

PRESS RELEASE

Ford of Canada and Free The Children launch partnership to help youth across Canada drive positive change

-- *We Create Change Tour driven by Ford celebrates young change-makers across Canada--*

Oakville, ON (May 7, 2014) – Today Ford Motor Company of Canada, Ltd. and Free The Children, an international charity and educational partner announced a partnership to help young people across Canada take action on causes they care about, and drive change in their local communities. Together, **Dianne Craig**, president and CEO, Ford of Canada, and **Marc Kielburger**, co-founder of Free The Children, celebrated the announcement by welcoming to Oakville the We Create Change Tour, Free The Children's 10-week, 90-stop epic road trip.

As a co-title sponsor of the We Create Change Tour, Ford has joined Free The Children in celebrating young people across Canada who are committed to helping others and making a difference in their communities. From April 11 to June 17, 2014, the tour will visit students and schools across the country for an exciting hour-long educational event and concert headlined by Me to We motivational speaker and Free The Children Ambassador **Spencer West**, a double amputee who lost his legs at the age of five. Joined by 11-year-old activist **Hannah Alper**, and chart-topping, MMVA nominated Canadian group **Neverest**, the tour features incredible stories of young Canadian change-makers dedicated to providing their peers in developing communities overseas with access to education.

Also making the coast-to-coast trip is a custom 2014 Ford Escape donated by Ford. Specially equipped for West, the Ford Escape has been outfitted with hand controls for brakes and gas pedals, extra padding in the driver seat, and hand grips for ease of accessibility into the vehicle.

During the We Create Change Tour, Ford is also turning the spotlight on local heroes across Canada who are taking action through the Go Further blog. From 16-year-old Spencer MacKay in Halifax, to grade seven student Aliya Frendo in Ottawa, the Go Further blog recognizes everyday heroes in communities across the country for their accomplishments and can inspire others to drive change.

"We are awed by the passion of young Canadians and are proud to celebrate the accomplishments of our youth with Ford of Canada's support of Spencer West's We Create Change Tour," said Craig. "Free The Children and Ford of Canada share a common belief that a better world starts right here at the grassroots in our communities and that anything is possible through the spirit of collaboration. We are honoured to support this wonderful organization and look forward to continuing to make an impact hand-in-hand with Free The Children and our Ford dealers in communities across the country."

Education is important to Ford, and to encourage students and schools in their fundraising efforts, Ford has implemented the innovative *Drive 4 UR School* program. With the help of a local Ford dealership, schools can amplify their fundraising events by including a special Ford test drive for the community. For every qualified test drive that's completed at the event, Ford will donate \$20 to the school, up to \$6,000 total.

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“By partnering with a company like Ford that has a presence in so many communities across Canada, we can help even more young people realize their dream of creating a positive change in their schools, hometowns and around the world,” said Kielburger. “Whether it’s a neighbourhood bake sale raising money for the local food bank, or a school-wide carnival in support of education overseas, we are looking forward to seeing how youth, schools and community groups will be able to make an even larger impact thanks to Ford.”

As a presenting sponsor of eight [We Day](#) events across Canada, Ford will also help bring the unprecedented educational initiative to tens of thousands of local students, raising awareness of some of the most pressing local and global issues of our time and inspiring active global citizenship. Students can’t buy a ticket to We Day, they earn it through service; by committing to take action on at least one local and one global initiative of their choice as part of the year-long educational program called [We Act](#).

Together, Ford of Canada and Free The Children will empower Canadian youth to take action and help change the world around them.

About Ford of Canada

Ford of Canada’s operations include a national headquarters, three regional offices, two branch offices, three vehicle assembly and engine manufacturing plants, and two parts distribution centres. Ford employs approximately 6,000 people in Canada, while an additional 18,000 people are employed in the more than 400 Ford and Ford-Lincoln dealerships across the country. For more information, please visit www.ford.ca.

About Free The Children

Free The Children is an international charity and educational partner. Founded in 1995 by international activist Craig Kielburger, Free The Children believes in a world where young people are free to achieve their fullest potential, and empowers youth to remove barriers that prevent them from being active local and global citizens. The organization’s domestic programs – which include We Day, Free The Children’s signature youth empowerment event – educate, engage and empower 2.3 million youth across North America and UK become engaged global citizens. Its international projects are implemented through a holistic and sustainable development model called Adopt a Village. Currently, Adopt a Village supports community development in eight countries; Kenya, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Ecuador, Haiti, Nicaragua, rural China and India. Through its international programming, Free The Children has brought more than 650 schools and school rooms to youth and provided clean water, health care and sanitation to 1 million people around the world, freeing children and their families from the cycle of poverty.

The organization has received the World’s Children’s Prize for the Rights of the Child, the Human Rights Award from the World Association of Non-Governmental Organizations, and has formed successful partnerships with leading school boards and Oprah’s Angel Network. For more information, visit www.freethechildren.com

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