

Christian Children's Fund

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Child Labor Steals Play, Educational Opportunities

Richmond, Va. – June 12, 2009 – Monica is 15. She is from Zambia and she was forced to carry heavy loads of water and heavy bags of charcoal. Given this work, Monica had no time to play with her friends.

She was one of the 218 million child laborers in the world and one of the 100 million who are girls, according to the International Labor Organization (ILO). That's why today's ILO's World Day Against Child Labor takes on the theme "Give Girls a Chance: End Child Labor." The ILO launched the World Day Against Child Labor in 2002.

Christian Children's Fund tackles child labor problems head on by supporting the basic needs of children in these situations. Children are missing out on their childhood as educational opportunities are sacrificed when they're forced into work.

To help end child labor in a country such as Zambia, where CCF has worked since 1983, CCF combats child labor in communities while increasing resources for families to help children attend school. CCF also develops approaches to increase public awareness on the dangers of child labor.

Working with communities to combat child labor in a holistic way (with NGOs, civil society and governments working together) was a focus of a Department of Labor-World Day Against Child Labor event this week in Washington, D.C., said CCF's Director of External Relations Laura Henderson. In addition to CCF, the group included representatives from other non-governmental organizations, unions, employers' groups and research institutions.

"Everyone who participated in the event spoke of their experiences in combating exploitative child labor and provided insights on the challenges as well as the opportunities to address this multifaceted problem," Henderson said.

For example, in Ecuador, where CCF has worked since 1985, CCF helped the family of 14-year-old Edison by teaching his parents how to grow flowers, which in turn helped his family make money. But, more importantly to Edison, it meant going back to school.



Christian Children's Fund is a global force for children, helping the world's deprived, excluded and vulnerable survive and thrive in order to reach their full potential. Serving children since 1938, CCF works in 31 countries and helps more than 15.2 million children and family members worldwide, regardless of race, creed or origin. CCF is a member of the ChildFund Alliance. It has earned 4 stars from Charity Navigator.

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“Thanks to the greenhouse, I don’t have to work so my brother, sister and I can continue studying,” Edison said.

Monica’s life, too, has changed for the better. Given the impact that being forced to do hard labor had on her life, Monica captured the experience in a poem: “You steal our time to play. You make us carry heavy things. Every day we wake up in the cold to carry heavy loads of water, heavy bags of charcoal and wood.”

For more information on CCF, visit www.christianchildrensfund.org. CCF will begin operating as ChildFund International on July 1.

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