

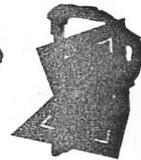
"IMAGINE HOW DIFFERENT THE WORLD WOULD BE IF



Imagine never having to go to school!
 No homework.
 No tests.
 No papers or reading assignments.
 Never having to give a presentation in front of the class.

There are about 140 million children around the world who don't have to worry at all about these kinds of things that are for us a regular part of going to school. Instead, these children go to work, often starting when they are only five years old. Some of them are even considered slaves. They can work as much as 20 hours a day, 7 days a week, with no vacation, no summer break, no holidays! Many of them suffer from lung and eye diseases or other sicknesses because they have worked such long hours. And the children who make mistakes, or who try to run away, are beaten.

One boy, 10 year-old Hamid of Sudan, says, "If I don't work, my family will starve as my father is sick. My younger brother works in a tea stall, too."



Did you know that in some parts of Asia and Africa, children are taken from their families and sold to other people? This makes them slaves. They then have to work full time weaving carpets, making glass, or doing some other type of hard work.

When Craig Kielburger from Toronto, Canada, found out about this situation, he didn't think it was fair. So he started *Free the Children*, an organization that has grown so big it now exists in more than

FREE THE CHILDREN
 WANTS KIDS EVERYWHERE
 TO KNOW THEY HAVE THE POWER
 TO CHANGE THE WORLD.



Craig loves to visit with other kids.

CHILDREN EVERYWHERE COULD

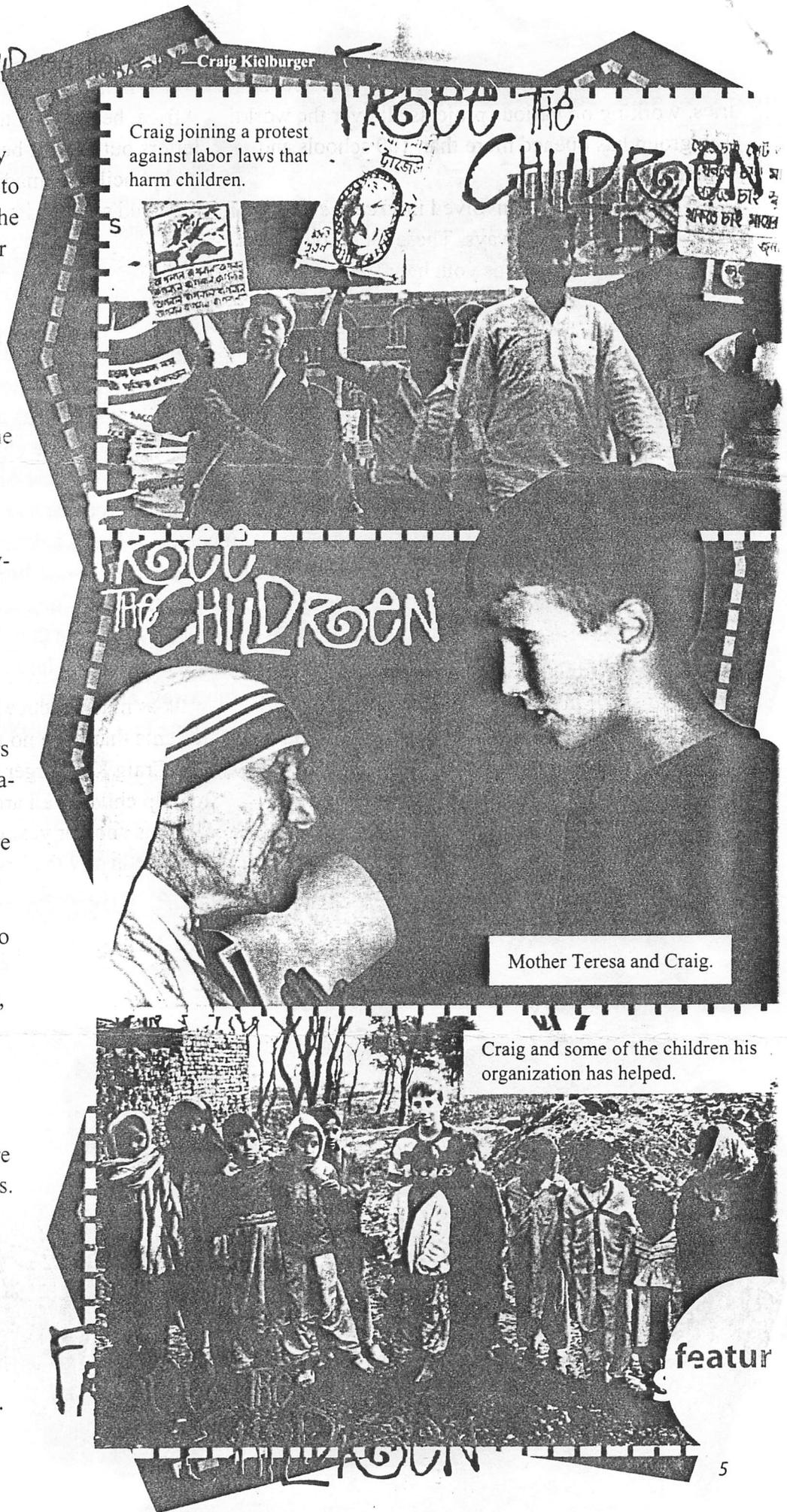
20 countries. Although he's only 17 years old, Craig has traveled to more than 30 countries around the world. With his sandy blond hair and warm manner, Craig has touched many other people's lives. He speaks to lots of children and adults, both rich and poor, during these travels. He talks to them about improving the living conditions for children in their country.

