

BREAK THE CHAINS



PREVENTION EDUCATION, YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AND LEADERSHIP PROGRAM



ONE CHILD EXPLOITED IS ONE CHILD TOO MANY.

Dear Educator,

Modern-day slavery is a booming business **in Canada** and touches every corner of the planet. An estimated **40.3 million people are enslaved**, and human trafficking constitutes a \$150 billion dollar industry - the second most profitable criminal industry. A modern day slave may be a 13 year-old girl groomed on social media and forced to service customers during lunch breaks or after school in motel rooms along the Highway 401 corridor in Ontario; an 11 year-old girl lured by the false promises of working in restaurants in the mines of the Amazon and forced to service men; or a 15 year-old boy forced to provide sexual services in the tourist resorts of Thailand, where the local police accept bribes to turn a blind eye. Born into it, coerced and/or tricked, these child slaves are purchased and sold as commodities, degraded, tortured, manipulated not to escape, and forced to work under the authority of violence. While the nature of slavery has changed it is still very much alive.

Child sex trafficking remains as one of the most rampant and vile forms of modern-day slavery. Victims are usually between the ages of 9 and 17, but some are as young as 5 years old. As online connectivity expands, so does the ability to groom children; produce, access, and share child sexual abuse materials, find like-minded offenders and sell children; and reduce the risk of detection.

In Canada, **it is one of the fastest growing crimes**, but Canadians--especially our children-- are unaware of its prevalence and ill-equipped to protect themselves. They are being recruited and trafficked on social media and at public places such as malls, bus stops, restaurants, parties, and even schools. In fact,

93% of sex trafficking victims in Canada are Canadian citizens. **28%** of police-reported human trafficking in Canada involved victims under the age of 18.

In Ontario, the average age of recruitment is

13 yrs. old

At OneChild, we believe that an informed child is very difficult to traffick. We also believe that when children are taught empathy and to hone their leadership skills, as well as given the opportunity to develop solutions; our chances of eradicating this problem increase significantly.

I invite you to enlist your school or organization in our Break the Chains Prevention Education, Youth Empowerment and Leadership Program and be part of the solution.



Sincerely,

Cheryl Perera

Founder & President, OneChild



About OneChild



OneChild is a multiple award-winning Canadian charity and the first in the world to empower a **youth-led movement against the sexual exploitation of children (SEC)** through prevention education, advocacy, survivor care, and survivor empowerment.

OneChild was founded by **Order of Ontario Appointee Cheryl Perera**, at age 16, after learning about the sexual exploitation of children, while researching for a project in her **Grade 10 Civics class**. Spurred to action to protect her peers, Cheryl embarked on a fact-finding mission on child exploitation to her native Sri Lanka and consulted with children, social workers, NGO workers, and law enforcement. Enraged by the atrocity, and realizing that the land of her own heritage, was a perilous trap for nearly 40,000 children forced into prostitution, and wanting to

get an insider's look into the child sex trade, she partnered with the National Child Protection Authority and played the **main role of the decoy-- a 15 year-old trafficked child-- in an undercover STING operation which ended in the apprehension of a 40+ child sex perpetrator.**

Since its founding in 2005, the organization has built a track record of success and positively impacted the lives of **79,000 child survivors**, at-risk children, social workers, law enforcement, judges etc. in **11 countries**. **Our first educational and motivational speaking tour offered in 2011 reached 31,000 students in 76+ schools and has been acclaimed by students and educators, alike. Since then, our presentations have reached students in 230 public, Catholic, private and alternative schools across 12 school boards in Ontario and has extended to the United States. Our program has reached several youth-oriented organizations as well.**

OneChild has advocated at the local, national, and international level including at the United Nations and World Economic Forum, sharing the stage with Heads of State, United Nations Secretary-Generals, and Nobel Peace Prize Laureates. Our work has been featured in the Wall Street Journal, Toronto Star, Globe & Mail, CBC, Al-Jazeera, CNN, Financial Times of London etc. For our efforts in turning the tables on child sexual exploitation in Canada and abroad, we have been named one of the Top 5 Canadian Charities Run by Young Professionals, and received over **28 honours** including 2017 L'Oreal Canada Women of Worth Award; 2016 World Economic Forum Award; 2006 Canada's Most Powerful Women: Top 100 Award; 2006 World of Children Founder's Award; and 2005 Canada's Top 20 Under 20, among many others.



About The Program



The Break the Chains Prevention Education, Youth Empowerment and Leadership Program is a program consisting of a **1) Speaking Tour** **2) Action-Planning Workshop** **3) Youth Advisory Squad**.

