

Nelson Rural School (NRS) teacher, Mrs. Ellen MacDonald, was notified earlier this fall by the international charity Free the Children™ of an invitation for a group of her students to attend the first We Day™ in Atlantic Canada to be held Wednesday November 27th at the Halifax Metro Centre. We Day™ is described as an educational event, eight of which are being held across Canada, and are organized by Free the Children™, to motivate and educate youth about “sustained activation” and changing “me to we”. The NRS invitation includes the chance for Mrs. MacDonald and four of her students to attend a dinner the evening before where they will meet Free the Children™ founder Craig Kielburger and other guests. This dinner will be a “kick-off” for the We Day™ gala event taking place the next day. Moreover, due to the significant involvement of Nelson Rural School in Free the Children™ campaigns, outlined below, the school has been chosen as a Profile School. This means that NRS will be used to promote future campaigns and to encourage other schools to become involved in positive change. The NRS students making the trip to Halifax are Mrs. MacDonald's grade 8 students from last year (presently in grade 9 at JMH) as well as several transition students who helped out with last year's group and are now in grade 8. They continue with the program at NRS. Two successful major fundraiser events to support this event were held recently. All the support received from the community is greatly appreciated.

These NRS students spent much of last school year learning about and promoting positive change with Free the Children™, taking part in campaigns such as: “We Scare Hunger”, “Be the Change”, “We are Silent”, “We Share Love”, “Pay it Forward” amongst others. The year finished up with a visit to North and South Esk Regional High School for a mini “We Day” for local schools. The students began their year of change in MacDonald's civics class, taking part in an activity where they had to budget for a family in Afghanistan for a year, taking on the role of head of household and making decisions that would affect the entire family. They then began their own “Pay it Forward” campaign doing random acts of kindness for others who in turn were urged to do the same for yet others. They formed the 8M Nelson Rural “We Day” group. The students rolled pennies for change, sold buttons and had food drives to raise money. As well, they took part in “Better Place” school wide-assemblies which were theme-based and promoted positive action for change amongst the school population and beyond. The funds raised by the NRS students have gone towards building a school in Asemkow, Ghana and further funds will be sent to this adopted village, a poor fishing community where most children do not have access to education.