

# Conference looking at social barriers welcomes children's rights wunderkind

**Speech by Craig Kielburger.** Conference organizers say breaking social barriers can give boost to mental-health therapy and community work

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"We can do small things with great love." It was a message children's rights activist Craig Kielburger delivered at the Winds of Change conference at the University of Ottawa Thursday to an adoring crowd.

The theme of the conference was social justice and Kielburger, the keynote speaker, spoke about his work as co-founder of Me to We, a for-profit organization that provides socially responsible products and donates half its profits to Free the Children, a non-profit also

founded by Kielburger.

Free the Children was founded in 1995 when Kielburger wanted to expose child labour to North Americans. The organization has an Adopt a Village program that provides education, health care, clean water and sanitation in rural communities in seven countries around the world.

Free the Children also hosts an annual event called We Day where youth are asked to commit to taking on a local and global action for change over the course of a year. Students are rewarded with the event, which features activists, speakers and musical performances.

Cristelle Audet, one of the conference's organizers and an assistant professor at the University of Ottawa's faculty of education, said Winds of Change partners wanted to take a closer look at social injustice.

"We have to recognize the individual's problems may come from a barrier within society," she said.



Craig Kielburger poses for a photo with Metro after his keynote speech at the Winds of Change conference at the University of Ottawa Thursday.  
NOURAN ABDELLATIF/FOR METRO

# Mayor says he wants to keep recreation-fee freeze



Mayor Jim Watson JESSICA SMITH/METRO

A local "hockey mom" got a scoop in Thursday's online chat with Mayor Jim Watson — who said he will ask council to freeze recreation fees in the 2013 budget.

This month's online chat was hosted by Metro.

"I know recreation fees have been frozen for a little while now. Is that going to continue?" the woman, who signed in as "Linda Simpson," asked. "It's been helpful as a hockey mom since, as you may or may not know, hockey can be prohibitively expensive."

Watson said Ottawa's

recreation fees have been among the highest in the province and have been frozen in the last two budgets.

Continuing the freeze in 2013 "will allow our fees to come in line with other major cities and make sports and cultural programs more affordable for parents and grandparents," he wrote.

"This is my first announcement for the 2013 budget right here online!" he added.

Watson took questions on a wide range of issues.

One Metro reader asked via Facebook about his opposition to having supervised in-

jection sites in Ottawa — and for him to "cite sources."

"My first priority is treatment, and that's why I've worked alongside people like (former police chief) Vern White and (United Way CEO) Michael Allen to raise funds to get a youth residential treatment centre up and running in the west end, and later this year we open a smaller site in Vanier for francophone young people," he said.

The mayor also took a number of questions about the western light-rail route, including about potentially running the route along the

National Capital Commission land of the Ottawa River Parkway and from people concerned about the potential for the train to run through Byron Park.

"I want everyone including the NCC to keep an open mind and allow the environmental assessment and our Transportation Master Plan to run its course before we make any final decision on a route," he wrote.

JESSICA SMITH/METRO  
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