Facilitated by a Youth Speaker, the program aims to:

- Raise awareness on the prevalence of child sex trafficking in Canada and around the world, and educate students on how to protect themselves
- Invest in character education and build empathy among students
- Develop leadership and global citizenship skills to advocate for lasting change in their schools, communities, and beyond

Audience

The program is suitable for children ages 12-17, however the Tour and Workshop will be tailored to younger audiences when appropriate.

Cost

The Program is offered free of charge to schools.

Curriculum Connections

Presentations support the Ministry of Education's strategies for Student Success, Safe Schools, and Equity and Inclusive Education. Curriculum connections include citizenship education, family life, healthy relationships, well-being, and character education.



About The Program (continued)



The Tour

Format

Presentations are typically 45 minutes long, followed by an optional Q & A session. Due to COVID-19, we have adapted the Tour to a virtual format, making it accessible to youth across the country.

What will students learn?

Presentations weave powerful stories of survivors with gripping statistics and information on the following themes:

- The scope of child sex trafficking in Canada around the world and its connection to modern-slavery
- Tactics used to groom and traffick children
- Vulnerable demographics from an intersectional lens, while also highlighting it can happen to anyone
- Root causes such as gender inequity and systemic racism and other push factors such as poor mental health
- Pop culture and harmful stereotypes, norms, and attitudes society
- Safety tips
- How to report cases and resources available in the community
- Laws in place to protect children and guarantee their right to civic action on the topic
- Empathy and tangible ways to take action in their schools and communities ie. awareness-raising, fundraising, advocacy, volunteering

Trauma-Informed Framework

We are aware that there may be students in the audience dealing with past or current struggles in this area or related areas. We seek to create a trauma-informed framework that reduces triggering students. To this end, we aim to offer trauma counsellors during and after presentations, as well as use language and visuals that respect the reality of students' experiences.

Action-Planning Workshop

A 2-3 hour workshop offered for 10-30 student leaders to explore the topic further, develop leadership skills, and plan actions to combat child sex trafficking. This aspect of the program can be offered virtually.

Youth Advisory Squad (YAS)

Students who listen to the Tour presentation will be invited to apply for a position on the YAS. Through a series of workshops that spans over 10 months, selected youth will receive training in leadership, public speaking and advocacy, to present on the topic within their community and run an awareness raising or fundraising activity in their school. This program takes place outside school hours, on weekends. Upon their successful completion of their term, each student will receive a \$500 scholarship.

Currently, this aspect of the program is only available to Toronto-based students.



BRYNNE THOMAS

Break the Chains Speaker



Ever since she was a child, Brynne has been an advocate for those around her who needed help. Whether it was standing up to bullies on the playground or organizing fundraisers on behalf of her school, Brynne rose to the challenge. Her advocacy and leadership skills were first recognized when she received the Principal's Award for Student Leadership at only eleven years old.

Through a school assignment in high school, Brynne learned about sexual violence, and vowed to support survivors and help put an end to the issue. She gave presentations on the topic, including a TED Talk, earning her first place at the Lawrence Park Collegiate Junior Speech Competition. For her compassion and service in high school, Brynne received a number of awards, including the Trinity College School's Hugel Prize for World Issues, and the Pat Moss Society Award for "Youth Serving Youth".

At McGill University, Brynne became involved with McGill's Office for Sexual Violence, Response, Support, and Education. In this role, she facilitated various workshops for the McGill community and offered trauma-informed support for survivors of sexual violence. She has received extensive training in active listening, crisis intervention and trauma support. Four years later, Brynne graduated with distinction and returned to Toronto, Ontario.



Viewing OneChild as a natural extension of her passion for advocacy and supporting trauma survivors, she jumped at the opportunity to bring her knowledge, passion, and dynamism to demonstrate that no matter how small you are, you can make a world of a difference.

Student Testimonials



"I learned about OneChild from a presentation at school that I found really passionate and touching. Someone else could have said the exact same speech, but am sure they would lack the passion, and without it, I strongly believe I wouldn't be as inspired to be a part of this big organization that's only looking to get bigger and bigger, month after month. As Cheryl went on and on, my ears and mind opened wider and wider as I began to wonder how she could have managed to accomplish all that and still be on a haunt to get more carers for child exploitation."