"Imagine how different the world would be if children everywhere could be heard," Craig often says.

Craig first became interested in helping children when he was about 12 years old. One day he opened a newspaper to search for the comics. Instead of the comic page, his eye caught a headline in another part of the paper. He read about the murder of a child in Pakistan who had been sold as a slave and forced to work as a carpet maker, weaving carpets by hand. Children are prized for this type of work because their hands are small. They are bought and sold and stolen by people, and they are usually forced to work long hours. Craig decided he wanted to do something to help these kids. That's when he decided to form *Free the Children*. He had his friends help by signing petitions to send to government leaders speaking up for children's rights.

Craig Kielburger

Craig joining a protest against labor laws that harm children.



Mother Teresa and Craig.

Craig and some of the children his organization has helped.

featur

Free the Children now has groups in 27 countries, working on various projects all over the world! The group has opened more than 100 schools and centers for children.

The young people involved in *Free the Children* help in many different ways. These kids, some of whom are the same age as you, help free children from poverty and abuse by speaking out about the rights of children. They talk to government officials, teachers, business leaders, and other kids. They also write letters to tell as many people as possible about the bad things that have happened to children in some countries.

Craig's organization also helps to free children by talking about education. They want all kids to have the opportunity to go to school. Education gives children the possibility of a better future. *Free the Children* also helps families earn money by providing them with sewing machines, cows, and small machines so that parents can work to survive. This way many children can leave the factories to go to school.

When Craig visited schools in one part of Africa, he saw that the children had to make their letters out of mud because they didn't have paper and pencils. He made sure the children in this school received school kits which contained school supplies just like you use.

Free the Children wants kids to believe in themselves. It wants children everywhere to know they have the power to change the world through their action. It wants to help them see how they can make the world a better place in which to live.

Craig speaks to all sorts of important people about problems kids have to face in poor nations. But he likes to talk to the children most of all. In one small classroom in Israel, Craig asked the kids simple questions like how far they walk to school, how they were affected by recent storms and what they hope to be when they grow up. He was shocked to hear that some of the kids in that group walk as much as three hours to school and return home to tents that have no running water or electricity.

Craig Kielburger wants to do as much as he can to help children all around the world. However, he still has another year of high school left. When he's not working with *Free the Children*, he likes to do lots of the same things you do. He enjoys going to movies, listening to music and riding bicycles

with his friends. Craig's mother says, "Craig is level-headed and a great speaker, but every child has a talent or a gift to use." □

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Help Free the Children:
Send Health Kits to children in
Africa, Pakistan and India. It's
easy! In a plastic bag pack a
toothbrush, toothpaste, bandaids, a
washcloth, a comb, and a bar of
soap. Send the bags to:
Free the Children
1750 Steeles Ave. W,
Suite 218
Concord,
Ontario
CANADA
L4K 2L7

Craig and the Dalai Lama share the same dream for peace in the world.

My Friend