



Chalk Talk

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Letter from the Editor

Dear Subscribers:

On the news the other day there was an update on the current state of the historic city of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina in August of 2005. My most vivid memories are of the horrific hours and days after the catastrophe that hit this historic and culturally rich city. The 'lucky' survivors stood on the roofs of their homes with signs that read "Help Me", hoping to catch the attention of the helicopters that circled above. The situation was terrifying, people were frantic to find family members from whom they had become separated during the storm. I recall watching an extremely distressed Harry Connick Jr. make an emotional and desperate plea to his government and fellow citizens to come to the aid of the city of his birth. The usually light-hearted jazz artist was visibly shaken by the disaster. The scenes witnessed in the weeks following the storm revealed a city, unprepared for the force of the massive hurricane and resembling a war zone.

When disasters hit close to home, we get a glimpse into the lives of people in dozens of countries around the world who every day live with poverty, war, and disease. All too often those of us who live in the most affluent and privileged countries in the world return to 'normal' after the shock of the televised spectacle lessens. For many of us, we want to help but are at a loss as to how we can make a difference. Awareness is one thing, but action is another matter.

This week's issue features a classroom resource that can raise awareness about the lives of school children in countries where the need is great. This resource also contains ideas on how students can take action to help. CoEd Communications is dedicated to supporting the important work of teachers by providing resources on a range of topics for the classroom. We invite you to visit our website at 4edu.ca to view the many free teachers' resources on offer.

[Let us know what you think.](#)

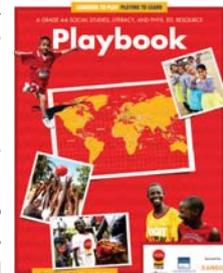
Mary Kovack

Look After Yourself, Look After One Another

Right To Play is a Canada-based athlete-driven humanitarian organization committed to improving the lives of children in the most disadvantaged areas of the world through the power of sport. By providing children with the opportunity and tools to engage in regular sport and play, Right To Play enhances their physical and social development and helps foster safer and stronger communities in 23 countries across Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

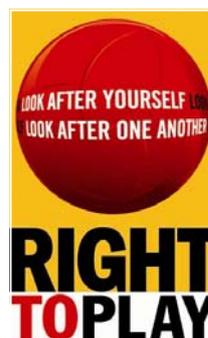
Right To Play offers elementary teachers — grades 4-6 — a free, curriculum-based teachers' kit packed with ideas for creative play and activities featuring an exploration of the lives of children around the world, the countries they live in and a study of our rights and responsibilities in the world community.

Created in partnership with Silken Laumann's Active Kids Movement, **Right To Play's** Canadian school program — **Learning To Play, Playing To Learn** — promotes educational play and awareness of global issues among Canada's school-children. **Available in English and French**, close to 5,000 **Playbook** kits are now being used in classrooms across the country.



To order a kit, [click here.](#)

NEW! Right To Play invites educators currently using the **Learning To Play, Playing To Learn Canadian school program** to its new **web links page** designed to enhance and supplement the material already contained within its fun and informative, curriculum-based educational resource. Go to righttoplay.com.



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"Sport and play is a fantastic way to bring children together and the perfect occasion to talk about issues like HIV and AIDS. They are much more eager to talk about such a sensitive subject when you create a relaxed and fun atmosphere. And I believe only sport can do that," — Shama Valentin, Right To Play coach, Rwanda

When Children Play, the World Wins! Sport has a natural and universal power to engage and motivate, to move and educate, to open dialogue and create positive change.



Right To Play harnesses the universal love of play to engage children and youth in regular, organized play activities that address critical challenges like the lack of basic education, lack of health information and the impact of conflict on both the individual and community networks and support systems.

Right To Play's specially-designed sport and play programs:

- teach HIV prevention to children most at risk
- foster rehabilitation and teach life skills to children affected by war
- open up educational and leadership opportunities to girls
- bring joy, hope, laughter and so much more to children in need

Right To Play trains community members and individuals within local partner organizations to be coaches and run our programs. This creates the foundation in a community for leadership and helps to rebuild community infrastructure, networks and support systems.

[Source: [Right To Play Canada website](#)]

UPDATE — Right To Play Athlete Ambassadors

Right To Play is pleased to welcome an entire soccer team, a star baseball catcher and the ultimate basketball teammate to its growing roster of Athlete Ambassadors.

On March 1, at a packed press conference attended by more than a dozen **Toronto FC** players, Right To Play was named one of two official charities of Toronto FC, the new expansion Major League Soccer franchise.

"We are very excited to enter this partnership with the Toronto FC and proud to call Toronto FC players Right To Play Ambassadors," said Johann Koss, President and CEO of Right To Play. "These players have reached the top of their profession thanks to the inspiration they received from parents, coaches and role models growing up. Through this partnership, and through the example set by these players, Right To Play can help ensure that children in our programs across Africa, Asia and the Middle East have access to the same opportunities. I'd like to thank Toronto FC for making a powerful statement that sport and play can set children and communities on an healthy development path."



