sobre el medio ambiente. Ella explicó la destrucción de un conjunto de manglares en ciénegas de agua dulce y salada en

el Delta de Níger. También habló de las empresas petroleras y de construcciones de represas negligentes que contaminaron tanto el suelo como las aguas subterráneas, afectando negativamente la salud de los residentes locales.

Byrd enfatizó que cada individuo tiene una responsabilidad social para ayudar al mundo. Mediante el apoyo de las leyes y el cumplimiento de las normas, el trabajo infantil, el tráfico de personas, la esclavitud y los daños ambientales pueden llegar a disminuirse. Con esfuerzos de educación y de apoyo se pueden informar a otros acerca de estas problemáticas. Al apoyar a las empresas justas y al verificar las cadenas de suministros, la juventud puede ayudar a abolir en el mundo estas prácticas empresariales injustas y erróneas que afectan a la humanidad negativamente. La raza humana siempre debe promover el desarrollo integral humano ya que cualquier ciudadano "tiene el derecho de vivir su vida plenamente para un desarrollo completo."

Excluido

Por Nicole Sadowsky, The Bishop's School

Imagina que el país donde tú naciste no apoye tus decisiones. Imagina que por causa de esto no tienes otra opción más que dejar a tus amigos, familia y hogar. Tony y Tomás tuvieron que hacer esto.

Tony, un americano, y Tomás, un alemán, son una pareja homosexual binacional. Con el fin de estar juntos, Tomás vivió en los Estados Unidos con visas de estudiante y turista que solo duraron cierto tiempo. Como se indicó en la sesión "Excluida: Luchas Contra la Discriminación," "Las parejas heterosexuales reciben más de 1,000 derechos federales cuando están casados legalmente. Los homosexuales y lesbianas americanas son excluidos de estos derechos." Debido a la ley federal de los Estados Unidos, Tony y Tomás tenían que tomar una importante decisión: permanecer juntos o romper la relación.

El permanecer juntos implicaría dejar los Estados Unidos para vivir en el país natal de Tomás, Alemania, ya que este país concede a las parejas homosexuales casadas el derecho a la ciudadanía para su cónyuge. Ellos partieron con rumbo a Alemania, más sin embargo no les gustó las experiencias que vivieron allá. Ellos se convirtieron en "nómadas contemporáneos," como se llaman a sí mismos, viajando por todo el mundo hasta que EE. UU. decidiera otorgarle a Tony y a Tomás "el derecho de un cónyuge extranjero a emigrar y a vivir en los Estados Unidos."

Lisa Nunn conoció a Tony y a Tomás cuando ella se matriculó en el programa de postgrado de sociología de la Universidad de San Diego (USD). En la escuela de postgrado, Nunn comenzó a filmar el documental *Excluido*, que está disponible de forma gratuita en www.excludedthemovie.com. Este documental relata los problemas que Tomás y Tony tuvieron con las leyes federales de EE. UU. y la injusticia de ser excluidos de los 1,000 derechos que las parejas heterosexuales reciben después del matrimonio.

Antes del documental *Excluido*, Nunn estaba interesada en promover los derechos de la comunidad lesbiana, homosexual, bisexual y transgénero (LGBT), pero no sabía cómo tomar un papel activo. Al hacer el documental, Nunn expresó, "Me permitió tomar una posición política [sobre el tema] y un papel como aliada significativa." Un aliado es un individuo que forma parte de un grupo mayoritario, cuyo objetivo es ayudar a este grupo que ha sido oprimido.

Nunn señala diversas maneras en que los jóvenes pueden participar como aliados de la comunidad LGBT. Sería maravilloso si cada persona joven hiciera un documental, sin embargo esta no es la realidad. Nunn discutió la importancia de comenzar o de unirse a la Organización de Alianza Homo y Heterosexual en las escuelas, o de mantenerse actualizado por correo electrónico de parte de organizaciones, incluyendo la Campaña de los Derechos Humanos (www.hrc.org). También, ella habló de la importancia de la lucha contra el uso de las palabras "gay" y "lesbiana" como sinónimos de estúpido. Nunn motiva a cada persona a vigilar unos a otros y a recordar a cada persona que utilizar frases como "eso es 'gay'" puede ser dañino e irrespetuoso. Nunn concluyó diciendo: "No te rías de las bromas 'gay' porque no son agradables" – es una simple, pero significativa declaración.

"Puedes utilizar el tiempo que estas en 'Facebook' o 'Twitter' para hacer un cambio."

~ Mark Schulte, Coordinador Nacional de Educación para el Centro Pulitzer

In Closing...

Thank You, Donors!

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The WorldLink Program provides students from all different backgrounds the chance to engage in learning and discussion through its year-round events and activities, at no cost. The opportunity to engage with all sorts of youth would not be possible without the generous support of the WorldLink donors!

~ Katherine Guerrero, High Tech High International

To learn how you can make a contribution to the WorldLink Program, please contact:

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The Protection... (Continued from page 11)

By Diego Breton and Eric Nicolas, IMAN and Canyon Crest Academy

He then explained the role that Joseph Kony, the leader of Uganda's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), played in perpetrating one of Africa's most destructive conflicts. Finck explained that even though Joseph Kony enslaved nearly 60,000 child soldiers and killed many thousands more, he and his victims remain nearly unknown in the United States and other western countries.

