

Statement by Free the Children:

As the Executive Director of Free the Children, I would like to thank The Tyee for the opportunity to officially respond to the opinion piece from Alison Atkinson entitled “A Teachers’ Critique of We Day”.

I would also like to thank The Tyee for acknowledging that there were a number of substantial factual errors by Ms. Atkinson when this posting was first placed on line. It is our understanding that at least one, and possibly two, separate subsequent edits, by the editorial staff of The Tyee, have been done on this piece after its original posting on Oct 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013 because of the significance of these errors. Moreover, an official acknowledgement of these facts has now been reflected, by the editorial staff of The Tyee, at the beginning of this written piece.

We may respectfully disagree with Ms. Atkinson on many of the points raised. However, our reason for writing this official response is to simply draw the attention of the reader, to be aware, of the significance of the errors in the posting by the author and the number of incorrect assertions which were raised. We do not seek, within this forum, to list the remaining incorrect statements in order to undertake in an on-line debate. However, what has become clear is that due to the number of changes and prominence of the editorial revisions, which had to be made *after* the original posting, the author failed to undertake basic research before publically sharing incorrect assertions.

Free the Children welcomes feedback from all stakeholders. We always strive to better our programing to serve the students with whom we have the opportunity to work as we seek a systemic shift in positive civic youth engagement in Canada. As Executive Director, I will be proactively reaching out to Ms. Atkinson to better understand her concerns, provide clarity on a number of these issues, and see what we can learn as we continue to shape our programs. We consider all feedback to be valuable. Moreover, if any other educators have suggestions, whether positive re-enforcement or suggestions for learnings, of our programs, we welcome them to contact our office. I would be pleased to enter into a conversation.

Thank you to the support of all educators who participated in We Day. We are constantly humbled by the passion and engagement of your remarkable students.

Scott Baker  
Executive Director