Toronto FC Soccer Team



*Toronto Raptor
Jose Calderon*

A day later, it was the Raptors' turn to pull out the stops through Right To Play Night with the Raptors at Air Canada Centre. It was an exciting, entertaining evening that featured numerous in-game Right To Play-themed promotions and a moving halftime ceremony which introduced **Raptors guard Jose Calderon**, as a Right To Play Athlete Ambassador. "We're honored to have Jose represent the Raptors as a Right To Play Athlete Ambassador," said Raptors President and General Manager Bryan Colangelo. "Jose has already demonstrated he is an exemplary community leader through his involvement with NBA Cares and the Raptors Foundation initiatives. He epitomizes the role of an athlete ambassador and with basketball's global appeal Jose can continue to make a difference in many of the world's most disadvantaged regions."

On April 18, **Toronto Blue Jays catcher Gregg Zaun** joined Right To Play as its newest Athlete Ambassador, and the first ever from Major League Baseball. Gregg will generously support Right To Play by donating \$1,000 for every runner he throws out during the 2007 season. "Right To Play is using the power of sport to create happier, healthier, more peaceful communities for countless children in developing countries overseas," Zaun said. "As a professional athlete, I'm fortunate to be in a position where I can help, and I encourage all Jays fans to join with me in support of this terrific cause. Together, we can help throw out poverty and conflict and replace them with laughter and hope for children who need it most."



Clara Hughes

CONGRATULATIONS CLARA! — At a ceremony held in Halifax on April 21, 2007, the Canadian Olympic Committee (COC) awarded five-time speed-skating Olympic medallist and **Right To Play Athlete Ambassador, Clara Hughes**, with the **2006 International Olympic Committee (IOC) Sport and the Community Trophy**. The award is designed to recognize an individual's outstanding contribution and commitment to promoting and assisting the development of sport at both the national and international level. "I'm deeply honoured to be recognized by the IOC with this award," said Hughes. "I've always felt that the potential of sport is to transcend competition and contribute to the human condition in a positive way. That I've had the chance to help the many children who are born into dire life situations that are beyond comprehension, is a gift I am grateful for. It shines far brighter than the gold medal I won in Turin. I hope this can inspire other athletes to make a difference in this vast world that we are all a part of."

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News

[Poverty is everyone's business](#) — Carol Goar, *Opinion*, The Star.com, May 18, 2007

"Why should you care about the growing gap between rich and poor, if you're doing all right? Why should you care about the shrinking middle class, as long as you're still in it? ... To anyone who shares the late June Callwood's credo – "when things are unfair you have to do something" – the answers to these questions are obvious. You care because it would be inconceivable not to care about a child growing up in poverty or an adult struggling to survive in an affluent society. You care because you're no different from the person sleeping in a church basement, lining up for temporary work or fighting mental demons – just luckier. You care because that's what it is to be human."

[Hamza Dawood](#) — TheStar.com, May 12, 2007

"It's an enormous distance – both literally and figuratively – from rural Sri Lanka to a \$30,000 scholarship at Osgoode Hall Law School. But Hamza Dawood covered it in short order. On a trip to his parents' homeland prior to Grade 12, Dawood watched how hard his cousin worked at high school despite a 90-minute bus trip each way. It was a lesson in the love of learning that was foreign to a young man from Scarborough who skipped classes and showed no interest in university. "That really woke me up," says Dawood, 22, who is graduating with an honours B.A. in criminology from York University. "It made me recognize how important it was to take advantage of living in the society I live in."

['Better readers become better thinkers': librarian](#) — Daniel Francavilla, The Star.com, May 08, 2007

"Yes, there was the *Harry Potter* craze along with a couple of other popular novels recently – but in general, today's youth seems to be putting books on the back-burner. The written word can't compete with an X-Box 360 or an iPod Video. Despite the lack of interest in North America, literacy is as important as ever for success all around the world. It is shocking to learn that an estimated 875 million adults are illiterate worldwide. The youth of North America, privileged with accessible education, should be putting more of a priority on perfecting their literacy skills. Kathryn Stevenson, a librarian in Brampton Ontario, thinks that today's teens aren't completely out of the loop – teens read, but not what people normally consider reading material. She states that, "The internet has replaced a lot of print material that previous generations read. However, being a teacher and a librarian, she argues that teens do not read enough quality material. Including course-related material, teenagers today have vast resources available-- whereas children around the world such as South Asia and India are desperate for basic literacy skills."

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T 416.955.9526
F 416.955.0815

THE COMPANY FOR EDUCATION COMMUNICATIONS INC.

66 George St., 3rd floor • Toronto, ON, Canada, M5A 4K8 • www.coedcomm.com • info@coedcomm.com