Directing attention to the theme of this year's Youth Town Meeting, Finck explained, "The right to be human is, first and foremost, the right to be known." He has worked in Uganda, Congo and the Central African Republic. After visiting several communities and receiving long lists of missing children that Kony had curiously and forcibly taken as his, Finck decided to join the Invisible Children (IC) organization in San Diego. In Africa, IC works with individuals that have been affected by the LRA. Their programs provide plans for the improvement of schools and education, as well as financial aid.

In the United States, IC encourages the government and the youth to raise its voices and bring Kony to the public spotlight. As stated on their website, they want us to "do more than just watch." Despite the heavy topic, Adam Finck's message was one of empowerment and hope. He pointed out that as individuals, we have the power to cause change. By choosing to take action and support causes we feel are just, we can make the world a better place.

The final speaker of the panel was high school senior Nina Church, co-founder of Nika Water – a company that donates 100% of its profits to raise awareness and initiate clean water projects in impoverished countries. She began with the simple question, "What would you do with a free afternoon?" Though many of us have the power to do anything we want because of the country we live in, the situation is very different for millions of people around the world.

The main goal of Nika Water is to raise awareness because, while fresh water is something that most of us take for granted, many zones all over the world consider it a luxury. As expressed by Church, lack of freedom stems from discrimination, intolerance and injustice. Thus, Nika works towards providing clean water to these regions and end the poverty cycle, all done while staying eco-friendly.



Nina Church speaks during the Closing Plenary at WorldLink's Youth Town Meeting.

(Photo by Victoria Acosta)

Finding your passion is everything she advised. For Church, this passion was helping alleviate water problems in the developing world and creating a business model that could help promote social change. By channeling her inspiration, Church and her family created Nika Water, turning a dream of making a difference into a reality.

Church spoke with a fervent drive that made the crowd cheer more than once. They cheered not only because she shared her company's statistics and on-going impact, but also because she took us through an emotional journey. Her words were rousing and touching, and she invited us to take the first step towards something great, for "it's ordinary people, who do extraordinary things," calling on every student in the room to follow their own passion and take action.

Together, the speakers of the Closing Plenary helped summarize the message of this year's Youth Town Meeting: the protection of human rights can be difficult, but it should not be ignored. Youth can make a difference by working together and choosing to stand up for what is right. Until then, the problems of today will remain.

Everything heard and learned is not meant to stay on the USD campus. It needs to be planted and nourished within us and not fade with time. In the end, progress will occur. Not because of those who are passive observers to the injustices of our time, but rather those who make the decision to put an end to oppression, discrimination and intolerance. As youth move forward into the future, it is our responsibility to find a sense of unity through the diversity that makes us human. This new generation must cherish the ties that hold us together instead of dwelling on what keeps us apart.

Announcing WorldLink's
16th Annual Youth Town Meeting!

"The Power and Influence
of Media"

Thursday, January 24th, 2013

Save the date!

2012 WorldLink Press

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A special thanks to the IPJ and wonderful volunteers for helping make the 15th Youth Town Meeting possible!

"The right to be human is, first and foremost, the right to be known." ~ Adam Finck, *Invisible Children*

Student Voices



Photo by Natasha Thomson



Photo by Frances Chen



Photo by Victor Garcia



Photo by Casia Walsh



Photo by Frances Chen

This year's Youth Town Meeting inspired my classmates and me to start a club at school built on the ideas we got from the conference!
 – 11th grade student, Sweetwater High School

After attending the Youth Town Meeting, I have a much greater understanding on global issues, and a huge appreciation for efforts to help and solve problems. WorldLink calls for action and follows through.
 – 11th grade student, Sunset High School

Today was filled with inspiration and motivation for me to continue in my path in trying to make a difference.
 – 12th grade student, Escondido High School

It can be a great challenge for us (as teenagers) to do something different, to take the first step, but WorldLink gives an opportunity to involve teenagers with global issues.
 – 12th grade student, IMAN

Being able to join other students from different schools, who have some concern about what goes on in the world makes me feel like I'm not the only person who cares. One person can make a difference, but it's a stronger power when it's more than just one person, and I felt that power when I sat down in that room and listened to everyone speak. It was a beautiful experience and I'm glad I was able to be a part of it!
 – 11th grade student, Lincoln High School

Being close and interacting with students of different ages and cultures made me feel that if we really want to accomplish something or make a difference in society, we need to join together and forget the differences between us.
 – Student, Federal Lázaro Cárdenas

I felt like my voice was being heard when I was allowed to offer my opinion and ask questions, especially since adults are usually involved in global issues. It was great to be able to interact with the speakers and have actual conversations about the issues we all have to face.
 – 11th grade student, MAAC Community Charter School

It was an honor for me to not only learn about what other adolescents are accomplishing in the world, but also to be able to participate in a conference alongside them.
 – 11th grade student, San Diego Early/Middle College



Photo by Natasha Thomson



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