– Student, Central Toronto Academy

"Cheryl Perera actually came to my school during an event called Think Fast and gave a speech that absolutely moved me to tears. It was BEYOND effective. Every person in that room was harnessed by her words of injustice, power, and abuse; all with an underlying message of a possibility of hope, freedom and healing. Her speech and the international sex trade was the talk of the halls for the next few days, and even people who hadn't attended Think Fast had heard of her and OneChild's message."

**– Student, Jean Vanier C.S.S.,
Richmond Hill**

"Thank you so much for the lovely presentation. It means a lot to me personally, since I am a victim as well. It never went far, but abuse is abuse. Please continue to help these kids. Thank you."

– Student, Toronto

"The presentation that Colin gave at St. Marguerite D'Youville really left a mark. It left all of us feeling so privileged and aware of the issues going on. We learned about how kids get trafficked, survivors' stories, and how OneChild helps survivors. The presentation made a lot of people passionate to put an end to child sex trafficking. While listening to the speech, I was in absolute awe that this happens to kids my age and the whole day I felt bothered and felt that I needed to do something. The speech truly opened our school's eyes to the horrific things that go on and I feel very happy to have had the opportunity to listen to it."

– Student, St. Marguerite d'Youville CSS

"Before Katie came to our school, I was clueless about the issue. I wasn't aware of the scale of child exploitation, and how much it impacted children across the world both physically and emotionally. When Katie came to our school she brought with her knowledge of this problem and presented it in an engaging way that I think really resonated with us afterwards. Her presentation really inspired the students, me especially, to go that extra mile and make a change in our school community to hopefully help children who are in this problem. After the presentation I walked out feeling really passionate about contributing to the cause, thanks to Katie's presentation! Though I'm currently in grade 9, Katie's presentation really pushed me to start brainstorming ideas on how our school community can make a difference. For instance, from her presentation, I've noted many methods that can be used."

**– Grade 9 Student,
Francis Libermann Catholic H.S.**

Staff Testimonials



"We would love to have your organization come out to our school again this year as the presentation was so well received by our students and the message continues to be extremely important at this time. We are also interested in organizing dates for your other presentations geared to staff and parents too. I look forward to connecting with you so that we can schedule this for our next semester. Thank you once again for your outreach."

**– Guidance Counsellor,
St. Marguerite d'Youville CSS**

"I had the opportunity to listen to Cheryl deliver a lecture to secondary school students in 2011. She captured the attention of all students in attendance at the onset of her presentation. To my amazement, I have rarely seen a speaker accomplish such a level of attentiveness amongst students for the entire duration of her presentation. Even students who normally had trouble focusing in their classrooms did not move from their seats until the end of the presentation, when students stood up to give her a standing ovation. I believe the issues she is addressing are important for all Canadians to be aware of – especially secondary and post-secondary students. Hopefully her message will inspire youth to join Cheryl in confronting this issue in the societal and political arenas. Cheryl is an exceptionally vibrant and eloquent speaker who can motivate her audience – both students and adults. Her confidence addressing issues and answering questions demonstrates her knowledge and preparation when delivering presentations and workshops. I would highly recommend Cheryl as a motivational speaker on the topic of child sex trafficking and sexual exploitation of children around the world. She is a children's rights social activist who brings unique experiences and talents to captivate her audience."

**– Guidance Counsellor, Albert Campbell
Collegiate Institute, Toronto**

"Thank you so much for including Mount Carmel in your speaking tour. You and your work is inspiring for all audiences. Many teachers and students have already provided positive feedback from your talk. It was fantastic. I hope your empathy and passion will continue to translate into more results that improve the lives of others; victims, perpetrators, and youth in need of a voice."

– Teacher, Our Lady of Mount Carmel

"A staff member who has been with our school for over 20 years informed me just now, that during the past 20 years, this is the first time that a speaker has ever received a STANDING OVATION"

**– Guidance Counsellor,
North Albion Collegiate Institute**

"It was an amazing presentation and the students wanted to do the "Break the Chains" campaign immediately. They were talking about the presentation in the hallways for days. I would like Cheryl to do the presentation again this year, and the next year at our school, and we will definitely do the campaign during the first semester."

– Head of Chaplaincy, St. Robert CHS

"Cheryl's presentation was excellent, and the Grade 8 students replaced the organization they had already selected for fund raising this year, with OneChild, and raised funds immediately."

– The York School

"Thank you so much for sharing your inspiration with our students. The topic is so very important, and opening our student's eyes to it is imperative. Thank you for working to "Break the Chains." You have a wonderfully relaxed and confident presentation style that puts students at ease despite the challenging content."

– Teacher, Bur Oak S.S.



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