

“Tie One On” for Child Labor

CHILD and Iowa City

Organizers: Children Helping Innocent Laborers Democratically (CHILD)

Date: Thursday, June 17, 2004

Time: 1:00 p.m.

Place: Iowa City, City Hall (and later back parking lot)

For immediate release

Tomorrow several elementary students will tie *purple ribbons* to Iowa City vehicles at City Hall at 1:00 p.m. to celebrate the recently proclaimed **CHILD Month**.

Children Helping Innocent Laborers Democratically (CHILD) is a student volunteer group composed of 25+ 6th graders who just graduated from Lucas Elementary. They have worked tirelessly to raise awareness in Iowa City about child labor around the world. This student led group was formed last year by a few 6th grade students at Lucas Elementary, and has grown to include approximately 30 students from Lucas, Hoover and Southeast Junior High. It is organized into four committees: Political, Education, Outreach and Fundraising.

The CHILD *Political Committee* approached City council to collaborate with the City of Iowa City. Working with the mayor and city council, they came up with a **child labor proclamation**.

On June 1st, Mayor Lehman issued the CHILD **proclamation declaring the month of June 2004 "CHILD month"**.

As part of their awareness raising efforts, the CHILD *Education Committee* created educational *bookmarks* attached to *purple ribbons*. One side of the book mark outlines problems associated with Child Labor; the other offers strategies to address child labor.

The purple ribbons attached to the book mark are intended to symbolize the 246,000,000 child laborers around the world, and raise awareness in our community about the plight of these children.

The bookmark bears a poem written by Luan Heywood, a founding member of CHILD that reads:

Our Bodies, Our Minds and our Voices;
Child Labor takes away all of our Choices.
Tie this ribbon to your car;
Send CHILD's message wide and far.

Tomorrow the CHILD leaders will celebrate our Iowa City CHILD proclamation by decorating city vehicles with their symbolic purple ribbons. The purple ribbons will remain on city vehicles until the end of July.

Some other efforts made by CHILD members to raise awareness about child labor include:

- Recruiting many students to the premier of "Stolen Childhoods", a documentary about child labor in seven countries
- Delivering presentations in the community
- Drafting articles for Prairie Progressive (local publications)
- Producing a Public Access Television show on child labor
- Attending "The Flute Player," a documentary film about the life and work of Arn Chorn-Pond, a Cambodian child soldier survivor
- Preparing 4,000 educational bookmarks (donated by Staples)
- Briefing the Iowa youth delegate to the Children's World Congress on Child Labor, Florence, Italy, May 2004
- Creating the artistic design for the t-shirts of US Delegation to the Children's World Congress
- Sending child labor platform questionnaires to US Presidential candidates
- Attending State Legislative Forums and raising questions about state purchasing practices related to child labor
- Hosting CHILD parties featuring educational documentaries and discussion about child labor
- Organizing weekly meetings and recruiting volunteers from the community to present and organize with students
- Hosting a Thai Flavors Community Day for Child Labor
- Organizing a school-wide bake sale

Ten members of CHILD were recognized by the Iowa City Human Rights Commission with a Human Rights Award. They have raised more than \$500.00 in funds and \$200 in donated services. They have reached countless citizens, UI Students, students, local elected officials, and other institutions in Iowa City with their education and outreach campaigns.

City of Iowa City PROCLAMATION

Whereas, outsourcing takes jobs away from the local community and money spent at local businesses stays in Iowa City;

Whereas, local businesses support community events and civic organizations;

Whereas, the US Government has not ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;

Whereas, there are 246 million child laborers between the ages of 5 and 17, many of which displace American workers;

Whereas, 179 million children are trapped in the worst forms of child labor, including trafficking, forced & bonded labor, hazardous work, armed conflict, and illicit activities;

Whereas, 110 million children are not attending schools, and two thirds of them are girls;

Now, Therefore Be It Resolved, that the children at Lucas Elementary have formed together to encourage people to buy locally and domestically to counteract child labor;

Now, Therefore, I, Ernest W. Lehman, Mayor of the City of Iowa City, Iowa, do hereby **proclaim June 2004 to be Child – Children Helping Innocent Laborers Democratically – Month.**

Signed in Iowa City, Iowa,

This 1st day of June, 2004.

Mayor